

STANDING IN THE CEMETERY

I mentioned last Sunday about being asked by the Sunday school director, from a previous church to visit all the children's classes so that the children could get to know their pastor.

During one Easter Sunday visit, I experienced an Art Linkletter's "Kids say the darnest things" moment. I was visiting the first grade class and was trying to relate to them. I ask them what their favorite thing was about Easter? They answered hunting for Easter eggs. That went well so I ask them why we celebrated Easter? Once again they all answered, it was the resurrection of Jesus.

So, I got brave and ask if they knew what a resurrection was? One little boy, who had not been interested in participating in any of the discussions, raised his hand and said, "IT'S GETTING UP VERY EARLY IN THE MORNING AND STANDING IN THE CEMETERY."

It dawned on me that he had attended our 6am-sunrise service, in the cemetery adjacent our church. I was reminded of Jesus' quote of Psalms 8:2 – "Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babes Thou hast prepared praise for Thyself." (Matt.21:16). Jesus made this statement during the Passion Week.

For Jesus, His resurrection meant getting up very early in the morning and standing in the cemetery:

"But Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping; and so, as she stooped and looked into the tomb; and she beheld two angels in white sitting, 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 laid Him.' When she had said this, turned around, and beheld Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus." (John 20:11-14)

This Easter we will study four homiletical points taken from Matthew's account of the resurrection of Jesus Christ (28:1-6). This lesson will also study four groups of people that were STANDING IN THE CEMETERY.

- The Seekers (28:1) women
- The Shakers (28:2-3) walloped
- The Soldiers (28:4) watching
- The Speakers (28:5-6) Word

1. The seekers were confused women followers of Jesus Christ (came to look/ theoreo). They were standing in the cemetery but NOT because of the resurrection of Jesus.

Like the men these women followers were confused about the message of the passion of Jesus Christ. Two women named Mary represented the women followers (Matt.27:56).

They were confused because they were going to the tomb for burial not for the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Luke 23:55-24:1). They were confused but they were not in hiding like the men. Like the men followers they had rejected the teachings of the passion of Christ as taught in the OT (Ps.16:8-11; Acts 2:22-36).

They missed important and pertinent doctrines right under their noses.

They had failed to understand the importance of shadow Christology of Levitical holidays and sacrifices (Passover and Unleavened bread and the last OT supper; Luke 22:14-23) and (John the Baptizer's declaration of Jesus as the lamb of God; John 1:29) and First Fruit to Pentecost; John 19:31, 42- 20:1; Lev.23: 10-11, 15-16; 1 Cor.15: 20-23; Acts 2:1).

2. The shakers were angels assigned to wallop the burial site and declare the resurrection of Jesus.

“And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it.” The angels were standing in the cemetery because of the resurrection of Jesus.

Two earthquakes were associated with the passion of Jesus Christ. The first was related to His death (Matt.27:51-54) and the second was related to the first and His resurrection (28:2).

- Angels were assigned inside and outside the tomb of Jesus (Mark 16:5; Luke 24:4-6).
- The women were worried about how they would deal with the Roman sealed tomb and stone (Mk 16:3-4).
- **This led them to worry about things that were non-essentials to the doctrinal issue hand.**
- This is the consequent of missing important and pertinent doctrines right under our noses.
- God is in charge of all our doctrinal issues (Rom.4: 16-21).

While Job, we learned a principle that applies here – “False assumptions leads to false interpretations that leads to false expectations that leads to false applications.”

3. Soldiers of the temple were assigned by Jewish government to watch the tomb of Jesus Christ so that no one could steal the body of Jesus.

In this cemetery, on the day of the resurrection of Jesus, dead men became live men and live men became as dead men (28:3).

When the soldiers reported the resurrection of Jesus to the Jewish authorities, the Jewish authority did what weak authority do in crisis – they pass the blame onto the underlings – “You are to say, ‘His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.’” (Matt.28:13, 11-15)

This is typical cosmos diabolicus thinking and behaving (John 8:44-47).

It is interesting that the disciples of Jesus thought very much like the Jewish authority regarding the truth of the resurrection of Jesus: “What was new was not true - and - what was true was not new.”

4. The speakers were the messenger angels who declared the truth of the word of God regarding the gospel of Jesus Christ (John 8:32; 14:6).

This is the truth they declared regarding the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ:

“Jesus who has been crucified” (stauroo / perf.p.ptc / passive of substitution) (2 Cor.5: 21; 1 John 3:5)

“He is risen” (egeiro / a.p.ind / passive of ministry of Holy Spirit) (Rom.8: 11) (John 28:5-6)

Pay special attention to this important phrase **“Just as** (kathos / intensive reminder) **He** (Jesus) **said** (lego / a.a.ind).” (28:6)

The doctrine of His resurrection was taught repetitively during the last month of His life.

- Matt.16: 21 suffer, killed, on 3rd day raised to life.
- Matt.17: 22 betrayed, killed, on 3rd day raised to life.
- Matt.20: 18-19 betrayed, condemned to death, mocked and flogged, on 3rd day raised to life.

Jesus Christ, standing in the cemetery very early on Easter morning is why the message of grace salvation is called the GOOD NEWS or gospel (1 Cor.15: 12-19).