

FEELINGS YOU REMEMBER

Matthew 28:1-10 *Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.*

2 And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it.

3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow.

4 And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men.

5 But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.

6 He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay.

7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you."

8 So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

*9 And behold, Jesus met them and said, "**Greetings!**" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him.*

*10 Then Jesus said to them, "**Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.**"*

Synopsis:

This sermon reminds us that maybe we should revisit the empty tomb each Sunday and remember the wonder of it all.

Introduction:

The early disciples witnessed the presence of Jesus Christ after the resurrection.

They could not forget the open tomb and His pierced hands, and wounded side.

His presence had a powerful and profound effect on them.

The people who went to the tomb on that first Easter morning testify to the power of the resurrection.

They were in awe and wonder.

In Bill

The first thing you see is the extraordinary orange light, which is just at the limit of what you can bear to look at.

Everything is illuminated with this light.

Then comes this thing slowly rising in total silence, because it takes a few seconds for the sound to come across.

You hear a WHOOOOOSH! HHHMMMMM!

It enters right into you.

"You can practically hear jaws dropping.

The sense of wonder fills everyone in the whole place, as this thing goes up and up.

The first stage ignites this beautiful blue flame.

It becomes like a star, but you realize there are humans on it.

And then there's total silence."

What do you think it would have been like to observe the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave?

What if some entrepreneur had understood when Jesus said that he would rise from the dead?

What if he sought an opportunity to make some money off this spectacular event?



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What if he set some bleachers in front of the tomb and charged people admission for watching?

What if he advertised in the Jerusalem Chronicle and a huge crowd showed up to watch?

Do you think that they would have experienced something similar to what Jacob Needleman experienced at the Apollo 17 launch?

My guess is that people would have arrived cynical, casual, and callused.

But then, a resplendent light followed by momentary silence before a deafening noise, Jesus would have stepped forth from the grave alive.

Upon seeing Jesus come back alive from the grave, I suspect that the onlookers' eyes would have been as big as saucers.

Their jaws would have dropped.

A sense of wonder and ecstasy would have filled everyone watching.

The feelings would never be forgotten.

The resurrection of Jesus itself is never described anywhere in Scripture, presumably because no one saw Jesus exit the tomb.

Not a single person beheld the moment when Jesus burst forth from the grave on that first Easter morning.

No one witnessed the resurrection, but many have experienced it.

No one can explain the resurrection, but many people feel its effects.

I. Does the resurrection affect you?

A. The earth felt the effects

Matt. 28:2a And behold, there was a great earthquake,

It shook.



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It rocked.

The ground quaked.

The rocks erupted.

The earth cracked.

The olive trees in the garden waved their twisted limbs.

Nature was roused.

The earth trembled in sorrow at the crucifixion, but it leaped for joy at the resurrection.

The quake attests to the cosmic significance of the event.

B. The angel felt the effects

Matt. 28: 2b-3 for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it.

Verse 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow.

Like an action hero in a Hollywood movie, shafts of lightning blazed from the angel with its clothes shimmering like new-fallen snow.

He rolled away the stone not to let Jesus out, but to let the women in.

The angel sat on the rock that had been rolled away indicating the triumph of the completed work.

C. The guards felt the effects

Matt. 28:4 And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men.

They stood as corpses.

They shook, in their sandals, longer than the ground.

The ones keeping watch over the dead became as dead.

They were scared stiff.

D. The women felt the effects

Matt. 28:1 Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.

They came to anoint Jesus' body with spices to give him a more appropriate embalming.

In-route they were concerned about who would move the stone for them.

On seeing the stone rolled way from the opening of the tomb and hearing the angel proclaim that Jesus was not present, that He had been raised, they were filled with wonder and joy.

The good news of His resurrection became their message to share.

Everyone present that day felt the effect of the resurrection.

The WHOOOOOSH! HHHHMMMM! went right through them.

What effect does the resurrection have on you?

II. Does the resurrection move you?

Can we really celebrate Easter and not be moved?

And once we have been truly moved, can we still have the world as it was previously?

When there is no pandemic, we want to come to church on Easter, sing some soul-stirring hymns, eat lunch with our family and friends, hunt for eggs with our children, and still have our world un-rocked by the resurrection.

We are amazingly well adjusted to the same old world.

I think that is why Matthew reminds us that the earth shook on that first Easter morning.

Luke records Easter as a meal on Sunday evening with the risen Christ.

John has the resurrected Jesus encountering Mary Magdalene in the garden.

But what about Matthew?

What is significant in his story?

Matt. 28: 2 And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it.

Easter is an earthquake with a stone rolled away from the tomb and a dead person walking the streets, with a defiant angel sitting on the stone.

It was a ruckus.

Most of us in the sound of my voice have been in an earthquake.

It gets our attention.

Easter is an earthquake that shook the world.

It got everyone's attention.

On the cross, the world did all it could to Jesus.

At Easter, God did all he could to the world.

And the earth shook.

You don't explain that.

You experience it.

You feel it.

It goes right through you.

In the 1950s there was a devastating earthquake in China.

As a result of the quake, a huge boulder was dislodged from a mountain and it exposed a great cache of wonderful artifacts from a thousand years ago.

A new/old world became visible.

When the stone was rolled away that entombed Jesus, and the earth shook, we got our first glimpse of a new world.

It is a world where death doesn't have the last word, where injustice is made right, and innocent suffering is vindicated by the intrusion of a powerful God.

The soldiers shook, and not because the ground was shaking.

The angel plopped himself down on the stone in one final act of impudent defiance of death.

He said to the women, "Don't be afraid. You're looking for Jesus? He isn't here."

Nobody went back the same way they came.

Easter has that kind of moving effect on people.

Does it have that effect on us?

If not, maybe you need to check your spiritual pulse.

Maybe you have been living too long in the in-between-time of Good Friday and Easter.

Maybe it is time to see and feel the resurrection of Jesus all over again.

Maybe it is time to let God shake our world.

Maybe it is time to allow God to roll the stone away from our cold and hardened hearts to feel the love and power of Jesus Christ.

III. Does the resurrection touch you?

Easter not only moves us; it touches something deep down inside of us.



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We encounter God's wonder, that feeling of surprise and awe aroused by something strange and unexpected.

It's what Mary Magdalene and the other Mary felt when they learned that Jesus had risen.

They departed "quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy" (Matt. 28:8).

They were astonished.

They went to the tomb expecting to find a dead man in need of embalming.

Instead they found an empty tomb.

Jesus was alive.

That fact, while strange and unexpected, was wonderful and exciting.

One can't experience Easter without wonder.

The trouble is that we don't feel wonder anymore.

Wonder is rare, especially as we grow older.

The catch phrase of our culture is: "Been there. Done that."

We are spiritually and emotionally stretched.

We are a people saturated with analysis, explanations, and experiences - but void of wonder.

The author G.K. Chesterton wrote, "The world will never starve for want of wonders, but only for want of wonder."

It is that wonder and mystery of the resurrection that we should want.

And once we experienced it the most expensive purchase or the most thrilling experience can never substitute for it.

For when God touches you, you know it.



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You can't explain it.

You experience it.

You feel it.

It goes right through you.

In Chicken Soup for the Soul, Dan Millman tells the story of Sachi.

When she was four years old her baby brother was born.

Little Sachi began to ask her parents to leave her alone with the new baby.

They worried that, like most four-year-olds, she might feel jealous and want to hit or shake him, so they said no.

Over time, though, since Sachi wasn't showing signs of jealousy, they changed their minds and decided to let Sachi have her private conference with the baby.

Elated, Sachi went into the baby's room and shut the door, but it opened a crack - enough for her curious parents to peek in and listen.

They saw little Sachi walk quietly up to her baby brother, put her face close to his, and say, "Baby, tell me what God feels like.

I'm starting to forget."

Is childlike wonder disappearing?

Have we forgotten the implications of a man rising from the dead?

Have we grown ashamed of the transcendence of a God who can conquer death?

Are we so caught up in reality that we have no place for mystery in our lives?

Have we become so religious that we have lost the wonder?



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Have we forgotten what it feels like to have God remove the darkness and coldness in our heart caused by sin so that the light of glory can invade our soul and set us free?

Are we, too, starting to forget what God feels like?

For me there have been times when my childlike sense of wonder has faded.

I get bogged down in duty, effort, and analysis.

The danger is that Easter becomes just another Sunday.

I fear that in our culture, wonder-less living has become the norm.

Conclusion

How do we revive this sense of wonder?

Wonder begins in the presence of Jesus.

Regardless of our geography or status or age, where the Lord is present, that place is alive with wonder.

As we become more aware of God's presence we become more filled with wonder.

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary felt it.

It was the WHOOOOOSH! HHHMMMMM! that went right through them. When they saw Jesus, their only response was to fall at his feet in worship.

Matt. 28: 17 And when they saw him they worshiped him,

When you and I encounter the living Christ, our only response is to celebrate his presence.

That's Easter.



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It is the presence of Jesus that moves us and touches us deeply.

It is the rocking experience of Jesus' triumph and the relational experience of Jesus' presence.

It becomes an experience to imagine that God will be present in our lives to roll the stone away from our hearts.

Easter makes us want to fall at Jesus' feet in gratitude and praise for what he has done.

That, my dear family, is something you don't explain and never forget.

You experience it.

You feel it.

It goes right through you.

FEELINGS YOU REMEMBER

- I. Does the resurrection affect you?
 - A. The earth felt the effects
 - B. The angel felt the effects
 - C. The guards felt the effects
 - D. The women felt the effects
- II. Does the resurrection move you?
- III. Does the resurrection touch you?