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Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

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Called to Believe the Resurrection Matt 28:1-15

Lesson Background and Introduction

The events in last week's text from Matthew occurred at a point when the Jewish religious leaders were plotting to arrest Jesus. But they did not want to create a public disturbance by doing so (Matthew 26:3-5). To their delight, the leaders found among Jesus' disciples an ally for the scheme: Judas Iscariot (26:14-16). After the Passover meal, Jesus led his disciples from the upper room to the Garden of Gethsemane. That was a place to which he had brought them often. Therefore the location was known to Judas, who guided those who arrested Jesus there (Matthew 26:47; John 18:1-3). There followed the series of appearances before the Jewish ruling council (the Sanhedrin) and Pilate that resulted in Jesus' crucifixion. Of the four Gospel writers, only Matthew records the concern of the chief priests and Pharisees that Jesus' disciples might attempt to steal his corpse. Their concern was based on being aware of the claim of "that deceiver" that he would rise from the dead. A missing body meant that a resurrection could be claimed. Therefore the chief priests and Pharisees recommended to Pilate that steps be taken to ensure against such a hoax (Matthew 27:62-66). Pilate agreed. The results of that effort are considered in today's lesson. All four Gospels record the actions of devoted women who returned to Jesus' tomb to honor him after his death. We say "returned" because they had been there when Jesus' body was interred (Matthew 27:61; Mark 15:47; Luke 23:55). Their intent was to finish the hurried job started by two others (John 19:38-41) in anointing his body with various preparations (Mark 16:1; Luke 23:55, 56; compare 2 Chronicles 16:14).

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

Discovering the Empty Tomb - After Jesus' gruesome crucifixion and burial, several women came on Sunday morning to the tomb to finish preparations on His body. They waited until after the Sabbath, then gathered spices and hurried to His burial place. When they got to the tomb, supernatural happenings had already occurred. Jesus walked out of the sealed sepulcher, an earthquake rocked the ground, and angels rolled the stone away. The soldiers watching Jesus' tomb saw what happened and became like dead men.

Reporting the Good News - The angel reminded the women of Jesus' words concerning His resurrection. He instructed the women to run and tell Jesus' disciples. They became the first couriers of the Good News. The angel also told them of Jesus' plan to meet His followers in Galilee. While the women joyfully ran to give their report to the disciples, who should they run into but Jesus! They fell at His feet and began to worship Him. Like the angel, Jesus told them not to fear, but go and tell the others to meet Him in Galilee.

The Lies - In the meantime, the Jewish leaders worked on a cover-up. The guards reported the miraculous events and the chief priest had to do something immediately to falsify these truths. They bribed the soldiers, telling them to spread a ridiculous lie. They would report that the disciples stole the body while the soldiers slept. A Roman soldier could lose his life if he dozed off and lost a prisoner. And if the guards fell asleep, how would they know what happened? This lie is still circulated among the Jews to this day.

Hope Because of the Resurrection - A Christian's faith and hope rest on the facts surrounding Jesus' walking away from His grave. As promised, Jesus rose from the dead, therefore validating all the statements He said about Himself. Other religious leaders still lie in their graves. Jesus is the only one to live again to confirm His claims. Fear of death is a natural, human fear. But Christians who face the end of their earthly existence place their trust in the Lord. They believe they will be resurrected and live again like Jesus. There's no need to fear death—instead God's children should be longing to go home and be with their heavenly Father. Embracing this message and truth brings hope, peace, and joy.

(Adapted from the Echoes Commentary)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:
The resurrection assures what Calvary secures

POEM FOR THE WEEK:
What has that empty sepulcher to say to you and me? It tells us that the Savior's death has set His people free; He died, our sins upon Him laid; He rose, because the debt was paid. —Reich

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:
Who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification
(Rom 4:25 NKJV)

from "Our Daily Bread", Apr 12, 1997)

Series: Discipleship & Mission

UNIT: Call To Ministry

NEXT WEEK

Called to Make Disciples
(Matthew 28:16-20;
Acts 1:6-8)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

The Quest for Jesus in the Tomb (Matt 28:1-4)

Seeking to see Jesus (1)

- Seeing Jesus face to face will be such a joy (Job 19:27)
- We want to be apart of His people that see Him and have His Name on our forehead (Rev 22:4)
- Seeing Jesus is seeing the Father (John 14:9)
- Seeing Jesus is seeing God because Jesus is the exact representation of God (Heb 1:3)

Angels help us in our seeking of Jesus (2-3)

- Angels help by gathering God's people from everywhere (Matt 24:31)
- Angels help by protecting those who are representing Him (Dan 6:22)
- Angels help because they are stronger and more powerful (2 Peter 2:11)
- Angels help because they are to be part of Jesus' powerful army (2 Thess 1:6-7)

Seeking Jesus should not include fear (4)

- No fear because through the Holy Spirit we have been freed from slavery of fear (Rom 8:15)
- No fear because God is our helper (Heb 13:6)
- No fear because God is our refuge and strength (Ps 46:1-3)
- No fear because our trust is in God (Heb 2:13-16)

The Angel's Declaration of a Risen Jesus (Matt 28:5-7)

Fear keeps us from seeing Jesus (5)

- Because fear makes us a slave (Rom 8:15)
- Because fears causes doubt about the saving power of God (Num 17:12-13)
- Because the spirit of fear comes from Satan (2 Tim 1:7)
- Because there is no fear in love (1 John 4:18)

Jesus was crucified (5)

- We can be assured that Jesus was crucified (Acts 2:36)
- Jesus was crucified because His own countrymen wanted Him crucified (1 Thess 2:14-15)
- Because the chief priests and rulers handed Jesus over to be sentenced to death (Luke 24:20)
- Because the Roman soldiers verified it (John 19:31-35)

Jesus has risen (6)

- Jesus has risen because He appeared to the disciples (Mark 16:14)
- Jesus has risen because it was prophesied (Acts 2:29-32)
- Jesus has risen because He is the living hope (1 Peter 1:3)
- Jesus has risen through the power of God (2 Cor 13:4)

We will see Jesus again (7)

- We will see Jesus again because He will come back the way He left (Acts 1:11)
- We will see Jesus again in Heaven (Mark 14:25)
- We will see Jesus again and rejoice (John 16:22)
- We will see Jesus again coming down from Heaven (1 Thess 4:16-17)
- We will see Jesus again because all will see Him (Rev 1:7)

Jesus' Appearance (Matt 28:8-10)

There is joy because of Jesus' resurrection (8-9)

- Joy because of salvation through the resurrection of Jesus (1 Peter 3:20-21)
- Joy because of the revealing of Jesus' glory (1 Peter 4:13)
- Joy because of the hope provided through Jesus' resurrection (Rom 15:13)
- Joy because Jesus joyfully died and rose for us (Heb 12:2)
- Joy because Jesus is praised and honored for His resurrection (1 Peter 1:6-7)

One reason for worshipping God is because of Jesus' resurrection (9)

- Worship God because Jesus has all authority (Matt 28:17-18)
- Worship God because Jesus is in heaven (Luke 24:51-53)
- Worship God because of our belief in Jesus (John 20:28-29)

We should tell others about Jesus' resurrection (10)

- Witnessing to others started with the scattering of the disciples (Acts 11:19-21)
- Witness to others because Jesus commanded it (Matt 28:18-20)
- Witness to others through the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8)
- Witness to others through teaching (2 Tim 2:2)

Conspiracy about the Missing Body of Jesus (Matt 28:11-15)

Conspiracy usually has money involved (11-12)

- Money was involved in the betrayal of Jesus (Mark 14:11)
- Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and performed all kinds of evil (1 Tim 6:10)
- In the last days, it is prophesied that greed and conspiracy will be a problem (2 Tim 3:1-5)
- No one can love money and God at the same time (Matt 6:24)

Conspiracy usually starts with fear of the truth (13)

- Fear of the truth because it will disqualify authority (Matt 21:25-27)
- Fear of the truth because of being controlled by Satan (John 8:44)
- Fear of the truth because envy of true Christians (Gal 2:4)
- Fear of the truth because the loss of connection with God (Col 2:17-19)
- Fear of the truth because it exposes heresies (2 Peter 2:1-3)

Conspiracy is strengthened by others agreements (14-15)

- Betrayers always seem to desire a crowd with them (Matt 26:47)
- Conspiracy depends on persuasion of a crowd (Matt 27:20)
- Conspiracy is strengthened when a few win others over to their ideas (Acts 14:19)
- Conspiracy doesn't always mean participating, it is also approving and agreeing with those who carry out the actions (Rom 1:32)