Come and See the Place Where He Lay

Text: Matthew 28:1-10 -- Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. 2 And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. 4 And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. 5 But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. 6 He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. 7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you." 8 So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. 9 And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."

Introduction: This morning, we celebrate the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, the most important event in all of Christianity. In fact, we believe it's the most important event in all of human history. **Here's why**: It is God's way of saying to those who have put their faith and trust in Jesus that our sin has been paid for in full. Someone has suggested that we should think of Christ's resurrection as a store receipt. If you're in a department store and you buy some clothes, you should always ask for the receipt. **Why**? Because if you're still walking around the store a plainclothes security person could stop you and ask, "**Excuse me, can I look in your bag**?" And if you don't have a receipt you could get in trouble. So, if somebody stops you, you want to be able to hold up your receipt and say, "**Oh, plainclothes security person, trouble me not because this proves that this has been paid for and I do not have to pay it again**." Listen: The resurrection is a giant receipt stamped across history for all people to see, a receipt that allows you to know that your future is certain if you believe in Jesus Christ because your sin has been paid for in full and you possess eternal life.

As we think about the very first Easter morning and the resurrection of our Lord, Matthew tells us that some women proceeded to the tomb in which Christ's body had been placed. They were intending to anoint His body with spices. But when they arrived, the women were surprised to discover that the stone that had protected the Lord's body from intruders had been rolled away. An angel seated on top of it greeted them and said, "**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. <u>Come and see the place where he lay</u>." One has to wonder why the angel would give them such an invitation. What did he intend for them to see? I doubt if it was simply a way of confirming that a miracle had taken place. I mean … come on … - it's hard to imagine that the appearance of an angel sitting on top of a very heavy stone that FORMERLY blocked the entrance wouldn't have indicated that something truly miraculous had taken place. ***<u>I wonder if there weren't some other reasons to take a gander inside the tomb</u>***. Perhaps there is more to be learned from the cave hewn out of rock in which they placed the body of our Lord. **I would suggest there is. Here are three additional observations that occur to me on Resurrection Sunday**.

<u>One look at the tomb and we see the HUMILITY of Christ</u>. The word means "**lowliness of mind**." In Jesus' case, it wasn't that He didn't deserve glory and honor, but that He chose not to pursue it when He came into the world. Now, of course, the tomb isn't the only place where we see this quality in Christ. It seems that at every point in His life, our Lord's humility was on full display -- from His birth to the days of His earthly ministry to His death.

- ***HIS BIRTH***. This word that is used to describe it is <u>INCARNATION</u>. It refers to the moment in history when the Son of God became a human being, coming into the world the way we all did, born of a woman. In this act, we're told that Jesus emptied Himself of any glory that was rightfully His and took on human flesh. In **John 17:5**, Jesus spoke of the honor that was His before His birth when He prayed, "**And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed."** Now when we add the fact that he was born in a stable in the presence of farm animals, we see the most humble of all beginnings. If we want to appreciate His lowliness of mind in the incarnation, all we have to do is consider the glory that is once again His following His resurrection and ascension to heaven. Hear how John the Apostle describes our glorified Lord in **Revelation 1:12-17 -- Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. 14 The hairs of his head were white like wool, as white as snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, 15 his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. 16 In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength. 17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Just a solitary look at Jesus in His glorified state was so overwhelming**

to the apostle that he fainted in the presence of Christ. That gives you a pretty good idea of what He left behind when He came into our world!

- ***HIS MINISTRY***. Jesus' entire ministry can be summed up in two words--- ***humble service***. He healed the sick, fed the poor, gave sight to the blind, and set the captives free. Even in His last hours, our Lord adopted the posture of a servant when He was His disciples' feet (**John 13:3-5 -- Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, 4 rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. 5 Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him**). What is most remarkable about this is that Jesus washed the disciple's feet knowing full well where He had come from and where He was going.
- ***HIS DEATH***. The humility of Christ is seen in the following:
  - **The FACT that He died**. NO ONE DISPUTES THE DEATH OF SON OF GOD. But when we understand that death is the wage given to those who sin against God (**Romans 6:23 – For the wages of sin is death**) one might wonder why Jesus had to die. He never did anything contrary to His Father's will (**John 14:31 – I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father). At the beginning of His ministry,** Jesus told John the Baptist to baptize Him so that He might fulfill all righteousness (i. e. do everything right). And do you remember what the Father said about Him immediately afterward? "**This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased**." **Jesus never did anything to earn death, yet die He did just like the rest of us.**
  - **The WAY that He died**. Jesus did not die of natural causes. He was crucified. The Bible tells us that He endured the cross while scorning its shame (**See Hebrews 12:2**). Crucifixion was one of the most tortuous penalties for several reasons: **(1) It was reserved for those of lower status -- -** dangerous criminals, slaves and those from other countries. A Roman citizen was almost always spared from this type of execution. **(2) It was a public affair**. Naked and nailed to a cross, the victim was subjected to verbal abuse by passers-by (**Matthew 27:39-44 -- And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads 40 and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." 41 So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, 42 "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. 43 He trusts in God; let God deliver him**

now, if he desires him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" 44 And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way). **(3) It was designed to prolong suffering**. Sometimes it took several days for the individual to die. This is why a soldier pierced the side of Christ with his spear – to speed up the process. He was surprised to see that Jesus had already died in just six hours.

- **The PLACE where they buried Him after He died***.* The Romans felt no obligation to bury anyone who had been crucified. Those who were unfortunate enough to suffer this fate were left as food for the birds and as a deterrent to anyone who might be contemplating a similar offense. The Jews, however, were slightly more compassionate, probably because of **Deuteronomy 21:22-23 -- "And if a man has committed a crime punishable by death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, 23 his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day."** Executed offenders were denied burial in their family tombs and thrown into a common tomb (**See Jeremiah 26:23**). What we discover about Jesus was that He was buried in a borrowed tomb (**See Matthew 27:57-60**). It is nearly impossible to look at the tomb of Christ and fail to see His humility. (**Review: At the tomb we see the humility of Christ**.)

One look at the tomb and we see the HORROR of sin. Jesus did not die for His own sin. He died as a substitute for us. When we look at the tomb and acknowledge that it is our offenses that brought Him to this end, we begin to develop a proper awareness of the horror of sin. In **Isaiah, 53:4-5**, the prophet speaks of the sacrifice of Christ and uses 4 words to help us understand the horror of our sin which He bore.

- **He took up our "infirmities."** The word means, "***disease or sickness***." It is not inaccurate to think of sin as a terminal disease that, if left untreated, will ultimately lead to death. Certainly, Jesus saw it this way. Listen to what He said to some Pharisees and lawyers in **Luke 5:29-32 -- And Levi made him a great feast in his house, and there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them. 30 And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" 31 And Jesus answered them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.** By His death, says Isaiah, we are healed from our **infirmities**.
- **He carried our "sorrows".** This refers to ***the emotional pain and anguish associated with life because of sin***. Sin has corrupted every relationship that

we have... with one another, with God and even with creation (**See Romans 8:20-21)**. On the cross, Jesus took the sorrow that we brought upon ourselves through our rebellion to God.

- **He was pierced for our "transgressions."** This is a word we don't use much anymore. ***It means to trespass or cross over a boundary that has been declared "off limits***". God's Word provides the boundaries inside of which we are to live. In a very real sense, it is a NO TRESPASSING sign. When we step outside of those boundaries, we transgress the will of God for our lives. This passage in **Isaiah** reminds us that we've been caught trespassing and that Christ has offered Himself in payment for the offense.
- **He was crushed for our "iniquities."** Iniquity is an "***act of perversion***." When we call someone a pervert, it is usually in view of some sort of sexual deviancy. But the scriptures tell us that every act of disobedience is a perversion of God's will for our lives. King David used the word to describe both his adultery with Bathsheba, and the murder of her husband, Uriah, as well (**Psalm 51:2 -- Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin).** Well, there we have it. He took up our infirmities, carried our sorrows, was pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities. Jesus, who was completely innocent, took upon Himself all of our offenses against the Holy God of the universe. This doesn't paint too good a portrait of us, does it? A man in a rented devil costume was walking to a Halloween party when it began to rain like in the days of Noah. Fearful that the costume might be ruined, he bolted for the first cover he could find. It just happened to be a church in the middle of a service. He ran directly into the sanctuary to the shock of all in attendance. The congregation panicked and quickly vacated the room. All except one unfortunate elderly woman who could not move fast enough. With nowhere else to go, she bravely faced the man in the devil costume and pleaded, "**You know I've been on your side all along**!" I guess you could have said this of all of us before we came to Christ (**1 John 3:8 – He who does what is sinful is of the devil**). Not a very flattering portrait, is it? **Review: At the tomb we see the humility of Christ and the horror of sin.**

One look at the tomb and we see the DEATH of death. Certainly, this was part of the angel's motivation for inviting the women to look inside. They were meant to see that it was empty! In the weeks following the resurrection, no one seriously argued that Jesus was still in the tomb. Why not? Because it would have been so easy to verify. Instead, we find believers proclaiming that He had risen and that they had seen Him (**1 Corinthians 15:3-6 -- For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with**

the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6 Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep). What does the empty tomb mean for us?

- **Death could not hold Him**. Had Jesus remained in the grave, then the claims that He made about Himself would have been proven false. (**1**) He claimed to be God (**See John 8:56-59; Exodus 3:14**). (**2**) He claimed power over death (**See John 2:18-22**). By virtue of His resurrection, Christ has declared that '**death has been swallowed up in victory**.'
- **Death cannot hold us**. The Scriptures teach that Jesus is but the firstborn from among the dead (**See Colossians 1:18**). Of course, this implies that others will follow. Those who believe in Jesus have eternal life (**See 1 John 5:11-13**). Though we were dead in our transgressions, we have been made alive in Him (**See Ephesians 2:4-5**). Because the tomb is empty, we have hope that the last enemy – death -- will ultimately be defeated (**Revelation 20:13-14 -- And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. 14 Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire).**

Conclusion: So, remember, one look at the tomb and we see the Humility of Christ, the Horror of Sin and the Death of Death. At a Good Friday service in ***Dampara Baptist Church, Chittagong, Bangladesh***, little children sat on the floor in the aisles and across the front of the church. Rows of people stood in the back, craning their necks to see the crucifixion scene as depicted in the "***Jesus Film***." Weeping and gasps of unbelief could be heard in the shocked hush as Jesus was crucified. As the **Bengalis** watched, they were feeling the agony of Jesus' pain and the disappointment of the disciples. In that emotional moment, one young boy in the crowded church couldn't abide their suffering any longer and suddenly cried out, "***Do not be afraid. He gets up again! I saw it before***." That's the very reason that we celebrate Easter. "**He is not dead. The Lord has risen! Come and see where He lay**." These words from the angel are what give hope to all who believe. WHAT ABOUT YOU? DO YOU HAVE HOPE? (PRESENT THE GOSPEL.)