

Sermon Series: Like No Other: The Life of Christ

To be used with: Session Six: Resurrected Like No Other

Sermon Title Possibilities: “What A Difference a Day Makes”

Scripture: Matthew 28:1-10

Connection to Unit Theme: *Jesus Christ is central to the Christian faith. That statement may seem obvious, but even Christians need a constant reminder that everything in our faith is built upon the person and work of Jesus Christ. Every aspect of Jesus’ life—from His birth to His current exalted state—is unique from any other person. His uniqueness means His life and character merit our fullest attention, and because He is uniquely God, His life and character greatly impact our lives.*

Session Six shares the resurrection narrative from Matthew’s Gospel. The Point of the study is “Jesus is alive, and we can live forever.”

These text based sermons draw from the same Scripture passages as the small group studies, but explore other themes from the passage. This way, you as the pastor can reinforce the passage without repeating the small group study.

Introduction: Think about all the individual days that changed our nation: when man first landed on the moon, the death of JFK, the events of 9/11. Now think about the individual days that changed your personal life: the day of your marriage, your graduation, the birth of your first child, your retirement. One day can rock your world. One day can change *EVERYTHING*! Three days ago, John and some of the women who followed Jesus had the worst day of their lives. All their hopes had been pinned on Jesus, and they had watched Him be crucified and die. Then they had watched Him be placed in the ground and hidden from their sight by a stone. Each of them remembered the day that they had been faced with Jesus for the first time. That had been the greatest day of their lives! They had been forgiven. Nothing had been the same since then. Their eternal destiny was changed. But now...it felt like it had all been a dream...no, a nightmare. Into that darkness came the light of a new day. And with that new day came the one day that would permanently change them and give them a hope that nothing could take away. On this day, Jesus would rise again!

1. The day changed – darkness gave way to light (v. 1) It was the beginning of a new day and the beginning of a new week. It had been an eventful week; it had been an awful week. The week ended with faithful Jews having celebrated two ceremonies:

- **Passover:** Passover was about the Jews historical rescue from death and subsequent escape from slavery. Death had come to some (a sacrificial lamb, Egyptian firstborn). The Jews had watched them die. Their death meant life and freedom for the Israelites. This was an example of national rescue. Mary Magdalene had experienced a rescue of her own, but it was of a much more personal nature. She too had watched a sacrificial Lamb die. But she, unlike her ancestors, didn’t quite feel like celebrating.

- **Sabbath:** This day was designed for rest, but it was tough for them to settle down. It was designed for worship, but they felt deserted by God. It was designed for contemplation. They definitely had MUCH to think about. And they were still thinking about the events of the previous days as the women made their way to the tomb.
2. **The setting changed – physical gave way to spiritual (v. 2-4)** Physically, Jesus was dead. They had watched him die. On Friday night, Nicodemus and Joseph had placed him in the grave. The women had watched this too. But this was Sunday, and the physical was invaded by the spiritual. An angel came down and continued the change that a new day was bringing.
- **There was an earthquake (v. 2)** Within a space of three days, Jerusalem experienced two earthquakes. The first was when Jesus died (Matt. 27:51), and the second is here at His resurrection. Any why not? Paul records that the whole of creation though physical reacts to the spiritual reality of sin (Rom. 8:22). So why shouldn't creation react both when its Creator was killed as well as when its Creator rises again?!
 - **An angel rolled back the stone (v. 2)** God who sent him recognized that physical beings need to be able to see with their own eyes the spiritual AND physical reality that Jesus had risen from the dead.
 - **The angel sat on the stone (v. 2)** In Scripture, when someone sits down, it means that their work is done. The OT priests could never sit down because their work was never complete, but Jesus sat down at the Father's right hand because the work of redemption was finished (Heb. 10:11-12). The angel, in sitting on this stone, was signaling the victory of Jesus Christ over death (1 Cor. 15:54-57). The stone was a symbol of death and defeat – something that usually evoked sorrow and fear which is exactly how the guards reacted to the angel.
 - **The angel caused a reaction (v. 4)** The guards reacted with fear. Those in the physical world don't know what to do with things in the spiritual world (1 Cor. 2:14) unless they have been made a part of the spiritual world (Jn. 3:3). So their natural reaction is to fear what they cannot understand. The guards reacted by fainting – *"became like dead men"* The dead came to life, and the living became as the dead!
3. **The mood changed – fear gave way to anticipation (v. 5-7)** The guards were not the only ones that were fearful that day. The women were fearful too. They were fearful of getting to the tomb and not being able to do what they had come for because they could not remove the stone (Mark 16:3). They were fearful of what life was going to be like without the Savior. But the angel had a message to tell. That message took away their fears and gave them hope.
- **He knew why they were there (v. 5)** They were there to finish getting Jesus' body ready for burial. They had watched Him die and be buried. The angel knew that they were afraid, and he had come to tell them that the cause of their fear was now gone.
 - **He knew where Jesus was (v. 6)** He told them that Jesus was no longer there! He had risen just as He said! As good as this news was, and as strong a hold their fear had on them, they were going to need convincing. So he told them to see for themselves that Jesus was not there.

- **He knew what Jesus wanted (v. 7)** The angel also told them that risen Jesus wanted to see them. They didn't just get to see where He had been; they were going to get to see where He now was. They had dreaded coming to the tomb to see Jesus' dead body and have their fears confirmed. Now Jesus wanted them to come and see Him so that they could have their hope renewed and magnified.
4. **The purpose changed – silence gave way to message (v. 8-10)** They had come in silence. All His words would have echoed in their minds, but they not a word as they made their way to the tomb. They were there to perform a task that would have been done in silence. There's not much small talk that happens as you wrap a body...especially not when you're wrapping the body of the one who had spoken the words of life. But now, the words of the angel gave them hope and gave them a purpose. Those words changed them forever.
- **They became witnesses to His resurrection (v. 8)** When they left the tomb, they couldn't help but tell what they had seen. They knew that others would have difficulty believing them...they were having difficulty believing it themselves! But they were filled with joy, and joy overflows!
 - **They became worshipers at his feet (v. 9)** As they were going, Jesus met them along the way. The last time that they saw Him, He had been a bloody mess. He looked very different now. He looked...glorious. But it wasn't the way He looked that caused their reaction to Him. It was just because it was Him. And so they held Him like they would never let Him go. And they worshiped Him like there was nothing else worthy of their attention.
 - **They became watchers for his coming (v. 10)** Jesus told them, "Do not be afraid." They were looking to the future with fear. Jesus told them to look to the future with hope because Jesus was in their future. They were going to see Him! He was going to come to them! And they were supposed to be watching so that they would be ready.

Conclusion: Witnesses, worshipers, watchers...doesn't that describe what we're supposed to be! Jesus is alive! We need to tell that He's alive! We need to worship Him rather than holding onto material things. And we need to watch for His return and live as if He is right around the bend. It is then that we will live with righteousness. It is then that we will live filled not with fear but with unquenchable hope. It is then that we will shine His glory into a dark world that needs the light that only Jesus can bring.

Chris Talton is married with two grown children, Vikky and Ben, and one grandson. I live in Ga which is also where I grew up. I enjoy spending time with my family, playing ping pong with my son, and watching the occasional science fiction movie (whenever his wife will let me). He teaches Bible at a Christian school, and teaches a life-group at Beulah Baptist Church.