

Witnessing the Resurrection

Matthew 28:9-10

The secret of Christian stability is the Resurrection. Actually, the symbol of Christianity is more an empty tomb than a cross. The empty tomb gives meaning to the cross. If it were not for the empty tomb, the cross would have been a tragedy. What was sadness on Friday, turned into gladness on Sunday.

It was only right that the witnesses of Jesus' crucifixion and burial would also be witnesses of His resurrection. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were the first to receive news of the risen Lord and to encounter Him. They had been at the cross, they had been there when He was laid in the tomb, and now they were the first to know the joy of the resurrection.

I. Witnessing the Resurrection affirms the Reality of the Resurrection!

Our Christian faith is built on the reality of the Resurrection. It does not alone prove the deity of Christ, but it is consistent with it. Because Jesus is Lord, we can believe that He is the resurrected Lord.

Was the Resurrection real? Many scholars say that it is the best-attested fact in history, but there are many skeptics who try to explain away the Resurrection.

But the tomb is empty! Jesus was resurrected and set loose in the world.

II. Witnessing the Resurrection gives witness to the Resurrection!

Knowing that the resurrection is real, what are we to do? **We are to tell others!**

Notice, in Matthew 28:7, the Angels told the women to, *"go quickly, and tell..."* The first declaration of the Resurrection was a call to action. "Go quickly, tell!" This is the kind of news that you do not keep to yourself. The Resurrection is that kind of news! It's news that gives courage, "fear not." News that gives assurance, "He is not here." News that gives joy, "with great joy." **This is news that gives life!**

III. Witnessing the Resurrection reminds us of the greatest witness: changed lives!

After the Resurrection, notice the change in the lives of the men who followed Jesus at the close of the Gospels and the opening of the book of Acts. Notice

particularly Peter and James. Peter had denied the Lord three times. He had cursed and sworn as though he had never known the restraining influence of Jesus. He had gone out and wept bitterly, and he had joined the other disciples behind closed doors after Jesus died. But when he saw the Living Lord, turn over a few pages in your Bible, and you will see this same Peter boldly preaching Christ.

So, what changed Peter? – It was the Power of the Resurrected Christ!

James, the brother of Jesus, assumed a position of leadership in the Jerusalem Church. But in Jesus' lifetime, James did not believe in Him. After the Resurrection, this earthly brother of the Lord, was transformed from a doubter into a believer. Lives are changed by the resurrected rd. This is the greatest assurance of the resurrection in our lives. We have met the Resurrected Christ, and He has changed us.

He changes us – He charges us – then He gives us a job to do and the power to do it. We are witnesses of the Resurrection as we experience His power and presence in our lives.