

# THAT YOU MAY HAVE LIFE

## (A Study of the Gospel of John)

### Joy Comes in the Morning

TEXT: John 16:16-22

For several weeks in our study through the Gospel of John, I have pointed out to you the fact that before Jesus went to the cross and rose from the dead, the disciples simply did not understand nor fully believe. Jesus, of course, knew this. In our passage today the Lord deals with their doubt and declares the solution for it.

If you struggle with doubts about Christ, about what happens when you die, about what will happen personally to you when you die, this passage of Scripture, and I hope, this message on it will help you, just as it did the struggling, doubting disciples.

John 16:16–22 16 “A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me, because I go to the Father.” 17 Then *some* of His disciples said among themselves, “What is this that He says to us, ‘A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me’; and, ‘because I go to the Father’?” 18 They said therefore, “What is this that He says, ‘A little while’? We do not know what He is saying.” 19 Now Jesus knew that they desired to ask Him, and He said to them, “Are you inquiring among yourselves about what I said, ‘A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me’? 20 Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. 21 A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. 22 Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.

**Why does the resurrection of Christ produce joy which cannot be extinguished?**

#### **I. THE EVIDENCE FOR THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS IS UNDENIABLE.**

##### **A. We know from multiple sources that Jesus’ body was put in a tomb.**

1. Luke and the other three gospels agree that Joseph of Arimathea took Jesus’ body and placed it in a tomb.

##### **B. The detail given in these accounts invited contradiction if it were not true.**

1. **If Joseph of Arimathea were not a member of the Sanhedrin who gave Jesus’ body an honorable burial, this claim would have been denied by Joseph himself, members of the Sanhedrin, his family, or his friends.**
2. **Although the claim to Jesus’ resurrection was the supreme argument for Jesus being the Messiah, no counter claims concerning Joseph or the burial were forthcoming.** There is no evidence for a single one!

3. In the years immediately following Jesus' death and resurrection, literally no one claimed that Jesus did not really die or that His dead body was not put in a tomb as the gospels describe.

**C. The tomb with the body was guarded by Roman soldiers.**

1. The soldiers were assigned by Pilate but instructed to report to the chief priest. **The presence of the guard removed any opportunity for someone to steal the body.**
2. The guards were rendered unconscious by the presence of the angel who rolled away the stone, revealing an empty tomb.
3. **When the guards reported what happened to the priests, the priests bribed them to say they were asleep and the disciples stole the body.** The priests promised to fix things with Pilate since soldiers could be executed for falling asleep on duty.
4. **Matthew reports that this transaction between the priests and the guards was common knowledge among the Jews (Mt. 28:15).**
5. **Again, the absence of contradiction by unbelievers of what Matthew says "everybody knew" is strong evidence for the validity of the account.**

**D. A group of women who followed Jesus discovered the empty tomb around dawn on the first day of the week (Sunday morning).**

1. **Critics have often cited the differences in the gospel accounts of the discovery of the empty tomb as evidence against the veracity of the story.** These differences include the time of the discovery (dark, dawn, or early morning), who and how many women visited the tomb, how many angels were there, did Jesus appear to one or more of them, and did they tell anyone their discovery.
2. To be honest, there are differences in the details of the accounts. However, none of the accounts presents itself as giving the "complete, unabridged history of the resurrection." **Each one tells the truth, but limited to that which was seen by the individuals in each story.** Most of these supposed discrepancies can be harmonized with a reasonable synthesis of the four accounts. A few others are more difficult to explain, but that does not mean the account, even with its mysterious details, is untrue.
3. **In fact, the presence of unharmonized details is actually a strong argument for the legitimacy of each of the accounts.** If the gospels were reporting a legend, or even worse, perpetrating a hoax, each of the writers would have been careful to have avoided apparent contradiction. None of the gospel writers demonstrate any concern about this at all. They all report in very straight forward fashion the events as they had learned them to be.
4. While some may desire to quibble over some of the details mentioned above, **the remarkable thing is that all four accounts are clear in their testimony:**
  - **On Friday before sundown, Jesus' body was put in the tomb.**
  - **On Sunday morning, the tomb was empty!**
5. **The discovery of the empty tomb first by the women, makes the account even more believable.** At this time in history in Judea and the surrounding

area, women were not highly regarded. A woman could not even testify in a court of law. If Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were making up this account, they certainly would have had men make the discovery, because Jews in general would have found the testimony of men to be more reliable. But the gospel writers just told it like it was. The women discovered the empty tomb as they left their homes in the pre-dawn hours to go and anoint the dead body of the Savior Who had loved them more than any other and Whom they so sincerely loved.

**E. No one had the motive to steal the body of Jesus.**

1. **Certainly the Jewish leaders did not want the body stolen;** that is why they asked for a guard.
2. **The Romans did not want the body to be stolen;** that is why Pilate agreed to securing the tomb.
3. **The disciples obviously did not really expect a bodily resurrection** even though they had been told it would happen by Jesus. They were in despair and disarray at the death of their master. They themselves had to be convinced that Jesus arose.

**F. The empty tomb was available for everyone's examination.**

1. **The site of the tomb was known to all: Romans, Jews, and Christians. Everyone knew it was empty.**
2. That is why the Jews bribed the guard to say the disciples had stolen the body. They knew the tomb was empty. That fact could not be disputed.

**G. The sum of the testimony is this:**

1. **On Friday, the body of a very dead Jesus was put in a tomb.**
2. **The body was there when a Roman guard closed it and sealed it prior to establishing a watch to be sure the grave was not robbed.**
3. **No one had either opportunity or motive to steal the body.**

**On Sunday morning, when the tomb was opened, the body of Jesus was not there!**

**H. The changed lives of the apostles.**

1. **When Jesus was crucified, the apostles scattered like sheep without a shepherd.** Although Jesus had told them of His impending death and resurrection, they either did not understand or they did not believe.

2. Every indication that we have is that if Jesus' body had remained in the grave, the apostles would have gone back to what they did before Jesus called them: fishing, collecting taxes, whatever.
3. **The disciples did not come to faith easily.** Even when Jesus appeared to them suddenly in the room, Luke says,  
Luke 24:41 But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, "Have you any food here?"

**For them to believe required two things:**

- a. **They had to see Him eat.** This proved He was a real, living man to them, not just an apparition or a vision.
- b. **Jesus had to go back into the Old Testament Scriptures and explain what God had been saying long ago.** For instance, He might have said,
  - Remember how the Israelites were dying because they had been bitten by the serpents because of their sin and rebellion, and God told Moses to hang a bronze serpent on a pole, and whoever would look upon it and believe in God's provision, he would be saved?
  - And remember how I told Nicodemus,

John 3:14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,

Jesus said,

- That's what I did on the cross. I was the provision of the Father to take away the sin of the world.
  - But the Father said He would raise me up. Remember, I told you I would rise the third day, and I did. Here I am.
4. **But then they believed; and with faith came a new level of understanding and remembrance. Then came the indwelling and filling of the Holy Spirit.**
  5. The apostles we see and hear at Pentecost are very different from the fearful men we saw after Jesus' betrayal and arrest. **Fifty days after the resurrection, the apostles are bold men of God, preaching Jesus as the crucified and resurrected Messiah** of God Who would give forgiveness and eternal life to all who would trust in Him.
  6. **And this transformation in their lives lasted their entire lifetime.** Each of them suffered greatly because of their faith. Each of them gave the rest of their life to the propagation of the gospel and the service of Christ.
  7. **What made the difference?** For forty days, Jesus appeared alive to men and women all over Judea and Galilee. The apostles saw Him, talked with Him,

touched Him, and ate with Him. **They knew Jesus had risen from the dead, and it changed everything!**

## II. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION IS INDESCRIBABLE.

Paul put it this way: **1 Corinthians 15:12–19** 12 Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. 14 And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching *is* empty and your faith *is* also empty. 15 Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. 16 For if *the* dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. 17 And if Christ is not risen, your faith *is* futile; you are still in your sins! 18 Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

- A. **The resurrection is the ultimate authentication that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God.**
- B. **The resurrection is at the heart of the gospel.**
  1. **Jesus, God's Son, died on the cross for our sin.**
  2. **He rose from the dead.**
  3. **Jesus offers forgiveness of sin and the gift of eternal life to those who trust Him as Savior and Lord.**

Without the resurrection, there is no gospel.

That is why Paul says, "If Christ is not risen, you are still in your sins."

**1 Corinthians 15:20** But now Christ is risen from the dead, *and* has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

- **The undeniable evidence of Jesus' resurrection proves He is the Messiah, the Son of God.**
- **The unquestionable reality that Jesus rose from the dead also makes the gospel a reality.**

## III. THE APPLICATION OF OUR LORD'S RESURRECTION IS INTENSLY PERSONAL.

Jesus said to Martha, **John 11:25** ... "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.

And Jesus said to His disciples, **John 14:19** "A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also.

- **Because Jesus rose from the dead, death will not be the end of you either.**
- **You will live again after you die.**

**1 Corinthians 15:22** For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

- **The resurrection validates the gospel**
  - **The gospel says you can have the gift of eternal life,**
  - **If you trust Jesus as you Lord and Savior**

Romans 10:9 ... if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.