

The Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Christ

By David Harrell

Bible Text: John 19:31-20:10
Preached on: Sunday, September 20, 2015

We come this morning to John's Gospel in chapter 19 so if you will turn there with me, we will look for this closely. An amazing passage of Scripture, beginning at verse 31 and we'll go through verse 10 of chapter 20.

We are examining the death, the burial and the resurrection of Christ, a fascinating narrative that, once again, points to the glory and the power of the Son of God which is John's primary emphasis in his Gospel and I pray that each of us will embrace these truths with all of our heart, ponder them in our heart, because they are intended to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ as we will once again see. This is so important because we have just finished yet another week in a world, in a culture that is doing everything it can to dethrone the Lord Jesus Christ and to mock him. In fact, now in our culture, it's basically politically correct, even encouraged, to malign biblical Christianity. If you tell people that Jesus is the Son of God who came to earth as a substitute to save sinners and satisfy the just wrath of God, that he is the only way to salvation, they look at you as if you have lost your mind. It's not only considered the mere ranting of fools but it's coming to a point where it's considered to be hate speech to say such things. Moreover, to believe that Jesus died and was buried and then was raised again from the dead after 3 days in the grave is considered by most to be a religious myth and for others they think that that's a sure sign if you believe that, that there is some kind of a mental disorder going on and that as a person you really shouldn't be worthy of any serious consideration, especially on matters of morality and religion and so forth. But to be sure, these attitudes existed in the first century as they do now and, frankly, they will continue to exist among all who blaspheme the name of Christ. Scripture teaches that even throughout eternity they will blaspheme his name.

So, we come to John's account where, again, we see the glory of Christ, the sovereign King, proven by the very events surrounding his death, his burial and his resurrection, all of which fulfilled certain prophetic Scriptures that really underscore the glory of Christ. So we want to look at him this morning in light of the Providence of God. We're going to see this in 3 ways: we're going to exalt his majesty by examining the Providence of God in his death, in his burial, and in his resurrection. By the way, Providence is that doctrine that states that God is continually involved in his creation, sustaining all things and causing all things to function according to their intended purpose and even directing all of his creation, including man, including angels, and all the events of history, to ultimately fulfill his glorious purposes to not only redeem sinners but also to bring glory to himself and, frankly, the Providence of God has staggering implications in each of our lives. I hope those of you who are going through the Soul Care Discipleship training are really getting a hold of what this means.

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We see all of this in John's narrative, beginning with 1. The Providence of God in Jesus' death. So notice verse 31 of chapter 19,

31 Then the Jews, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

Now, by Jewish reckoning, the Sabbath which is Saturday, really began at sundown on Friday evening. This means Jesus was crucified on Friday, the day before the preparation for the Sabbath, which on that occasion as we see from this text, was a special Sabbath because it occurred during the Passover feast and because the second Paschal day, according to Leviticus 23:11, fell on the Sabbath. This was a day devoted to the very important sheaf offering that the Jews would render that would also include, according to verse 12 of Leviticus 23, the offering of a male lamb, a year old without blemish as a burnt offering to the Lord. So obviously it was by no accident that the Lord Jesus Christ, the unblemished Lamb of God, would really offer himself as a sacrifice at this precise time, on this precise occasion, that for centuries had pointed to him.

Now, it was the custom of the Jews according to Mosaic law to never allow a person to remain hanging on a gibbet overnight, on a gallows overnight, a cross or whatever. They would especially after an execution like this because they considered that the body cursed by God would defile the land. So it is very important for you to understand the historical context here. So being the self-righteous law keepers that they were, they asked Pilate to have Jesus' legs broken so he would die quickly and then they could dispose of him and then honor God. Of course, the hypocrisy here is astounding and that's part of what John wants to communicate.

Now, normally the Romans would leave crucified men and women on the cross until they died which many times took several days. A long torturous death. And then as a final disgrace and warning to any other would-be criminal or insurrectionist, they would leave the decaying body on the cross to be devoured by the vultures. But if they needed to hasten the death of an individual, they would break the victim's legs by using a large iron bar or a heavy mallet, a practice called in Latin, *crurifragium*. The sudden excruciating pain combined with the loss of blood would cause a person to die rather quickly. Moreover, when the legs are broken, they could no longer lift their body to allow air into their lungs which would cause them to suffocate.

So this is the background. So what we have here are the Jews wanting to be good law keepers and not jeopardize their righteous standing before God by violating their high

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Sabbath, the Jews then asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away, verse 31. Then verse 32,

32 So the soldiers came, and broke the legs of the first man and of the other who was crucified with Him; 33 but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.

So apparently the soldiers come up; there is one man on either side of Jesus; probably different soldiers are looking at these men; they break their legs and then they come to Jesus in the middle and they see that he is already dead. We know from Scripture that Jesus was hung on the cross at the third hour or 9 o'clock, 9 AM according to Mark 15:25. Then he died at the ninth hour or 3 PM. So he was on the cross for a total of 6 hours before he voluntarily gave up his life, a point that John is wanting us to understand. It's very, very important. In fact, you will recall in John 10, beginning in verse 17 that Jesus declared, "I lay down My life so that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father."

So you must understand it's a relatively short period of time before Jesus gave up his life but bear in mind, given the prior beatings that he received and the loss of blood from the crown of thorns upon his head, not to mention the double floggings that he endured and the unimaginable suffering associated with sin bearing, no doubt all of these things combined contributed to his early death. And we see in chapter 19 here, at the end of verse 30, he gives a final shout on the cross, "It is finished!" and the very fact that he was able to do that tells you that not all of the life had been drained from him. In fact, we know that Joseph of Arimathea came to Pilate to ask for Jesus' body and Mark tells us that Pilate didn't think that Jesus would be dead already so he summoned the centurion to go and to find out and to confirm that, "Yes, he's dead."

So, again, here in John 19:30, John tells us that Jesus bowed his head and gave up his spirit, literally handed over his spirit. No one took his life from him. He gave it up on his own authority. But we must not neglect, dear friends, the Providence of God that we see at work here in this passage, all of which points to the glory and the majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, John's emphasis, again, here in his Gospel. You see, Jesus had predicted that he would be killed and that on the third day he would rise again, for example, in Luke 18:33. And for this to be fulfilled, he had to be buried on the same day that he died and so, once again, we see God using wicked men to execute orders that were made in eternity past. Yet another testimony to the fact that Jesus was who he said he was, the Son of God, the Messiah of Israel.

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So, as we come to the text we see that the soldiers break the legs of the men on either side of Jesus but they see Jesus is already dead so they did not break his legs. Verse 34,

34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.

Since the ancients understood that the body was made up of blood and water, this proved something very important. This proved that Jesus was physically dead. Now, this was very important for John to help us understand because over the years, now mind you, he's writing some 50 years after all of this happened, over the years he saw the rise of a popular heresy known as docetism. It's from the Greek word doceo, which means "it seems." He saw this heresy rise and basically what this heresy said is that Jesus never really took on human flesh, it only seemed as though he did. He only appeared to be human. Likewise, when he died, he only seemed to be dead but he wasn't really dead. Now, like all heretics, they wanted nothing to do with Christ so they enjoy every demonic doctrine that will discredit him and we continue to see that to this day.

Well, John witnessed the rise of this satanically inspired heresy and he's going to have no part of it so as an eyewitness he adds in verse 35,

35 And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe.

Now, the blood and water that flowed from Jesus' side also may be symbolic of both the life and the cleansing that flowed from Jesus' death. Some have suggested that the blood of Jesus Christ, that is his sacrificial and redemptive death, is the basis of eternal life in the believer. We know that from John 6:5, and it also purifies us from every sin John tells us in 1 John 1:7. But also, the water we know biblically is symbolic of cleansing, symbolic of life as well as the Spirit. So all of these magnificent blessings we know flow from the lifting up of the Son of God, the Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, it is from this verse and these themes that the blind hymn writer, Fannie J. Crosby, derived her inspiration for the first verse of that great hymn, "Near the cross," which says,

"Jesus keep me near the cross,
There a precious fountain,
Free to all a healing stream,
Flows from Calvary's mountain."

Others have suggested and this may be true, that it is possible that here John the evangelist is alluding to Exodus 17, especially in verse 6 of that text which says, "Strike

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the rock and water will come out of it for people to drink." Now, we know that John has already used water to refer to the Holy Spirit and has apparently alluded to the water from the rock episodes in Exodus 17 and Numbers 20, so here in John's Gospel we can see that perhaps the long-suffering Yahweh himself, the Rock for his people, is stricken for his people that they might receive the promised Holy Spirit. In fact, Augustus Toplady, the great hymn writer and theologian who lived from 1740-1778, wrote this in light of that very concept,

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power."

So the soldiers pierced Jesus' side but he was spared from the crurifragium, they did not break his legs. And notice what John says in verse 36 and verse 37,

36 For these things came to pass [I love this] to fulfill the Scripture, "Not a bone of Him shall be broken."

He's quoting from Psalm 34:20, written a thousand years earlier. Verse 37,

37 And again another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced."

This is from Zechariah 12:10, written some 520 years earlier, a prophecy that frankly speaks of a future repentant remnant of Israel that will confess Jesus as Messiah when he returns in glory. That text reads, "I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn." So yet another prophecy that affirms the deity of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, which John wants to prove over and over again in his Gospel.

So the Providence of God in his death affirms the deity of the majesty of Christ. We see it also in the Providence of God in his burial. Look at this with me in verse 38,

38 After these things Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the

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body of Jesus; and Pilate granted permission. So he came and took away His body.

Now, who is this man? Well the synoptic writers, Matthew, Mark and Luke, tell us that Joseph was a member of the Sanhedrin. That he was a wealthy man that was looking for the kingdom of God. He was a man that did not agree with the decision to condemn Jesus. That he was a good and a righteous man who both Matthew as well as John state that he was a disciple of Jesus but a secret one for fear of the Jews. This reminds me of some of the Orthodox rabbis in Israel who this very day believe that Jesus was and is who he said he was and who he is, the Messiah of Israel, but out of fear they believe in secret. Some of them are even enrolled in curriculums, online Bible curriculums, to avoid detection.

Well, perhaps out of shame mixed with love, we're not sure, Joseph goes then and he asks Pilate for the body of Jesus and no doubt because of his rank as a member of the Sanhedrin, Pilate granted his request. In fact, Mark says that, "He gathered up courage and went in before Pilate." No doubt he had had enough of the wickedness and the hypocrisy of his fellow Sanhedrinists and he was convinced that he needed to fear God more than man. We just don't know all of his heart but we know that he mustered up enough courage to do this and we know from tradition that what happened to Nicodemus was very severe, his friend, and so perhaps he feared the same thing. We don't know what happened to Joseph.

But when we look closely, once again, we see the Providence of God orchestrating all of these events to fulfill his divine decrees made in eternity past because, you see, under Roman law, no man crucified for sedition would ever be taken down from his cross until the vultures had picked every shred of flesh from his body and only then would that body be taken down and buried among the criminals. Moreover, the Jews would only bury criminals outside the walls of Jerusalem but, you see, John wants us to understand that this is no ordinary man. These are no ordinary circumstances. He wants us to see that this is the Son of God whose death and now burial was foreordained, was predicted in the Old Testament Scriptures. In fact, in Isaiah 53:9, the prophet declared that though Messiah's "grave was assigned with wicked men, yet he was with a rich man in his death because he had done no violence nor was there any deceit in his mouth."

Now, John goes on to introduce another member of the Sanhedrin that was also a secret disciple of Jesus that now joins Joseph in the preparation for Jesus' body to be buried, a man named Nicodemus in verse 39,

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39 Nicodemus, who had first come to Him [referring to Jesus] by night, [you remember that story] also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight.

Now, the Jews did not embalm their dead like the Egyptians did but rather they would use fragrant spices to cover up the stench of putrefaction so Nicodemus brings, it says, about 100 pounds of this mixture of spices. It would have been, by the way, in powder form, and this powder then would have been laid upon the strips of cloth and the cloths wrapped around the body and then more powder, more cloths, layer upon layer, until the body was completely wrapped and then the body would have been laid upon another layer of that powder and then the powder put over the entire body. This is how they buried their dead with this powdery mixture.

Well, obviously neither Joseph nor Nicodemus or, for that matter, even the women that would come later, really believed that Jesus would literally rise from the dead physically as he said he would do. You know, if they had believed that, they wouldn't have gone to all of this trouble. So they prepared his body for the grave. Verse 40,

40 So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. 41 Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. 42 Therefore because of the Jewish day of preparation, since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

I find it interesting, little did Joseph and Nicodemus realize that by burying Jesus while it was still Friday before the Sabbath, they were fulfilling God's eternal plan as Jesus prophesied earlier in Matthew 12:40, where Jesus said, "For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." So Jesus was buried before sundown on Friday and then he rose again on Sunday and according to Jewish reckoning, a part of a day would be considered as a whole day or considered a day so Jesus was in the tomb 3 days: part of Friday afternoon, Saturday night and a part of Sunday morning.

Now, I find it also very interesting that the writer of Hebrews tells us that this is really a picture or that this was pictured when Isaac was delivered from the altar after he had been given up to death 3 days before. In Hebrews 11:19, we read that Abraham "considered that God is able to raise men even from the dead, from which he also received him," referring to Isaac, "back as a type." Isaac being the type, Jesus being the greater antitype. And I also find it fascinating that Yahweh delivered his covenant people Israel from the Egyptians in the parting of the Red Sea 3 days after slaying the Paschal lamb, yet another

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picture of our deliverance from the penalty and the power and someday the very presence of sin through Christ in whom we have died and in whom we have been raised again with him. Scripture is amazing, isn't it? When you look at it, you see its inspiration. You see how God has woven all of these things together and, frankly, only the most calloused heart could possibly deny the obvious that Jesus was indeed the Son of God, the Messiah of Old Testament prophecy.

So we rejoice in him and exalt his majesty. We see it in the Providence of God in his death and in his burial, now let's look thirdly and finally at the Providence of God in his resurrection. Notice verse 1 of chapter 20, "Now on the first day of the week." Let me pause there for a moment. This is what became known as the Lord's day, the first day of the week. We see this, for example, in Revelation 1:10. This was the day when Jesus in those ancient days and down through history set aside to worship Christ to celebrate his resurrection. Certainly this was the habit of the first century saints as we read in Acts 20:7 and 1 Corinthians 16:2.

1 Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone already taken away from the tomb.

Now, the other Gospel writers indicate that there were other women who also made their way to the tomb that morning but Mary must have gone on ahead of them because it says that she arrived when it was still dark but we learn that the others arrive at sunrise. As I think about Mary going there in the dark, I think that this was a woman who longed to be near the body of her precious Lord, the one who had delivered her from those 7 demons, the one who had revealed to her his love in very astounding ways. And it's also quite remarkable if you think about it, remember, there had just been a great earthquake, Matthew tells us, and you know the type of havoc that an earthquake will cause in a region. Moreover, there are thousands and thousands of people in Jerusalem at this time of year and they are sleeping everywhere. There are strangers under every tree. There are strangers around the wall and yet her love and devotion for Jesus, despite all of this, compels her to go even in the dark, go to the tomb. I'm always moved when I see such love and devotion for Christ proven by a man and a woman's desire to be near Christ, to serve Christ and to love others as he has commanded.

But what a shock that must have been for Mary. I tried to put myself in her place. It's dark. She's mourning. She is confused. She is, no doubt, weeping. And she gets to the tomb and the stone has been rolled away. What would you think? It doesn't tell us here but we know it to be true, the soldiers are also gone and there was a massive contingency of soldiers there. Who would be killed if they somehow lost this corpse, given all the

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dynamics of everything that's going on? So she comes and she sees this and obviously it's still dark so she's not going to look in the tomb because the tomb is already dark. She's not going to see anything so what does she do? Verse 2 tells us, "So she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved," in other words, to John. She runs to John and Peter. They must of been together someplace.

2 So she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him."

Now, it's interesting, grave robbing was not uncommon in those days and given the violent animosity that so many had toward Jesus, Mary's conclusion I believe is justified. The synoptics tell us that while she goes to get the disciples the other women come to the tomb. You remember, they come and they encounter the angels. Matthew 28:5, we hear that the angel says, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying." Then later, when Mary returned, John says that she was standing outside the tomb weeping. She didn't get the message that the others did. So she comes, "But Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping; and so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb; and she beheld two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying. And they said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.' When she had said this, she turned around and behold Jesus was standing there." The text goes on to say that she did not know who he was, she thought he was the gardener until he spoke her name, "Mary," and she recognized him with great joy.

So this is what went on later but between that time we see that Mary runs to Peter and to John and then in verse 3 we see that,

3 So Peter and the other disciple went forth, and they were going to the tomb. 4 The two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead faster than Peter and came to the tomb first;

In other words, John outran Peter and that's understandable. He was younger. In fact, he outlived Peter by some 60 years. Verse 5 says,

5 and stooping and looking in [in other words this is John], he saw the linen wrappings lying there; but he did not go in.

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So he peaked in. He's able to see the linen wrappings lying there. Then we read that Peter "also came, following him." It doesn't say it but I think we could add, huffing and puffing. And what happens? It says, "he entered the tomb." This is consistent with his nature, is it not? He's a hardcharging kind of guy. He gets there and he goes right in and it says,

and he saw the linen wrappings lying there, 7 and the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself.

Now folks, this is so profoundly significant. What John and Peter saw is so important because their eyewitness account of the linen wrapping and the neatly folded facecloth lying by itself rules out any possibility that the disciples stole the body of Jesus like the Jewish leaders would later claim and like many people believe to this very day. Think about it: who would possibly go in, assuming they could get by the soldiers, and roll away the stone? Who would possibly go in and unwrap a corpse and then re-wrap it in the original position of the contour of the body? You see, John's description indicates that the wrappings were still tightly and rigidly wound around what used to be a body and now they're lying there undisturbed in their original convolutions and the face cloth neatly folded and placed over by itself. Moreover, what fools would possibly embark upon a Gospel ministry based upon a resurrection lie that they themselves fabricated? Only those with a severe mental disability would possibly embark upon a life-threatening ministry based upon hypocrisy, knowing all along that they had just stolen the body, that there was no resurrection. Furthermore, how could so many people be morally transformed by a resurrection narrative they themselves created and knew to be false? It makes no sense whatsoever. Only a man who is insane would possibly go out and die for his own lie.

John's eyewitness account also rules out another explanation that eventually surfaced, that continues even to this day, that Jesus wasn't completely dead. Contrary to the testimony of the centurion, contrary to the eyewitness account of the piercing of the side, that somehow he was still alive and somehow he rallied his strength enough to unwrap himself and then move the stone away, slip by the soldiers and so on. Of course, what John says is that everything is still in its place. You know, if you want me to believe such absurdity, you must also explain to me in a compelling way how Jesus not only would have been able to have done that but then how would he have been able to heal up so quickly that he could appear to his disciples and convince them that he had vanquished death through a resurrection which really didn't take place and then go on and live for 40 days and disappear?

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Well, such an explanation, dear friends, is not only ludicrous, it is demonic and here's why: if Jesus did not die, then he made no atonement for sin and if he did not die, he did not rise from the dead and, as Paul says, our faith would therefore be vain and we remain in our sins. I might add the undisturbed grave cloths rule out the spiritualized interpretation that you hear from time to time, especially among the liberals, that the resurrection was merely a spiritual continuance of Jesus in the lives of the disciples. Not a literal, physical resurrection.

Well, such willful self-deceptions can only be affirmed by those who want nothing to do with Christ. Folks, there is only one plausible explanation and it is this: Jesus rose from the dead. He passed through the grave clothes and all the spices. His body dematerialized through them. In a miraculous demonstration of supernatural power that we cannot fathom, the Father dematerialized his Son's body out of the graver wrappings, out of the stone sepulcher, out of the restrictions of the flesh as we know it, and then he re-created his body into the imperishable, indestructible, eternal habitation of a mortal manhood, a transformation every believer awaits. And some will say, "Well, if so, why such secrecy? Why wasn't his resurrection a public spectacle, one that we could all see and we could all believe? We need proof of such a fanciful claim." My response would first be that the kind of heart that would ask such a question is so hardened by sin and unbelief that no answer would ever suffice. Nevertheless, the answer I believe is this: the supernatural work performed by the Father to reconstitute the body of his beloved Son into immortality was far too sacred of an act for human eyes to behold. Such was an indescribably personal moment between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit alone. An event that can only be likened to the sacred privacy of the marriage bed.

This was not something for man to see but isn't it interesting that God did not leave us without a witness? There are many witnesses. We have eyewitness testimonies recorded in his word and yet I would also add that one of the greatest evidences of the resurrection is the resurrecting power that we see manifested in men and women and boys and girls when they come to a saving knowledge of Christ and they are born again. Paul speaks of this in Romans 6, beginning in verse 4, "We have been buried with Him through baptism into death," in other words, we have been immersed into his death. In order that, "as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin." Oh, dear friends, what a testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, to see a person radically transformed into a new creature in Christ, raised to walk in newness of life.

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Well, this is what John wants us to understand. This is what he saw. Notice in verse 8,

8 So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb then also entered,
and he saw and believed.

In other words, John comes and he sees and he believes that Jesus did rise from the dead and yet, verse 9, he says, "They did not understand the Scripture." He's referring to himself and to Peter. They still didn't understand the Scripture, "that He must rise again from the dead." We will examine that in future days. You see, they still do not understand the teaching of Scripture with respect to the life and the ministry and the death and the resurrection of the Lord. Why that was so important. Why that was necessary. Now, later on they would. They did as we see in Scripture. Think about it, for 3 years Jesus had taught them, preparing them for his death and for his resurrection but they, like us, were so heavily influenced by their traditions, by their own preconceived ideas of how things are supposed to be, that they just couldn't see it. It's so easy to believe what we want to believe even though it may be a lie.

So, verse 10,

10 So the disciples went away again to their own homes.

Dear Christian, what a glorious future awaits us. What a blessed hope that we have in Christ. And as we close this morning, may I tell you a little bit about what we're going to see as we continue to look at the resurrection account and how Jesus continues to minister even after his resurrection? As we read John's account of the resurrection, he tells us 3 groups of 2 stories. There will be 2 stories in the tomb. 2 stories in the upper room. And 2 on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. And in each of the 3 pairs, Jesus is seen ministering to someone in great need in the second story of each of those pairs. We're going to see in the first pair he ministers to Mary as he tenderly wipes away her tears, a broken hearted woman. Then we're going to see how he dispels Thomas' doubt. And finally, and this is one of my favorite stories in all of Scripture, Jesus prepares breakfast and the guys come there on the Sea of Galilee and he restores Peter to a place of useful service, a man that was haunted by his failures.

Beloved, know this, that Jesus continues to minister to each of us in the same way, all of us who have placed our faith in him if we will only humble ourselves in his presence. If we will only humble ourselves and submit to his word. If you're here today and your heart is breaking like Mary, know this: that Jesus can wipe away your tears. If you're here today and like Thomas you are filled with skepticism and uncertainty, know this: Jesus can dispel your doubt. And if you're here today and you're like Peter, quite certain that

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The Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Christ

By David Harrell

Bible Text: John 19:31-20:10
Preached on: Sunday, September 20, 2015

you are a failure, that you are unfit for service, oh dear friend, know that Jesus can restore you to useful service and he can fill your heart with joy.

I pray that we will all leave here worshipping the living Christ. Isn't it wonderful to know that we serve a living Savior? He has conquered death. He has burst open the seal of the grave. Thus we can say as Paul did, quoting the prophets, "O death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" So now for us to die is gain. To be transformed by death and sleep in Jesus is a welcomed relief. Isn't it wonderful to know that God does not forsake us in death for he even cares wonderfully for our dust and our ashes as precious elements of his chosen bride. Oh, I hope you know my Jesus. I hope you know him. If you don't, won't you trust him today? And folks, for those of us that do know him, I leave you with this question: knowing all that Christ has done for us, what are you doing for him?

Let's pray together.

Father, thank you for the eternal truths of your word that speak with such power and clarity to our lives. I pray that we will embrace them by the power of your Spirit. Cause us to be more conformed into the likeness of Christ that he might be glorified in all that we do and say and that others might see Christ emanating from us, that they too might be saved. We give you thanks. We give you praise. In Jesus' name. Amen.

We pray you have been edified by this presentation. You have been listening to Pastor, Bible Teacher and Author, Dr. David Harrell. For more information or for other messages from Dr. Harrell, please visit the Olive Tree Christian Resources website at otcr.org.