He Has Risen

Matthew 27:62-66, 28:1-20

Key Verse: 28:6 “He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.”

Happy Easter! We are going to study the last chapter of Matthew’s gospel today. Matthew’s gospel ends with the resurrection of Jesus and Jesus’ commission to all his followers. Jesus’ resurrection is the core truth of the Gospel and it changed the lives of many. Let us learn and accept the gospel faith through Jesus’ resurrection to restore our hope and mission.

1. Jesus has risen (27:62-66,28:1-15)

Jesus suffered, was crucified, and buried on Friday. The dead body of Jesus was put into the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. The chief priests and the Pharisees became anxious even though Jesus was buried in the tomb because they remembered Jesus’ words, **“After three days I will rise again.”** So they went to Pilate the governor and asked him to seal the stone and post the guard in front of the tomb. The governor allowed them to do so. So, the tomb of Jesus was completely sealed by a huge stone and guarded by the guard. No one could go in and come out.(picture)

**“After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb”**

Here the first day of the week is Sunday, the third day of Jesus’ death and burial. It was still dark. Two Marys were on the way to Jesus’ tomb. It is very scary to go to a tomb when it is still dark. When I was little, I stayed late in my friend’s home and I had to come back home when it was dark. The most scary thing was that I had to pass through the tombs on the way home and I ran so fast to overcome the fear.

What was the reason to go to the tomb at dawn? It was because they wanted to anoint Jesus’ body with perfume. This was the Jewish custom. They were sorrowful seeing Jesus’ death on the cross. There were many wounds and hurts on Jesus’ body. They brought their precious perfume to pour on Jesus’ body. The fear of darkness, tomb and strong guards didn’t matter for them. They loved Jesus and served the Savior of the world to the end. I pray that our children may also grow to be brave men and women of faith who serve and love Jesus to the end.

Here is a problem though. The tomb was tightly covered and sealed by the huge stone and the guards were standing there to secure the tomb. How would they come into the tomb?

Our God always makes a way for those who seek Him earnestly. Something very unexpected and frightening happened before their eyes. After a strong earthquake, the angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled back the stone, and opened the tomb. (Picture) To the women the heavy stone and the guards were the obstacles for them to come to Jesus. But the angel removed the stone and disarmed the guard. Nothing was impossible with God. The appearance of the angel was absolutely amazing. It was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid and they didn’t move like dead men.

Look at verses 5,6. **The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.**

The angel’s message was short, but powerful. The women did not need to be afraid because Jesus was risen. He was not there anymore because he was resurrected. Jesus was not the first one brought back from the dead. Lazarus was dead but he came back to life when Jesus raised him from the dead, the same as a son of a widow in Luke’s gospel. Here, resurrection isn’t just living again; it is living again in a new body, based on our old body, perfectly suited for life in eternity. Therefore, people who are resurrected will never die again. They will be transformed into holy and glorious beings as if a caterpillar turns into a beautiful butterfly.(Picture) Jesus’ resurrection was not a sudden or unexpected happening, but it was the fulfillment of Jesus’ words and God’s set purpose. In fact, Jesus predicted his death and resurrection three times while staying with his disciples. However, the power of death overpowered the hearts of all followers of Jesus when Jesus was placed in the tomb being sealed and covered by the stone. They never thought about Jesus’ resurrection instead they fell in sorrow and despair. However, the angel's message was true. Jesus has risen, conquering the power of death. No death, no stone and no guards were able to withhold the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus has risen according to the scriptures and no death can overpower us who are in the resurrection faith.

While the women were still hesitating or wondering, the angel asked them to come and see the place where Jesus was laid. His body was gone! It was an empty tomb. There was no more Jesus in the tomb because he had risen! A tomb is for only those who are to be buried and return to the earth. But Jesus did not need a tomb because he had to return to God the Father in heaven, not to be buried on the earth.

The angel’s message for the women continued, **“Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.’ Now I have told you.” (7)**

The angel gave them a mission, the mission of witnessing the resurrection of Christ Jesus. The angel commanded them to be the first messengers of the good news of Jesus’ resurrection. What amazing and marvelous news it is. Jesus died and rose from the dead! It is good news for the perishing. Those who believe the message of the good news will have a resurrection body to live forever in the kingdom of heaven.

**John 5:24-25 states “Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life. Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.**

God set the way for sinners to receive eternal life. It is to hear Jesus’ words and believe in him. Therefore, there must be people who speak the words of Jesus to the world so that people come to believe in Jesus. Those who met the risen Jesus must go quickly to share this wonderful news of Jesus’ resurrection. Since it is good news for all people in the world, the message of Jesus’ resurrection must be spread as quickly as possible. Hence the angel urged two women to go quickly and tell Jesus’ resurrection to the disciples.

When my wife became pregnant, I was quick to share this good news with my family members, friends and my fellow workers. I couldn’t hold the joy of waiting for the new life to come to my family. Likewise, it is our natural desire to share the good news with others. Is Jesus’ resurrection good news and great joy for you? Let us share the message of Jesus’ resurrection to people around us so that our loved ones come to believe in Jesus and receive eternal life.

How was the woman's response to the angel’s message? Look at verse 8. **“So the women hurriedly away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.”** With mixed feelings, fear and joy, they ran to Jesus’ disciples. What happened to them on their way? The Risen Jesus appeared to them. Look at verses 9,10. **“Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”** The women didn’t see the Risen Jesus with their own eyes, but they believed in the angel’s message and obeyed. When they did so, they met the Risen Jesus face to face.

Two women recognized Jesus right away when Jesus greeted them. They clasped Jesus’ feet and worshiped him. Clasp means to grasp something tightly. It was great joy and bliss for them to see Jesus again and touch his glorious body.(Picture) We would all experience this glorious moment when we enter into the Kingdom of heaven. Jesus would welcome us with wide open arms. We can touch him, speak to him and worship him face to face.

Jesus again commended them to go and tell the disciples to go to Galilee. Galilee was the place where they started the life of faith, made a love confession to Jesus and served God’s flock of sheep. Jesus knew that all his disciples would fall away eventually. Jesus wanted to restore their faith, hope and mission in the place where the disciples spent most of their time with Jesus. Jesus knew that the first thing they needed to restore was the love relationship in Galilee.

In verses 11-15 we see the wicked plan of the religious leaders to cover up Jesus’ resurrection. There was a trade between the religious leaders and the guards. They gave a large sum of money to the guards to let them report that Jesus’ disciples stole Jesus’ body in the tomb while they were asleep. The guards received the money and lied to the governor. They might have closed the guards’ mouth, blinded the eyes of the governor, and covered up the truth. But no matter how they tried to manipulate, the truth of God will march on. The risen Jesus appeared to his witnesses and they started spreading the message of Jesus’ resurrection. Since then, the gospel of Jesus’ death and resurrection was widely spread to all generations, nations and tribes and those who accepted the truth received eternal life. The truth alway wins.

1. Go and make disciples of all nations(16-20)

As the disciples heard the message from the women, they went to Galilee. The risen Jesus appeared to them and the disciples saw him and worshiped him. But some doubted. They doubted because they did not recognize the resurrected Jesus. His appearance was glorious with a new resurrection body.

The Risen Jesus came to his disciples and gave them a mission. We call this the Great Commission. Look at verses 18-20. **“Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”**

**“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me”** means that Jesus has authority over all nature and all human histories as the Creator God. This indicates that this is an authoritative command, not a suggestion. Because Jesus has this authority, we are therefore commanded to go. It is His authority that sends us, His authority that guides us, and His authority that empowers us. Jesus’ work and message would continue to spread in the world through His disciples.

The idea behind the word the disciples is scholars, learners and students. Making disciples reminds us that disciples are made as if the scholars study so hard to be experts on their learnings. Therefore Jesus’ disciples are the people who confess their faith in the name of Jesus and learn and follow Jesus’ teachings. Our CBF and HBF members diligently learn God's words every Saturday and Sunday. They are on the course of being disciples of Jesus by studying the words of God. Yesterday I was surprised to hear all the poems of our children. Their understanding of the gospel is deep and wide. Let me introduce one poem.

**E**aster is bright, **A**nd full of light. **S**ins will be removed he says, **T**hen sacrificed and rose on this day. **E**aster, O' it's such a holy day. **R**ising of Jesus is so brighter than they say.

What a poetic and meaningful writing it is! Our children have great potential to be good disciples of Jesus. I pray that God may grow our children in the words of truth so that they may become disciples who continue to work on making disciples of all nations.

This great commission is a world mission command as well. The disciples are commissioned to take the gospel to all the nations. There is no place on earth where the gospel of Jesus should not be preached and where disciples should not be made. Our missionaries came from Korea to make disciples of Jesus in Canada in obedience to Jesus’ commission. Our children are to go and make disciples of all nations; Europe, Africa, America, Asia and Oceania countries.

Look at verses **19-20 “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”**

Making disciples of Jesus requires our life long commitment. Jesus sent His disciples with a mission to fulfill, but He did not send them alone. The risen Jesus promised to be with them constantly until the end of the age.

I praise and thank God for raising Jesus from the dead. We believe that Jesus is with us providing the constant grace and strength for us to make the disciples. May God use all of us here as disciple makers to witness the resurrection of Jesus to all nations.