

Sermon on Keep Hope Alive with the Risen Savior

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Text:

Luke 24:1-10 On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb.

² They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

⁴ While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them.

⁵ In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead?"

⁶ He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ⁷ 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' "

⁸ Then they remembered his words.

⁹ When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others.

¹⁰ It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles.

1 Introduction

1.1 Jesus is the only religious leader that holds a valid and proven claim as savior of the world

Mohammed did not claim to be the savior of the world, nor did his followers. They consider him as the prophet of God.

Budha did not claim to be the savior of the world, nor did his followers. They consider him as an enlightened being.

Confuscious did not claim to be the savior of the world, nor did his followers. They consider him as a great wise man.

Moses did not claim to be the savior of the world, nor did the Jews. They consider him as the prophet and law giver.

Elijah did not claim to be the savior of the world, nor did the Jews. They consider him as the great miracle-working prophet.

John the Baptist did not claim to be the savior of the world, nor did the Jews. They consider him as the fiery wilderness prophet.

According to Gamaliel, when Theudas appeared claiming to be Israel's deliverer, he was killed and remained dead.

According to Gamaliel, when Judas the Galilean appeared claiming to be Israel's deliverer, he was killed and remained dead.

But in all the history of mankind one man walked this earth who was declared with power and signs as the savior of the world. That man is Jesus! Jesus is the savior of the world! And when they murdered him for his declaration as savior of the world, the tomb could not hold him, death could not hold him, hades could not hold him. He is risen! He is risen! Jesus is risen! Jesus is the risen savior of the world!

1.2 A Ghanaian woman's messed up life was transformed when she surrendered to the Risen Savior

After Ghana became a republic in 1960 life was good in Ghana. I know a woman who enjoyed this life to the full. She enjoyed the newly-fashioned high-life music and dance, the night-club scene, beer, and sumptuous food. Shortly after that she and her husband travelled to London and lived there for some time. While in London they continued their high society life. When it was time to return to Ghana her husband went first to get things ready.

A year later when she arrived in Ghana she found out that her husband had taken a live-in girlfriend. That began a spiral down into gloom and doom. She had to live with friends. Some of her things she shipped to Ghana were stolen in storage. Then she gave goods she took to Ghana to sell to someone to sell and the person vanished with the goods. Any business she tried because her friends had succeeded in became a failure for her. Shortly after that her first born son died. She had no money, no husband, no home, no job, no means of making money, and no peace. Life had dealt her a serious blow. She was boxed in on all sides. Then one day she encountered the Risen Jesus after visiting an Apostolic Church. She surrendered her life to Jesus. Then gradually things began to change as Jesus shone his light into her life. Over a period of time God lifted her out of the doldrums beginning a long process of restoration. Now she has peace and hope has been restored. Life has become meaningful.

1.3 The first eyewitnesses to the resurrection regained their hope in Christ

Such was the case with five women who were the first eyewitnesses to the resurrection and the Risen Christ as narrated by our passage. Jesus had delivered these women from

demonization and diseases. But Jesus' death dashed their hopes and when they discovered that Jesus' body was missing they were overcome with despair, gloom and doom. Then two angels appeared to them and restored their hopes by shining a light into their darkness, and giving them the revelation that Jesus is risen!

No matter what your situation is, know that Jesus is risen! So, keep hope alive with the Risen Savior. Jesus is the Risen Savior of the World, so keep hope alive. Jesus is the Risen Savior of the World, so keep on holding on. Jesus is the Risen Savior of the World, so keep on keeping on. Jesus is the Risen Savior of the World, so keep on pressing on. Jesus is the Risen Savior of the World, so keep on pushing forward. Jesus is the Risen Savior of the World, so keep on running the race. Jesus is the Risen Savior of the World, so keep on fighting the good fight. Jesus is the Risen Savior of the World, so you can face tomorrow and overcome tomorrow.

2 Jesus brought deliverance to the oppressed women

We begin with verse 10, the last verse, of our passage, where we see the names of the first eyewitnesses to the resurrection and the Risen Christ. The verse 10 says, "It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them." The "others with them" is likely to include Susanna (see Luke 8:3) and Salome (See Mark 16:1). These five women had been oppressed in their lives by demons and diseases according to Luke 8:2. Mary Magdalene, in particular, had been possessed by seven demons. This type of demonic possession and disease oppression dispossesses one of hope. Life for these women would have been a dead-end. Anything they did would have failed. Trouble always had a way of finding them even when they were minding their own business. They had no hope in life and life was just passing by.

Then each one of them, one by one, encountered Jesus. To each Jesus was manifested as their personal savior. Jesus touched them, healed and delivered them. Jesus brought them out of the darkness into his marvelous light. Jesus lifted them out of the miry clay onto the rock of ages. Jesus freed them from captivity and released them from prison. Jesus gave them peace in place of their anxieties. Jesus rebuked the storms in their lives. Jesus opened their eyes to the wonderful kingdom of God. Jesus gave them hope as an anchor for their soul, steadfast and sure.

So also when you encounter Jesus, Jesus will bring you out of the darkness into his marvelous light. Jesus will lift you out of the miry clay onto the rock of ages. Jesus will free you from captivity and release you from prison. Jesus will give you peace and remove your anxieties. Jesus will rebuke the storms in your lives. Jesus will open your eyes to see the wonderful kingdom of God. Jesus will give you hope as an anchor for your soul, steadfast and sure.

3 Jesus' death and missing body was double jeopardy for the women

3.1 Jesus' death dashed the hopes of the delivered women

The women were full of hope and life because of their encounter with the incarnate Jesus. Then on that faithful Good Friday, Jesus was murdered on a cross. These same women stood a distance away looked on helpless as Jesus died and with that their hopes dashed. This must have brought a lot of discomfort as it reminded them of what their lives had been: each time they had seen a glimmer of light it turned out to be the light of an oncoming train that crushed their hopes to pieces. Here was another instance. Jesus, their hope in life, had been murdered. Hope is gone. Misery has set in. So, they resigned themselves to live in gloom. According to verse 1 of our passage, they decided to go embalm Jesus' body as was customary. They waited until the Sabbath was over on Saturday night and then very early Sunday morning they proceeded to the tomb.

Just as these women, some of you have resigned yourself to live a life of hopelessness and gloom. Life continues to beat you up. When things start looking good something bad happens. When a door opens it turns out to be a demonic opportunity. So, you go about your normal daily routine devoid of hope and not looking forward to the future.

3.2 Jesus' missing body plunged the delivered women into despair

When the women arrived at the tomb, according to verses 2 and 3 of our passage, "They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus." They were distraught. Their world was spinning downward to utter collapse. They did not know what had happened to Jesus' body. According to John 20:11, "Mary stood outside the tomb crying." I am sure she was joined by the other women. Their hopelessness had plunged into utter despair. Life was not worth living anymore.

Perhaps, at times, you feel this way, when everything keeps falling apart. Even the little hope you hold onto disappears right in front of you. You are stressed on the job. Your expenses are oppressing you on all sides. You are hemmed in between lack of papers and lack of a job. Your relationship with your spouse is on the rocks. Your friends have become your enemies and they plot your destruction. Sleep eludes your eyes as your anxieties keep you awake. You have hit rock bottom and wonder what is coming next. You even resign yourself to a life of drudgery and gloom. Life is meaningless; utterly meaningless.

But hold on to Jesus and don't give up. God has not abandoned you. God remembers you. Don't worry for God is in control. So, just hold on to Jesus and he will carry you through. As the Twi song says, "God loves his children and he delivers them from their troubles. When you've given up and there's no hope Jehovah will see to it that his saving power is available to you."

4 The angels restored the hopes of the delivered women

4.1 The angels shone a light into the despair of the delivered women

While the women were in their gloom and doom, a light shone into the darkness and the darkness could not overcome it. Verse 4 of our passage tells us that "suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them." The women beheld a vision, not a dream, but a real vision of hope. Their eyes were once again being opened to the reality of a new day. Their eyes were being opened to a new beginning. Their eyes were being opened to a new chance. Their eyes were being opened to a new opportunity. Their eyes were being opened to a new direction. They went very early in the morning to minister to Jesus and got their breakthrough.

If your life is in a mess and you seek Jesus as the women did, God will shine a light into your gloom and doom. Darkness must give way to the light. Despair must give way to hope. Anxiety must give way to peace. Burdens must give way to levity. Sickness must give way to healing. Demonization must give way to deliverance. Captivity must give way to freedom. Darkness cannot overcome the Light. Darkness must give way to the light.

So, keep hope alive with the Risen Savior. Jesus is the Risen Savior of the World, so keep hope alive. Jesus is the Risen Savior of the World, so keep on holding on. Jesus is the Risen Savior of the World, so keep on keeping on. Jesus is the Risen Savior of the World, so keep on pressing on. Jesus is the Risen Savior of the World, so keep on pushing forward. Jesus

is the Risen Savior of the World, so keep on running the race. Jesus is the Risen Savior of the World, so keep on fighting the good fight. Jesus is the Risen Savior of the World, so you can face tomorrow and overcome tomorrow.

4.2 In the light the angels gave them revelation

Sometimes when God begins to shine a light into your situation you become perplexed and you don't understand it because you have not experienced it before. You may even be scared thinking that the light is another bad thing about to happen. You need revelation when the light shines. Such was the case with the women. The angels gave them revelation when they said to them in verses 5 and 6 of our passage, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!"

4.3 The angels interpreted the revelation for the women

But they still did not appear to catch the meaning of the revelation. They must have gazed at the angels with puzzled faces as if to ask "what does it mean by, 'he is risen'?" Revelation requires instruction which involves interpretation which must make you catch the revelation to enable you to get your breakthrough. And so the angels proceeded to teach them saying in verses 6 and 7 of our passage, "Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'"

4.4 The women finally caught the significance of the revelation

Then it clicked; the women caught the revelation. They knew Jesus as the savior in flesh who delivered them from their demonization and diseases. This same Jesus, they knew had succumbed to untimely death, disappearing with their hopes. Now they have received a new revelation about this Jesus: He is the Risen Savior. Jesus is the Risen Savior. The women must have exclaimed, "Thank God almighty, he is risen!, Jesus is risen! Rabboni is risen! Yeshua is risen! Emmanuel is risen! Our Lord is risen!" Our deliverer is risen! Our healer is risen! Our provider is risen! Our protector is risen! The tomb could not hold him. Satan could not hold him. Death could not keep him. Hades could not keep him. Yes, Jesus is risen!

4.5 The women's hope was restored

The Risen Savior has once again restored the hope of the women. "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned." (Isaiah 9:2)

Life can only be imparted by one who holds the key to life. Hope can only be given by the one who controls the future. Peace can only be given by the one who is more powerful than any adversary. Breakthrough can only be given by one who has broken through the most impregnable situation. I submit to you that the Risen Christ is the only one who holds the key to life, has absolute control of the future, is omnipotent, and has broken through the impregnable gates of death.

So, no matter what your situation is, keep hope alive with the Risen Savior. Jesus is the Risen Savior of the World, so keep hope alive. Jesus is the Risen Savior of the World, so keep on holding on. Jesus is the Risen Savior of the World, so keep on keeping on. Jesus is the Risen Savior of the World, so keep on pressing on. Jesus is the Risen Savior of the World, so keep on pushing forward. Jesus is the Risen Savior of the World, so keep on running the race. Jesus is the Risen Savior of the World, so keep on fighting the good fight. Jesus is the Risen Savior of the World, so you can face tomorrow and overcome tomorrow. That is why the song writer wrote:

God Sent His Son, They Called Him Jesus;
He Came To Love, Heal And Forgive.
He Lived And Died To Buy My Pardon;
An Empty Grave Is There To Prove My Savior Lives.

Because He Lives I Can Face Tomorrow
Because He Lives All Fear Is Gone
Because I Know He Holds The Future
And Life Is Worth The Living Just Because He Lives

5 Filled with hope the women proclaimed the good news of the Risen Savior

When you encounter the Risen Savior you cannot sit still. There is something that itches in your body. There is a fire that burns in your bones. There is a zeal that consumes you. You must tell the good news to the hopeless and downcast. For "the sun of righteousness has risen with healing in its wings. And you must go out and leap like a calf released from the stall."

(Malachi 4:2) So, it was with the women who encountered the risen Christ. The women ran to tell the mourning and weeping¹ apostles and disciples the good news of the risen savior.

In the same way when you encounter the saving power of the Risen Savior, you must proclaim the good news to a dying world.

You must go tell it on the mountains that Jesus Christ is the Risen Savior.

Go tell it on the hills and valleys of Worcester that Jesus Christ is the Risen Savior.

Go tell it in the downtown and uptown of Worcester that Jesus Christ is the Risen Savior.

Go tell it in the coasts of providence that Jesus Christ is the Risen Savior.

Go tell it in the metropolis of Boston that Jesus Christ is the Risen Savior.

Go tell it in the meadows of Springfield that Jesus Christ is the Risen Savior.

Go tell it in the hinterland of Hartford that Jesus Christ is the Risen Savior.

Go tell it in the byways and highways of New England that Jesus Christ is the Risen Savior.

Go tell it in the north and south, east and west of the USA that Jesus Christ is the Risen Savior.

Go tell it to the whole world that Jesus Christ is the Risen Savior.

6 Conclusion

Five women were the first eyewitnesses to the resurrection and the Risen Christ. Jesus had delivered these women from demonization and diseases. But Jesus' death dashed their hopes and when they discovered that Jesus' body was missing they were overcome with despair, gloom and doom. Then two angels appeared to them and shone a light into their darkness, giving them the revelation that Jesus is risen! When the women caught the significance of the revelation they were filled with hope and they went and proclaimed the good news of the Risen Savior.

¹ See Mark 16:10