

Easter Sunrise 4/5/2026

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Preacher: Billy Joe Calvert

[0 : 00] Then we will pick up verse 16 through 20. So that's where we will be at in the Word this morning. Matthew 28, verses 1 through 10.

And then we'll read the end of the chapter, verses 16 through 20. Now, my intentionality is because I want to focus on Christ and disciples. I know I'm leaving out where the Roman soldiers or the soldiers went back and they connived the plan and all that.

I don't care what the world's discussing at that time. I want to see the hope and the joy we have. There's a reason for that. We can look at that. But this morning we're focusing on Christ and His disciples.

The Word says, Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave. And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it.

And his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. The guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men. And the angel said to the women, Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified.

[1 : 07] He is not here, for he has risen, just as he said. Come, see the place where he was lying. Go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead. And behold, he is going ahead of you into Galilee.

There you will see him. Behold, I have told you. And they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy and ran to report it to his disciples. And behold, Jesus met them and greeted them.

And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshipped him. And then Jesus said to them, Do not be afraid. Go and take word to my brethren to leave for Galilee, and there they will see me.

Verse 16. But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated. And when they saw him, they worshipped him. But some were doubtful. And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you. And, lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

[2 : 11] During this sunrise service, there's no better passage than the end of the Gospels. And we can look at all four of them. We can see, as we put them together, and we see a full picture of what took place that morning.

But as we're focused on Matthew's account of it, I want you to see a number of things. And I want you to see them in the light of that resurrection hope. We're no longer focused on the suffering and the pain that was necessary.

We're not focused on the brutality of Friday. We're not focused on the torture that bore our sins and the pain that we deserved and the scourging and the beating that was ours.

But rather, we're looking at the hope that we have in Christ because of the resurrection. And we're looking at the transformation that that brings to our life. We'll see a little bit later on as we continue to look at the Word.

And Paul says this is the greatest thing. This is the thing of first importance, something that we have to have. The suffering was necessary to pay the price, but the resurrection is essential for the hope since the price has been paid.

[3 : 12] For without the resurrection, we have a debt paid but no promise issued to us. And yet in this passage, what we see is just a number of things, things that are there.

We see here a revelation of power. It is telling because it says after the Sabbath, after that day of rest and uncertainty, that day of quietude where they didn't know what was going to transpire after that, that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, and we know from the other gospel accounts, they're accompanied by others as well, that they go to the tomb.

I love how Matthew says they went to look at the tomb. For in their power, they could do nothing else but look at the tomb because the stone was rolled against it.

The seal had been set. We know from the other accounts, they had spices prepared and they were going to bring it. And we always talk about, well, why were they bringing that since Nicodemus had already prepared the body?

And the reason we do that is because it tells us that they saw how they prepared the body. And I don't mean that kind of tongue in cheek. They observed and watched. And much like men are accustomed to having to do with our wives, watch us.

[4 : 18] They said, that's fine. I'll let them finish and I'll come back later and we'll do it right. But they observed how they prepared the body and they went and got more spices and it was done in haste and they wanted to do it in proper fashion.

But Matthew tells us that their only hope was actually just to go and look at the tomb because they were powerless to remove the stone. They were powerless to get entry. And we know from the other accounts that their question, who's going to remove the stone for us?

How are we going to get to the body? They were hopeless in their power. But it tells us that before they got there, a great earthquake came and an angel of the Lord rolled the stone.

The wording in the original language is the same word we get dynamite from. It is literally implied in the text that this massive stone that no one could move was cast up the hill and away from the tomb.

It was not just simply cracked open. It was blown open. And it is a grand revelation of the power of the angel of the Lord. The angels announced his coming and the angels reveal his resurrection.

[5 : 22] And there's this phrase that we looked at in the birth of Christ and we look at here. It is the angel of the Lord. It is his angels. It is his servants. It is his that do his work.

And they opened the tomb and with such power and authority, they are present and their very presence brings fear to the soldiers. And the soldiers become like dead men.

And now what the women were powerless to do, really any man was powerless to do, the angel has done so that they could see the empty tomb. And we see this grand revelation, this revelation here that is saying, I have overcome what you cannot.

Not only the removal of the stone, but the fact that the tomb is empty. And they say, come and see where he was laid. He has overcome what we cannot. He overcame death, hell and the grave. He bore our sins, but he's no longer where we are bound to go. And it is a true revelation of the power of the resurrection. The second thing that we notice from the text is really clear.

[6 : 28] It is the reassurance of his presence. There's a refrain that is repeated several times. The angels of the Lord, the first thing they tell the ladies, you notice this, do not be afraid.

For we know that you are seeking the Lord, but he is not here for he has risen just as he said. So they reminded the ladies of the word of the Lord, but their command was, do not be afraid for the tomb is empty.

But do you notice when the ladies leave the wording there? So they left the tomb in what? Fear and great joy. The angels had said, do not be afraid, but they could not remove the fear.

Though the joy was present now, the fear was still there because there was an uncertainty. There was the unknown. All they knew was the tomb was empty. And as they leave, they meet Christ. Now they have heard the assurance of his word. They have seen the proof of the empty tomb. But those things matter little without his presence. Because it says, as they were on their way, Jesus met them.

[7 : 34] And do you see what he says there? Do not be afraid. He repeats the same refrain that they have already been commanded. The first thing the angel said is, do not be afraid.

They left the tomb in fear and trembling. And the very first thing that Christ says to them is, do not be afraid. And what we find in our text is then when they leave, there's no fear.

Because it's the reassurance of his presence. Hey, it's not that his body is missing. It's that he is alive. And it is the presence of Christ that brings the reassurance throughout the whole resurrection account.

We read in our text that some gather and they're doubting. And we know from others that there's something. Unless I put my hand in his side and put my fingers in his hands where he was pierced, I will not believe. And it is the presence of Christ that brings the reassurance to the doubters. And it is the presence of Christ that brings the removal of fear. Though the word had been proclaimed, though the angels had announced it, they were still walking in fear and joy. [8 : 38] But Jesus' presence transforms that and says, do not be afraid. It is the reassurance of his presence. Third, what we see in this text is the responsibility of his people.

When the angels are there, and it's telling, we know one of the great defenses for the resurrection is the fact that the ladies were the first to proclaim the reality of it.

Nothing against you ladies, but at that time, the testimony of women was kind of on parallel with the testimony of shepherds. And neither one of them were really acceptable. And it was kind of their custom. And it's not any defaming remark towards any of you.

That was just that culture in that time. And no one writing a great story would ever make women the first testimonies, the first witnesses to such an event. They would not have made them that.

But what we find is when the angels are present, they say, not only do not be afraid, but they say, go and tell. Go and tell his disciples that he goes before them. And again, Christ meets them and says, do not be afraid.

[9 : 39] But what does he say? Go and tell my brethren. There again is this repetition of go and tell, go and tell. This event that was so grand, this event that removed all fear, this event that removed all doubt, was their now responsibility.

It wasn't that they could go back home and say, that was amazing. I'm glad we saw that. Boy, that brings so much comfort and hope to me. And I'm just going to go home and hold on to that. No, they had to take that and go tell someone, no matter if they believe them or not.

It was their responsibility to tell. And if you remember when you read the other accounts, that when they show up, they don't believe them. And they say, well, this seems unbelievable.

And it doesn't make sense. Now to us, that shouldn't be so astounding. We should say, well, why wouldn't they believe them? I mean, they've seen Lazarus come out of the tomb, right? They've eaten meals with the resurrected Lazarus, but yet the responsibility was not to persuade people. The responsibility was to tell people. And when Christ meets his disciples, we have the great commission. We know it. We see it. We, we read it over and over again. What is that repetition there?

[10 : 44] Go and make disciples and tell. It is the responsibility of his people to proclaim the hope of the resurrection. It is not our responsibility to convince anyone of the hope of the resurrection.

It is our responsibility to proclaim the hope of the resurrection. It is his presence that brings the assurance. It is his presence that brings the comfort, but it is the responsibility of his people to go and tell.

And may we be those who walk into faithfulness because the empty tomb changes everything. It changes everything. And Christ is risen indeed.

And we have the grand privilege of telling others about it. Let me pray with us. We're going to sing Amazing Grace. And after we sing Amazing Grace, we will be dismissed.

Gentlemen, I'll need your help carrying the chairs in. Ladies, we don't need you to do it. We'll take care of it, but we'll let everyone make their way in. You'll have a hard time sitting in the fellowship hall for a moment until we bring you some chairs, but we'll bring chairs in for you.

[11 : 55] And I know we'll have to wait for just a little bit for them to be ready, but just enjoy that time of fellowship together. Let's pray. Father, thank you so much for your faithfulness and your goodness. We thank you for the hope of the resurrection.

We thank you for the power that is on display there. We praise you for the assurance of your presence, for we know that you are present today as much as you were then. And Lord, help us to be those faithful proclaimers of this grand news.

Thank you for this day. Thank you for the testimony of your creation, the sun that has begun to shine, the birds that are singing. Lord, the place to build a gather together, the people of God that have come to worship.

We praise your name and we ask it all in Christ's name.