

“Death Burial and Resurrection, Now What”

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By Pastor Peter F. Paine

Now that Easter is over and the sugar high from our Easter baskets has worn off, many Christians are wondering: “I know about the death burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, but now what?” Pastor Paine looked at the disciples and the Early Church as they figured out what to do after Jesus rose from the dead, so we can follow their example.

Matthew 28:1-20

1. In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first [day] of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.
2. And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.
3. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:
4. And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead [men].
5. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.
6. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.
7. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.
8. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.
9. And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.
10. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.
11. Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.
12. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers,
13. Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him [away] while we slept.
14. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.
15. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.
16. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.
17. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.
18. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.
19. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:
20. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, [even] unto the end of the world. Amen.

Mary Magdalene and Mary came to the tomb to see Jesus' body early in the morning. No one doubted the crucifixion. It had already happened, and everyone was there to see. But many did doubt the resurrection. Mary Magdalene and Mary were met by an angel who told them Jesus was alive (verse 7). In verse 8, we find out that Mary Magdalene and Mary were filled with fear and great joy. You usually aren't joyous when you're afraid. This is a strange pair of emotions, but they were in a very strange set of circumstances.

They had no context of history, or proof that this was true. Mary Magdalene and Mary had to take it by faith.

The same is true in our lives today. We have to move forward even when there is no proof that things will turn out fine, and we have never been in a certain kind of situation before. This is a faith walk.

Pastor Paine urged the congregation to stop beating ourselves up when we doubt. It is a natural emotion. The important thing about finding yourself in doubt is how you react. We have to continue to put one foot in front of the other and continue, even in the midst of doubt. We cannot allow it to paralyze us. We must continue forward. Mary Magdalene and Mary were filled with doubt and great joy. The disciples doubted while they worshiped (even at a critical moment in the start of Christianity), but they didn't stop worshiping.

Pastor Paine showed us Luke's account of the ending of the same situation.

Luke 24:36-50

36. And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace [be] unto you.
37. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.
38. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?
39. Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.
40. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them [his] hands and [his] feet.
41. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat?
42. And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb.
43. And he took [it], and did eat before them.
44. And he said unto them, These [are] the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and [in] the prophets, and [in] the psalms, concerning me.
45. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,
46. And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:
47. And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.
48. And ye are witnesses of these things.
49. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.
50. And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.

We see in verses 37 and 38 that the disciples were terrified, affrighted and troubled. Of course they were scared! They had seen Jesus die, and now he was speaking to them. This can be a comfort to each of us who are troubled and doubt when we face things in our lives today. Jesus did not turn them away and dismiss because they were overwhelmed, instead he broke it down simply for them. He spoke to the source of their fear: their hearts.

Pastor Paine also pointed out the sequence of events in the passage above. The disciples didn't completely understand until verse 45. After years in ministry with Jesus, they saw him again and were terrified, comforted, met Jesus' physical need for food, and then received understanding. Jesus did not give them understanding about what they were supposed to do with the rest of their lives first. Instead, he asked them to move forward in faith and do the right thing. Understanding and direction followed.

Sometimes, we are troubled or frustrated when God hasn't opened our understanding, but we have to be patient. God is not on our schedule; we are on his. The key is that we have to turn to Jesus for the answer, and until we have the answer continue to move forward in faith. Since the disciples went through this process, we are in good company.

Mark 16:14-20

14. Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

15. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

16. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

17. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

18. They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

19. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

20. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

Pastor Paine asked us to say this sentence together as a congregation:

“I'm a human being. Sometimes I am weak, but I have a calling on my life”

We have to stop feeling like a failure before we even try. We are all humans. We're not perfect, but God makes up the difference when we call on him. We just have to be honest with him about how we are feeling. It's okay to say: “God, I'm terrified,” “God, I'm troubled,” “God, I'm overwhelmed”. We just have to be sure to stick around and listen to get God's answer once we tell him how we are feeling. Just like he did with the disciples he will speak to the root of the problem and comfort us.

John 20:19-21

19. Then the same day at evening, being the first [day] of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace [be] unto you.

20. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them [his] hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

21. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace [be] unto you: as [my] Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

The disciples were glad to see Jesus in John's account of his return, but only after they gained understanding. Jesus said in verse 21 that we are sent by him just like he was sent here by his father. Jesus was sent to Earth to be crucified. We have to be serious about making the choice to follow Christ because it's not easy (just like it wasn't for the disciples). We are going to have to make some sacrifices. The road will not always be easy, but being sent by Jesus is what we are created for. As Christians we are responsible for doing something with the gospel. That is the answer to the question "What now?"

Peter took what he had learned from Jesus and made the transition from student to teacher. There is a time for us to sit and learn, but there is a time for us to stand up and teach. It might be scary, but this was exactly what Jesus said would happen. It is what He expects from us.

As the Early Church was established, we see how the disciples took the next step after the death burial and resurrection of Jesus. Pastor Paine pointed out some sections in the first part of the book of Acts that show us as Christians what we need to be doing now.

Acts 1:11

11. Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

As the disciples stood in amazement of what they had just seen, an angel asked them why they were standing around looking at the sky. They might have thought that this was a stupid question. Jesus just went up into Heaven! But the angel was there to remind them that there was work to be done, and there was no time to waste.

Acts 2: 37-39

37. Now when they heard [this], they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men [and] brethren, what shall we do?
38. Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.
39. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, [even] as many as the Lord our God shall call.

While Peter was teaching, he made the point that the gospel is not exclusive. It is for anyone who will respond until Jesus returns. We must be baptized in Jesus name, go forward with the power from the Holy Ghost, and become teachers.

Acts 8:26-39

26. And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.
27. And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,
28. Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.
29. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

30. And Philip ran thither to [him], and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?
31. And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.
32. The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:
33. In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.
34. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?
35. Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.
36. And as they went on [their] way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, [here is] water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?
37. And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
38. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.
39. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

The story of Phillip and the Eunuch in Acts chapter 8 shows how we should respond to God's voice as we follow him. This is ministry in action. Phillip was listening for what God had to say to him, and then he literally ran through the desert to do what he was told. This is the kind of excitement we should have about following God in our daily lives, even when we don't know the next step (just like Phillip didn't know anything more than he was supposed to go to the desert).

Pastor Paine told us about an experience he had with his neighbor this past week. Pastor Paine and his wife were making hamburgers when the Holy Spirit pricked his heart to go and offer one to his neighbor. This didn't seem like a monumental task, but Pastor Paine went over and extended the offer for a burger. His neighbor said he had already eaten, but it opened up a conversation that ended with Pastor Paine's neighbor asking if he could come to church and worship with him. Ministry is not always going to be a series of huge, life changing events. Ministry takes place when we are obedient to the small urges of the Holy Spirit to go outside our normal routine and do something for him. That's what we need to be doing every day.

Acts 10: 44-48

44. While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.
45. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.
46. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,
47. Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?
48. And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

4. Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

5. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.
6. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.
7. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.
8. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;
9. To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;
10. To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another [divers] kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:
11. But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

Taking the next step won't always be easy. Everyone's part is different. Pastor Paine told us that it's okay if we aren't doing the exact same thing as the person next to us. We all have an individual calling from God. Sometimes we will be troubled, and sometimes we will be terrified. It may be overwhelming at times, and it won't always be convenient, but it is what we were created to do. Every one of us can make a difference for God in the world today. We just have to stand up and teach, and put one foot in front of the other by faith.