

Resurrection Worship 9:30

April 5, 2015

## AFRAID, YET FILLED WITH JOY

Matthew 28:1-10

Is there a condition of being afraid but not scared? The two who went to look at the tomb of Christ had a mind-altering experience. In Matthew, it says they only went to see the tomb. (28:1) In Mark and Luke, we are told that their purpose was to anoint the Body of Jesus with spices. In the unexpected suddenness of their encounter with the Angel, the rolled-away stone, and the empty tomb, their purpose was changed into that of becoming the bearers of a very particular message: That Christ had *“risen from the dead and is going ahead of you to Galilee! There you will see Him.”* (V. 7)

Jesus had died on Friday! But all of a sudden He was going to Galilee!? They would see Him there? They would see Him alive? Is that what made them afraid, or, was it that they had seen an angel? Whatever it was, they were *“afraid, yet filled with joy!”*

Afraid, frightened, shocked, startled, stunned...in their minds. And yet....joyful, glad, delighted, thrilled, inspired...in their hearts. Even though they were apprehensive, they were encouraged. Though terrified, they were confident. Though awestruck, they were charged full of enthusiasm.

I think the whole world is somewhere in the spectrum of those feelings. When it comes to Easter, when it comes to the Resurrection of Christ, you can't be indifferent. Not unless your heart has been hardened or your mind is numb.

The experience of God's miraculous realities can sometimes be paralyzing. We just can't absorb so great a truth. We can't believe the inconceivable. But then...God's grace goes to work, and the facts that intimidated us at first begin to sink in, they reach our hearts, and they compel us to new depths and propel us to new life. Sometimes, the heart *can* believe what the mind can't conceive. The mind may resist, but the heart will understand!

They felt a sort of dread, and yet they made haste. They hurried, full of both fear and joy. They began to run. They felt eager in spite of their anxiety. I picture the women glancing at each other after a dozen steps or so, reaching out, grasping each other's hand, and pulling the other along, thinking, *“Let's go!”*

The sun was up. The landscape was full of daylight. Jerusalem was beginning to really come alive with business as usual, though, not the usual business. It was still the season of The Passover Feast. But these women knew something no one else did. It was extremely out of the ordinary. It was extraordinary. Nothing usual about it. They wanted to tell the Disciples.

*Suddenly... Jesus met them. (v.9)*

He stopped them in their tracks by saying, *“Greetings!”* For them it may have seemed as if another earthquake was happening – an emotional earthquake. There was a very brief pause, a giant moment of recognition, and then they dissolved into ecstasy, falling before Jesus, clasping His feet, worshipping!

Worshipping. Rejoicing. Filled with gladness. Wrapped up in grace. Relishing the seconds. The Angel had said, *“Do not be afraid, for I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here!”* (5-6) I imagine a pause at *that* moment, however brief, when the women were crestfallen by the

devastating idea: "*He is not here.*" The lump in their throats began to choke them up as fears welled up in their eyes. And then...the Angel said, "*He has risen!*" (6b) Their hearts skip a beat when they hear that news!

And now, they are met by Christ. What joy! What rapture! And now, it is Jesus who says, "*Do not be afraid.*" (10) And I believe it is then and there that a peaceful calm came over them. Still eager, still excited, but now...joy. Just joy! Gladness. Hearts warmed by the presence of Jesus, they felt a perfect sort of assurance. It was pure worship.

But...they were told to *Go*. We don't get to stay there. As much as we might want it to last forever, we don't get to stay. There is a purpose beyond us when we have been touched. "*Tell... Tell my brothers...*"

Matthew doesn't tell us what happened next with these two women. He doesn't tell us anything more about the Angel of the tomb. But we know where the story goes. It's still being told. And it is we who are speaking. It is we who are filled with joy. It is we who are so glad. It is we who are so inspired. What our minds can't conceive our hearts have believed!

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!