

I Have Seen The Lord

Last Sunday was Palm Sunday and it was a magnificent day. This morning is truly a morning fit for a resurrection since the sun is bright. It might have been on a day such as this that Jesus came riding on a donkey. He left Bethpage and moved towards the foot of the Mount of Olives. People were chanting, shouting, and cheering as He continued to ride on that donkey. He rode on an animal that kings would not ride on. Kings rode on horses, and Jesus came riding on a donkey. Eventually He came to Jerusalem and people were still shouting “hosanna” and calling for Him to be their king. It was wonderful to be reminded of what had happened, with palm branches everywhere. Maybe they were waving or fanning them. We know that palm branches were littered all across the road as Jesus came riding on the donkey towards Jerusalem. We saw that people were seeking Him. Some religious leaders were seeking Him too! But they had a different motive. They had a different agenda. They wanted to murder Him.

AFTER THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY. On Monday, the day after the Triumphal Entry, Jesus entered the temple. This was not the first time that Christ entered the temple. This was the second time He entered it and cleansed it. The first time was at the beginning of His ministry. The second time was at the end of His ministry. I find it interesting that the reason He cleansed the temple was because He was a holy king. Jesus was a holy, righteous person. He was also a humble person.

Then on Tuesday we are told the religious leaders, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, challenged Jesus. They asked Him the toughest, orneriest questions that they had. They tried to

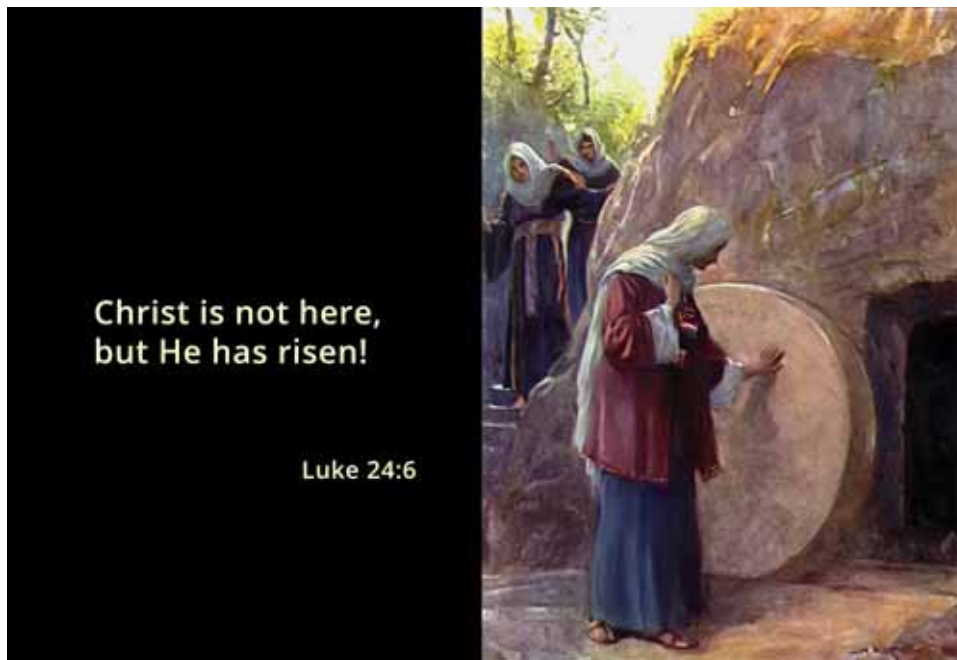
stump Jesus. But Jesus answered their questions and won the debate. The Scriptures tell us that He dumbfounded them. They were not able to respond to Him. Jesus was not just a holy, humble king. He was a wise king. On Wednesday

He pronounced a series of “Woes” on the Pharisees, His condemnation of them. He then preached His last sermon which is known as the Olivet Discourse.

THURSDAY - THE PASSOVER MEAL. Thursday was the day of preparation. Thursday was the day that He and the disciples were in the upper room celebrating the Passover. It was the day on which He instituted the Lord’s Supper. They

ate the Lord’s Supper or the Passover meal together. It was also the time He washed the feet of His disciples. That was an act of humility because in those days, washing another person’s feet was a duty only servants performed. It was not something one would

expect the Lord Jesus to do. It was not something that the disciples were expected to do either. Therefore, the disciples did not budge. They did not move to serve in this way. Therefore, Jesus washed their feet. The humble, holy, wise



king, reminded everyone once again that He was the humble king. He washed their feet.

THURSDAY - THE ARREST. Towards the end of the day, Jesus is in the Garden of Gethsemane and has finished praying to the Father. Then Judas arrived along with some soldiers and spectators who wanted to see what was happening. We can imagine the soldiers approaching and a crowd is forming. They walked right up to Jesus, and Judas walked over to Christ and said, "Hail, Rabbi!" and kissed Him on the cheek. The soldiers then bound Him and dragged Him away. Matthew 26:56 tells us that the disciples fled. They were afraid. John 16:32 tells us that they went home. These disciples were not brave, except for Peter who sliced off an ear, which Jesus chose to immediately heal. But everybody else fled and left Jesus alone with the soldiers and Judas. We are told later that two disciples followed Jesus from a distance. They were Peter and John.

THURSDAY - PETER DENIES CHRIST. Peter's courage did not last very long before he denied Jesus three times. Not once. Not twice, but three times he denied Christ. We are told that on the third time, Jesus' eyes and Peter's eyes met. When they looked at one another, the Scriptures tell us that Peter left weeping bitterly. He was really distraught. He was beside himself. The Greek has the idea that he was bawling. He could not control himself as tears were streaming down his face. There was only one disciple left at that point. It was John. The Gospel of John tells us that John was in the courtyard of the high priest, and he watched what happened to Jesus. He saw the trial and the events that followed. In fact, it was John who actually let Peter into the court of the high priest. John had arrived there first. John was watching all the events, all the false witnesses against Christ.

FRIDAY - CHRIST BEFORE THE CROWD. Eventually, on Friday, the next morning, Jesus was brought first before Pilate and then was taken to Herod. After meeting with Herod, He is taken back to Pilate. Eventually He is standing with Pilate before a crowd. One would think, "Why is Jesus standing before the crowd?" The answer is that He had been accused by the religious leaders of falsely claiming to be their Messiah. That was the accusation. But that was not the real reason. He was not there because He was God or holy. He

was not there because He was a humble king. He was not there because He was a wise man. He was not there because He healed thousands and thousands of people. He was not there because of His teachings. He was there, Matthew 20:17-19 tells us, because of envy or jealousy. The religious leaders were so extremely jealous that the people were more interested in Jesus than in them. They were jealous of Christ. That is why Jesus was standing with Pilate before the crowd.

Jesus stood there with Pilate and Barabbas, a thief. It was an opportunity for Pilate to release Jesus. Pilate believed that Jesus was innocent and was trying to find an acceptable reason to let Him go. I could not help but wonder what Jesus noticed at this point. Did He see John? John had been with Jesus throughout the trial but at a distance. Was John still there? I wonder how Jesus felt? I wonder how Jesus felt when Pilate said, "Who shall I release to you, Barabbas or Jesus?" I wonder what He was thinking and feeling.

Jesus just stood there while the people were shouting and chanting, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" I was wondering, "What was Jesus thinking as the people were chanting and shouting, 'Crucify Him!'" Did Jesus think back to Palm Sunday? Did He remember the people who had been shouting as he rode the donkey from Bethpage to the Mount of Olives and on to Jerusalem? Did Jesus remember the palm branches and the shouting of "Hosanna! Hosanna!?" I wonder if Jesus thought back to the first time John, James, Peter, and Andrew believed that He was the Messiah? What did Jesus think about as He stood there before the crowd? Did he think about Matthew, who was the next one to believe in Him and eventually all twelve who believed in Him. Did Jesus think about their walks, talks and the times they ate together and ministered together? Peter had called Him the Holy One and had said, "You are the Christ." What was He thinking about?

FRIDAY - DISCIPLES WHO FLED. What about the disciples? Jesus had warned them. He had told them about the events that were to come. In Mark 8:31 we read,

[And He began to teach them . . . Mark 8:31 \(NASB\)](#)

He had taught the disciples that the Son of Man must

suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priest, and the scribes, be killed, and after three days rise again. That was the essence of what was going to happen. He had stated the facts plainly. Once Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him when Jesus spoke of His death. Peter did not understand. Jesus told him what was going to happen. Did Jesus think about that? They just did not understand. In Mark 9:31 Jesus taught them again.

For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, “The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise three days later.” Mark 9:31 (NASB)

Then in the next verse we are told that the disciples did not understand.

But they did not understand this statement, and they were afraid to ask Him. Mark 9:32 (NASB)

They did not understand. I wonder if Jesus was thinking about their reaction as he stood before the shouting, chanting crowd. I could not help but wonder, “What was Jesus thinking?”

In Mark 10:32 we are told,

And they were on the road . . . Mark 10:32 (NASB)

Jesus and the disciples were going up to Jerusalem. This occurred just before Palm Sunday. They were walking on the road to Jerusalem. Jesus was walking on ahead of them. Those who followed were fearful that Jesus was going to die.

They were on the road going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking on ahead of them; and they were amazed, and those who followed were fearful. And again He took the twelve aside and began to tell them what was going to happen to Him, saying, “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles. They will mock Him and spit on Him, and

scourge Him and kill Him, and three days later He will rise again.” Mark 10:32-34 (NASB)

The disciples were just absolutely clueless. They did not understand what Christ had said. They did not understand at the Last Supper. They did not understand when Jesus prayed. Remember that they fell asleep while He prayed! They were in the Garden of Gethsemane when the soldiers arrived. One of them tried to fight and the others ran away. Why run away if you understand what is really happening? They just did not understand; they absolutely missed it!

I wonder how Jesus felt? You might be thinking, “Jesus was God. He did not have any of those feelings. He understood everything.” Oh, really? Stop and remember that as Jesus walked towards Jerusalem, Luke 19:41 tells us He wept over Jerusalem. Jesus cried over Jerusalem. He cried over Lazarus even though He knew that He was going to raise Lazarus from the grave. Jesus even cried over the realization that He was going to die according to Hebrews 5:7. Jesus had human emotions. I believe Jesus felt emotion while He was standing before the crowd with Pilate and Barabbas. But He knew who was going to be chosen.

There was only one disciple still remaining with Christ. All the others had left. Matthew 27:24 tells us that Pilate, because he feared a riot was breaking out, made his decision, and gave the people what they wanted. He turned Jesus over to the soldiers, who then led him off to be crucified. They nailed Him to a cross. They put nails in His hands and feet, and hoisted Him up and dropped the cross into a hole, and there He hung.

FRIDAY - JESUS DIES. But Jesus was not alone. Oh, Jesus was not alone. The disciples may have fled, but Jesus was not alone. He had two thieves beside Him. He had soldiers on the ground who were there to make sure He died. Jesus was not alone. The fickle crowd stood there, watching to see how long it would take Him to die. Jesus was not alone: The Sadducees and the Pharisees were there also! They were really happy they were finally getting rid of this man!

Jesus was definitely not alone! Jesus’ mother, Mary Magdalene, Mary the wife of Cleophas, Mary the mother of James and John, Salome, and many other women were there!

The gospel of John tells us that John was at the cross.

At three o'clock in the afternoon, there was an earthquake and darkness covered the known world. Eventually, Jesus pronounced, "It is finished." It was finished; the mission was completed. The perfect Lamb of God who came to take away the sin of the world was sacrificed for you and for me. Finally, we could have our sins forgiven.

FRIDAY - THE CLUELESS CROWD. But the crowd, the soldiers, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the women, John, the disciples—none of them understood what had just happened as you will discover shortly. Only Jesus and heaven knew what He had accomplished. That evening those who were at the cross returned home. I wonder how Jesus' mother, Mary, felt? It was a sad Sabbath for them. Since the Sabbath started Friday at 6:00 p.m. and ended on Saturday at 6:00 p.m. no one would have visited the tomb. No good Jew would have ventured out. Everybody would have stayed home and mourned.

SUNDAY - THE RESURRECTION. Now we come to John 20:1.

Now on the first day of the week . . . John 20:1 (NASB)

This refers to Sunday and on this day . . .

*... Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone already taken away from the tomb.
John 20:1 (NASB)*

That is a very interesting statement. Mary Magdalene had been at the foot of the cross when Christ died. Now she comes in the early morning while it is dark to the tomb. The other Gospels tell us that there were other women there also. Christ's mother was not among the women. Mark adds two other women are there along with Mary Magdalene. They are Mary the mother of James and Salome. Luke adds Joanna and some other women. They may have included the women mentioned in Luke 8:1-3.

But the apostle John singles out Mary Magdalene. He is not interested in all the other women. We are told that she came early in the morning to the tomb while it was still dark

and noticed that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. She must have come with grief in her heart. She also did not understand that Christ must die and would return to life three days later. Verse 2 says that she ran away to find Peter.

So she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved ... John 20:2a (NASB)

Who was it that Jesus loved? The gospel of John says it was the apostle John.

...and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him." John 20:2b (NASB)

THEY DID NOT BELIEVE. Mary went searching for the disciples. Next the gospel of John focuses on two apostles: Peter and John. What was Mary's message? She said that someone had removed Jesus' body. It is obvious she did not believe that Christ had risen from the dead. Why would she say, "They stole His body" if she believed He would return to life? It is very obvious that Mary Magdalene did not understand what had happened.

In verses 3-7 we are told that Peter and John hurried to the tomb in order to investigate.

So Peter and the other disciple went forth, and they were going to the tomb. The two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead faster than Peter and came to the tomb first; and stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings lying there; but he did not go in. And so Simon Peter also came, following him, and entered the tomb; and he saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself. John 20:3-7 (NASB)

This is an interesting picture. Peter and John race to the tomb. They want to see it for themselves, and we are told John arrives first, looks in, sees the wrappings, and sees that Jesus is not there. The linen wrappings are flat. The body is

gone. But Peter just darts in. That is just like Peter! Peter is bold and brash. He runs in and sees the linen wrappings but Jesus is not there.

In Christ's time when someone was buried, spices were put on the body and then the body was tightly wrapped in cloth. Consequently, Peter walks into the tomb and sees the linen wrappings lying flat. There was no body – just the linen wrappings. The head cloth was rolled up, but lying by itself (v. 7).

Luke 24:12 reveals to us that Peter was surprised by what he saw. Peter was still lacking understanding as Mary Magdalene had been. It is important to notice that we are not given any information about the other nine disciples. There is no record that they came to the tomb. After Judas died, there were only eleven left. Two of them came to the tomb. That reveals what the disciples understood about Jesus returning to life. They did not understand either. Mary Magdalene thought she had an answer—His body was stolen.

Kent Hughes makes a very interesting comment about the resurrection of Christ. He writes,

A grand truth that emerges from this story, as it does in none of the other Gospels, is that the disciples did not invent the resurrection story. At first, they neither understood it or believed it. None of the Gospels tell us how Jesus was resurrected because none of the Gospel writers saw it. How did they resist creatively imagining such a spellbinding story for the Church? They resisted because they were not myth-makers but witnesses. In Alexander MacLaclaren's words, "The evidential value of the disciples' slowness to believe cannot be overrated."¹

The obvious slowness of the disciples to believe cannot be overlooked. The disciples were in discovery mode; they were learning.

John 20:8 is focused on the apostle John.

So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb then also entered, and he saw and believed. John 20:8 (NASB)

Now John enters the tomb, sees the linens, sees the head cloth, and what are we told he did?

... and he believed.

He saw and believed. He saw and believed. There are some today, who just like Mary, have excuses, have explanations as to why Jesus was not in the tomb. Mary thought His body was stolen. That was a logical idea. Some people today like that explanation. There are some people who look at the biblical evidence and just like Peter they just do not understand. Then there are others who are like the apostle John and believe!

John did not believe because of stories, a slick preacher, a television evangelist or because of some book that moved him emotionally to respond. He did not believe because of the Scriptures. You might say, "Wait a minute, I thought for sure he would have known the Scriptures." Then read verse 9. It says,

For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. John 20:9 (NASB)

John did not understand the Scriptures yet! He did not understand Psalm 16:10 that says,

**For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol;
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.
Psalm 16:10 (NASB)**

John did not understand about that prophecy. Instead, John saw with his own eyes and he ... believed. He already knew what Peter would discover later. He already knew what the nine disciples would discover later. He already knew what Mary Magdalene was going to discover in just a few minutes because in verse 10 Mary remained at the tomb and guess who came to her?

So the disciples went away again to their own homes. But Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping . . . John 20:10-11a (NASB)

1. R Kent Hughes. Luke. Preaching The Word. Crossway Books. 1998. vol. 2. p. 403.

This tells us that apparently while John and Peter were there, Mary had returned and stood outside crying. After the disciples left, the last part of verse 11 says Mary looked inside the tomb.

... and so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white sitting . . . John 20:11b-12a (NASB)

Two angels showed up again!

... 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." John 20:12b-13 (NASB)

Mary still did not understand. She still thinks Jesus' body has been stolen. Verse 14 continues the description of what happened.

When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" John 20:14-15a (NASB)

CONCLUSION. Can I ask whom are you seeking?

Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said to Him, "Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" (which means, Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene came, announcing to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," John 20:15b-18a (NASB)

I imagine that Mary went back shouting, "I've seen the Lord! I've seen the Lord! I've seen the Lord!" She finally was no longer clueless. She finally understood. She finally

believed. I could not help but think the women were at the foot of the cross, and the apostle John was at the foot of the cross. Peter was not at the cross. The other nine disciples were not at the cross. Only the women and the apostle John were at the cross.

Who arrived at the tomb? At first, only the women, except for Jesus' mother, came to the tomb. Why is it that Jesus and the angels appeared only to the women? I think it was an expression of God's love for these women to help them believe. Later others of the apostles believed without seeing the empty tomb. We read in verse 29 that Jesus spoke these words to the one disciple who continued to doubt. He is called doubting Thomas,

Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed. John 20:29 (NASB)

The apostle John did not need two angels and he did not need to see Jesus in order to believe. He saw the empty tomb, the linen wrappings were flattened and understood and believed. Let us change the words. As you read the facts about Christ's resurrection that the tomb was empty, the linen wrappings were flattened, do you understand and believe? The message of secular accounts and the gospels are that He returned to life. He was resurrected. He is risen!

There is a wonderful song called "Alleluia, Alleluia" about the resurrection of Christ. The author is Christopher Wordsworth. Here are his words.

*Now the iron bars are broken, Christ from death to life is born;
Glorious life and life immortal on this resurrection morn.
Christ has triumphed and we conquer by his mighty enterprise;
We with him to life eternal by His resurrection rise.*

*Alleluia! Alleluia! hearts to heaven and voices raise;
Sing to God a hymn of gladness, sing to God a hymn of praise.
He, who on the cross as Savior for the world's salvation bled,
Jesus Christ, the King of glory, now is risen from the dead.*

He is risen!