

Eyewitnesses to the Resurrection

Scripture: Matthew 28:1-10

Code: 80-134

Well, fittingly on a day when we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we bring our great service to its climax by turning to the Scripture and hearing the record that God has given us of the resurrection.

It's always a challenge to decide where in Scripture to go because the Scripture is so filled with resurrection truth. After all, the resurrection is the foundation stone upon which the church is really built, the fact that Christ died and rose again. Without the resurrection there would be no service this morning; there would be no church here or anywhere else; there would be no Christian faith.

The first sermon ever preached after Jesus rose from the dead - as I read you from Acts 2 - was preached on the resurrection. And the resurrection then became the theme for all apostolic preaching and for all gospel preaching through all the years of history since. In the book of Acts, Peter not only preached on the resurrection in chapter two, but he preached on the resurrection in chapter four, and then, again, he preached on the resurrection in chapter ten. Stephen preached on the resurrection in chapter seven; Phillip preached on the resurrection in chapter eight; and then Paul preached on the resurrection - chapter nine, chapter 13, chapter 28.

When you come into the Epistles, they're just loaded with resurrection truth. The book of Romans says that "Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father". 1 Corinthians says that "He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures". 2 Corinthians says "He was raised up, and He being raised up shall raise us up also". The book of Galatians talks about God the Father who raised Jesus Christ from the dead. The letter to the Ephesian Church talks about Christ who was raised from the dead. The book of Philippians speaks of the heart of Paul, "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection." To the Colossians Paul wrote, "God who has raised Him from the dead." To the Thessalonians he wrote "His Son whom He raised from the dead," speaking of Christ.

Paul was not alone. Peter, the apostle, writing alone in his first epistle said in verse three of the first chapter, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who, according to His great mercy, has caused us to be born again unto a living hope." And that hope comes through the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord. The great book of Revelation which culminates all of divinely inspired Scripture begins by talking about the one who was alive and died and comes to life again in whose hands are the keys to hell and death.

The resurrection is not just the theme of the New Testament, but it is a theme in the Old Testament as well, as noted by the sermon from Peter quoting from the Psalmist, "The foundation of our faith, the foundation of the church, the foundation of our eternal hope is the resurrection of Christ." It was summed up in the words of Jesus, "Because I live you shall live also." Or in John 11, that great testimony of the Lord at the death of Lazarus, and just before He raised Lazarus from the dead He said "I am the resurrection and the life, whosoever believes in Me shall never die. And whosoever lives and believes in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. Do you believe this," He asked.

We come then to the greatest single truth in Christianity, the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We could discuss it from the viewpoint of apostolic preaching or apostolic doctrine. We could discuss it as Peter did from the viewpoint of prophesy. We could discuss it in terms of the ongoing intercessory work of Jesus Christ as He ever lives to make intercession for us even now. We could discuss it in the viewpoint of Revelation looking at the risen Christ returning.

But for this morning I want us to go back to just the simple truth of the narrative. Back to the history, back to the gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, who record for us the eyewitness account of the resurrection. To do that, let's go to Matthew 28 - Matthew 28.

We are going to view the resurrection through the first eyewitnesses who were a group of women - very wonderful, very special women. Women who had come to know the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior and Messiah while he was ministering in Galilee. They traveled through Galilee following Him, ministering to Him personally. Caring for Him whenever and however they could. They made the trek with Him south to celebrate the Passover at which He was crucified. They were there surrounding the foot of the cross at His death. These same women were there at His burial anointing His body profusely with spices, helping to see that He was placed in the tomb in a dignified and respectful way, though dead. They were there sitting in the darkness as the tomb was sealed; their hearts grieved to the point of breaking. It is those very women who were there in the morning of the dawn of resurrection.

Matthew begins in verse one by recording this, "After the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave." Here we meet the women. Not just these women, there were some others as well. Mark adds that Solome was there, the mother of James and John, the wife of Zebedde. Luke adds that a woman by the name of Johanna was there, the wife of one of Herod's stewards. John mentions only Mary Magdalene but uses the pronoun "we" indicating there were others. It was a group of women. Women who had come all the way from Galilee; women who had stood by Him at the cross, women who were there at the burial and had lingered long into that Friday night and women who were back that Sunday at the dawn having left their place of rest in the dark.

And why - why women? Why did God choose women to be the first eyewitnesses of the resurrection? Well, some say because God likes to choose the weak, those who are not the noble, those who are behind the scenes, those perhaps who are unexpected. God likes to surprise us and maybe even startle us with his sovereign choices. And some have suggested that God rewards the faithful and after all the disciples had forsaken Him and fled. Where were they at the foot of the cross? Where were they at the burial? The women were there and God rewards faithfulness. And some have suggested that after all death came to the whole human race in a garden through a woman, namely Eve. Why shouldn't life come to redeem the race, first to women in another garden? And perhaps it could be said that the deepest sorrow deserves the highest joy, and the woman - the women had the deepest sorrow after all. Whatever sorrow the disciples had seems to me to be overpowered by their cowardice. Whatever cowardice the women had was overpowered by their sorrow. And some might suggest that supreme love deserves supreme blessing. However greatly the disciples may have loved Jesus, their fear restrained them, but however much their fear restrained them the women loved Jesus so much, they were there.

Well all of that may be well and good, but you know why they, really - the real reason why they were the eyewitnesses of the resurrection; you know why they were the first to know about it? Because they were the first to show up. How profound is that? It's amazing how you will find yourself in the center of God's purposes if you're just around were He's working and speaking and moving.

Matthew tells us, "It was after the Sabbath as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week." Mark adds, "It was very early at the rising of the sun." Luke adds, "It was at early dawn." And John says, "While still dark." Right at that time when darkness is slowly fading and light is coming, that's the hour of the greatest event of all events, the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. And now we're going to see that event, and we're going to see it through the eyes of these women. But not just through their eyes. We're going to see it through their emotion, through their attitudes. Yes, their eyes will behold some things, but beyond what they see is how they react to it. And the real story of the resurrection here is to go through the emotional transformation that takes place in the hearts of these women.

The first attitude that I want you to note is sympathy - sympathy. It simply says in verse one that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary and of course the rest of the women came to look at the grave. They came to see. There was no thought of resurrection in their minds. They didn't come to see the resurrection. They didn't come to pray for the resurrection. They didn't come wistfully to hope it might have happened. The resurrection wasn't even on their mind. You know why they came? Mark 16:1, "Because they had bought spices that they might come and anoint Him." On Friday when He was being placed in the grave you can be sure that they anointed His body profusely with anything that would grant the body some fragrance and minimize some of the stench of inevitable decay. The Jews did not embalm their bodies. You remember in John 11 that Lazarus having been dead, and by four

days already his body would stink.

And here we are on the morning of the third day, decay already beginning. And the women having a hard time handling that emotionally, come for one last effort to put spices on a body that will send out a fragrance that will overpower the stench of decaying flesh. It's purely an act of sympathy; it's purely an expression of compassion. They had no idea that Jesus would be alive.

When they got there they had a problem because there had been a stone rolled across the face of the grave. And Mark 16:3 says they ask, "Who will roll the stone away for us?" It was very large, massive. They couldn't do it. Certainly the Roman soldiers weren't going to break the seal and do it, and maybe the women never realized that it was sealed with a Roman seal that couldn't be broken. And there they are, spices in hand, ready to demonstrate their sympathy and compassion for this one who they loved so deeply. Caring little for whether or not they are going to be associated with him. Caring not at all that they will be called followers of Jesus - followers of this insurrectionist rebel. Having greater courage, I say again, than the disciples themselves who were hovering in fear for their lives. They come to do this last deed of compassion and kindness and there's a barrier in the way.

But we commend their sympathy. And I think all through history and even today and perhaps this morning in this church, there are some of you who look at Jesus with sympathy. It's not difficult to be sympathetic for someone who gives his life for a cause, someone who is noble enough to say, "I'll die for what I believe in." All the world applauds someone who dies for what he believes, and even particularly when what he believes is noble and lofty and it's all about love and kindness and goodness and mercy and forgiveness - all those things of which Jesus spoke. And people usually applaud someone who is willing to go against the establishment, whether it be the elite religious establishment, or whether it be the power of a military army of Rome. Certainly here is a man who could gain a measure of sympathy and compassion from anybody because of the fact that he was willing to give his life for what was unpopular, counter culture, antiestablishment, for a cause that belongs to a handful of people. And certainly we could be sympathetic to one who was so loving toward women and children. One who carried himself among the poor, and those who were the despairing and despondent and who had nothing. He gave His life to them. A lover of poor people.

And now he was dead, and we too could come to the tomb out of sympathy for such a one. But that wasn't where it ended because immediately another emotion replaced sympathy. And the second thing they felt was fear - fear, terror. Verse two, "And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord had descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. And his appearance was like lightning and his garment as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men. And the angel answered and said to the woman, 'Do not be afraid for I know that you're looking for Jesus who has been crucified. He is not here, for He has risen just as He said. Come see the place where He was lying, and go quickly and tell His disciples that He's risen from the dead. And behold He's going before you into Galilee. There you will see Him,

behold I've told you."

That second section focuses on fear, you'll notice in verse five the angel says, "Do not be afraid." Their sympathy and their tender compassion immediately turned to terror. Matthew alone gives us the detail of verse two, "That a severe earthquake occurred." It was a mega-sizmus, not just a small tremor. It was not just an aftershock of the earthquake described in chapter 27, verse 51, the earthquake that occurred when Jesus died on the cross that split open the graves and let the dead saints out. A massive earthquake - an earthquake that ripped the temple veil from top to bottom. This is no aftershock; this cannot be explained as anything other than an act of God. This was in and of itself, a great earthquake.

And even without any kind of equipment, there was no problem finding the epicenter. The epicenter was the tomb and everything radiated out from that point. You say, "What caused the earthquake?" Not what, but who. An earthquake occurred, a severe one, because an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat on it. It wasn't some plates shifting; it was an angel landing. An angel of the Lord descending from heaven hit the tomb and a radiating earthquake sent shock waves out rumbling through the earth under the feet of the women who were approaching that very place.

Now let me tell you something, the earthquake came. The angel rolled the stone from the front of the grave and sat on it. Nothing says Jesus came out. Nothing. You know why? He was already gone. He was already gone.

Do you understand that the angel did not roll the stone away to let Jesus out? He rolled the stone away to let the women in. Jesus didn't need the stone removed to get out anymore than he needed the door opened to get into the upper room where he appeared to the disciples.

In fact, the Scripture tells us that the grave clothes that were wrapped around His body when He was buried were lying in the very place that they were when they were on His body. He went through the grave clothes and through the grave, the door - the stone - being over the cover - over the entry - the hole.

No, Jesus didn't need the angel to move the stones so He could get out. He needed the angel to move the stones so the women could get in. A glorified, resurrected Christ rearranged the molecules of His supernatural body and went right through. He had already risen.

In fact, that's what the angel said, "He's not here. He's not in the tomb and He's not around. He is gone." His resurrection already happened. Interestingly, no one saw it. No one - not anyone - saw the actual resurrection of Christ. The soldiers, they were there but what were they doing? Sleeping. And in the first gleaming light at the dawn of the third day to fulfill the prophecy, He came out of the grave

through the wall of that grave - through the stone. Alive.

Then the angel came and rolled the stone away to let the people in. And when they went in, there were the linen clothes lying exactly where they were when they were on the body of Jesus. So the women came and when they saw what they saw, it generated terror in their hearts. The earthquake, the stone is rolled away and sitting on it is an angel.

Now there's an interestingly little piece of the drama that happens here that Matthew doesn't record. The lady who seems to be most prominent in the group is a lady by the name of Mary Magdalene - loved and saved by Christ and a devout follower. When she came along with the others and saw the stone rolled away she panicked. If she saw the angel, she didn't look very carefully because John tells us what she did. John 20, "Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb; saw the stone taken away from the tomb." And, apparently, that's all she saw, and she ran. She spun around on her sandals and took off in the opposite direction. She ran and came to Simon Peter. Now Simon Peter, most would say, along with John, were staying in Bethany, and that's a two mile run. A two mile run up and down a mountain - the Mount of Olives - or around it. And even then it would be longer.

And she ran, and all she remembers is, "The stone is gone, the grave is opened." And she has jumped to this conclusion, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him," is the message she gives to Peter and John. John is described here as the disciple whom Jesus loved. That's always the way he refers to himself or similarly in his gospel. She's reporting in to the two leading apostles. Her conclusion is the body has been stolen. She doesn't know that; she never looked to see if it was there; she has no idea who the "they" are who have taken the Lord out of the tomb or where they've taken Him. Her assumption is: some grave robbers have come; they've stolen His body; they have some desecrating, humiliating thing that they're going to do. And in her fear, she takes in nothing about the angel, spins and goes on her way.

Now, in response to the report that she gives, Peter and John start on their way back to the grave. Peter goes first; John comes after Peter. They head towards the tomb, the two are running together. And, of course, John notes for us that he is faster than Peter. He came to the tomb first. But he is also more timid than Peter. He stoops and looks in; Peter bolts by him and goes in to see who isn't there.

Now that's the little interlude. We're back at the tomb with the women. Mary is gone. She's running to Bethany; she's going to tell the disciples. They're going to be running back. But while all that is happening, the women look from the open tomb to the angel. Verse three, "And his appearance was like lightening" - blazing, dazzling lightening. That's the reflection of deity. You remember from the book of Revelation when we look into the throne room of God we see lightening - the flashing, brilliant glory of God that surrounds His throne. So this angel - the angel of the Lord, as he is called - takes on the character of deity. He manifests the blazing glory of deity. His raiment - or his garment - is as white as snow. It's dazzling. It's brilliant. Its shining light demonstrating the deity reflected in this

angelic being not his own but reflected from God and also demonstrating his purity.

The reaction of the Roman soldiers who are now rubbing their eyes and waking up after an earthquake and the removal of the stone, and the angel and the women arrived. The commotion awakens them and it says, "The guards shook for fear of Him and became like dead men." Now these are Roman soldiers. These aren't your local wimps. These are soldiers. They've been around. And they've seen some things. And they should be ready for anything and they fall over in a coma when they see an angel. They literally fell over in unconsciousness. They were paralyzed with fear and went into a coma. They were victims of their terror.

They were overcome by the divine presence represented by that angel. No comfort, by the way, was offered to them at all. They later came to see the chief priests and tell them their story. And, of course, the chief priests bribed them to lie about it.

But only those who loved the Lord are comforted. So the angel has nothing to say to the comatose soldiers. They're outside the family, but verse five, "the angel answered and said to the women, 'Do not be afraid. Fear not.'" Literally, stop fearing. The women were terrorized. Why? I think it's a holy fear. I think it's the terror of realizing they're in the presence of one who comes from God. I think they believed that Jesus was God in human flesh. That was enough. That was a terrorizing reality in itself. That was a fear in itself to know you were in the presence of God incarnate. But here comes a blazing, flaming, shining angel from the throne of God, and that's a terrorizing thing. They must have had something of the fear of Isaiah who said, "Whoa is me" when he saw the glory of the Lord in the temple.

Something of the terror of Peter who, when seeing Jesus, said, "Depart from me for I am a sinful man." And so there is here, not just a personal fear that they might lose their life or something awful is going to happen to them that the guards are going to do to them because the body is stolen, but here is a holy terror. That they're seeing something that is divine and something that is supernatural. And it engenders tremendous fear. "I know that you're looking for Jesus who has been crucified."

They had come looking for Jesus to anoint His body with spices. The angel says, "I know what you're here to do. I know why you've come. Stop fearing." You might have expected the angel to say, "You know, God told me to tell you He's sick of your weak faith. He told me to tell you that He's really tired of the fact that you guys never believe anything Jesus says." He doesn't rebuke the women in that way. There was a mild rebuke. "I know you're looking for Jesus who's been crucified." Then he adds, "He isn't here for He has risen just as He said."

There's a mild rebuke in that but no anger, no condemnation of their feeble minds and their weak faith; their inability to remember what Jesus said or what the prophets wrote or to believe it. They were loyal, loving, sympathetic women whose devotion to Jesus Christ was very clear. There's just a

word of comfort. That's all. "He's not here. He is risen." Literally, *arra passif*, "He was raised. It's over, He's gone. It happened before you got here. Or before I got here," the angel could say.

The new Testament says, "He raised Himself." The New Testament says the Father raised Him, and the New Testament says the Spirit raised Him. They were all in on it, the whole trinity. And he's alive as He said. And Luke 24:8 says, "And they remembered His words." They came to the place where they did remember, but not quite yet. The angel says, at the end of verse six, "Come, see the place where He was laying." The angel opened the tomb to let them in.

"Come on in," he says. They went in. Luke 24:3 says, "When they entered they didn't find the body of the Lord Jesus." And it happens, that while they were perplexed about this, "Behold, two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling apparel." Angel number one went in and was joined by another angel.

Now there are two angels. And, by the way, John 20:12 says, "One of them sat at the head and one of them sat at the feet of the slab where Jesus had been lying. And it says, "The women," Luke 24:5 "were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground." It was a holy fear. They knew they were sinners and they were in divine presence.

And then the angel said, "Why do you seek the living one among the dead? He's not here. He is risen. Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee saying that the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and the third day rise again? Do you remember that?" "And they remembered his words." Not until then did they re-grip the promise that Jesus had made that He would die and rise again.

It was in that fear that they were given a command; verse seven, "Go quickly. Tell His disciples He is risen from the dead. He is going before you into Galilee, there you will see him." And then he signs off, "Behold, I have told you." Which is an angelic way of saying, "Roger, and out." Message delivered.

Fear, terror, holy presence, that's a reasonable emotion - a certain fear was rightly in their hearts. And I think that that's still true. I think that there are people - perhaps you - who read the resurrection and you say, "Wow, that's a traumatic thing. That's an incredible event. The evidence for its truthfulness is beyond question - beyond question." Hundreds and hundreds of eyewitnesses saw the risen Christ. Grave clothes lying exactly as they were, women who never expected a resurrection don't fabricate one. Disciples who never expected a resurrection don't fabricate one. And, least of all, do they all go out and die as martyrs for a one who's resurrection they faked. And how can you explain their transformed lives? And how can you explain the church? And how can you explain thousands of years of history of transformed lives by the living, risen Christ?

When Jesus rose from the dead even the guard knew it and had to be bribed to lie. There is no more attested - better attested truth in ancient history than the resurrection of Christ. And maybe you can look at it and say it's an amazing event. It's an astonishing and startling and wondrous thing, and I can understand the sense of awe and terror and holy fear that the women had because, after all, if He was alive, then He could take vengeance on His executors and on those who denied Him and rejected Him and did not believe. Maybe you can stand back and say it's an awesome event. Boy, I certainly affirm the resurrection. The eyewitnesses and evidence indicates it happened; it's an amazing and an astounding event. And it may inspire awe and wonder and even fear in your heart, but that shouldn't be all.

There's another emotion, another attitude that comes. Let's pick that up in verse eight, "And they, the women, departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to report it to His disciples." Fear starts to give way to joy as they head toward the disciples. Now they're running away from the tomb toward the disciples; two of the disciples and Mary are running the other way. They must have been on different paths; they never met. By the time Peter and John arrived, the women are gone. And they're going to tell the disciples the message the angel gave them. And that is to go to Galilee and Jesus will meet you there. Galilee of the Gentiles; Galilee of the darkness; Galilee where the Lord first ministered, performed miracles, redeemed souls, was hated and rejected; Galilee the microcosm of the world, they would all meet there. They would have some preliminary meetings with the disciples in Jerusalem. There would be several occasions where Jesus would meet with the eleven, but not until Galilee would everybody be gathered together. Every meeting in Jerusalem was only a preparation for the great assemblage in Galilee. And in that great assemblage in Galilee would come the great commission to go into all the world and preach the gospel.

That was the message that they were to give to the disciples, to tell them that He is risen; He's alive and He'll meet you in Galilee. And so they run and their hearts are filled with joy. It's important to note - and nothing is worse than this - and when they tell the disciples what happened, the disciples don't believe it. Nothing could be worse than to know that Jesus is alive and not be able to convince them that what you said was true. The disciples were so unwilling to believe they didn't believe the women. It's a sad reality that their faith was so shallow. Obviously, they came to believe when Jesus showed up in the upper room coming through the wall.

But as the women went to tell the disciples their attitude was joy. Why? Because it was dawning on them that Jesus really was alive. And what that meant was there's a future. There's more to life. It's not over. It's not all darkness and the end and despair. And I suppose there were people who would come that far. They might come to the death and resurrection of Christ with sympathy and compassion for a well intentioned martyr. They might even come so far as to say, "Hey, it was an amazing event. We'll even allow for the miraculous astounding to happen, and He did come out of the grave." And they might go that far. And they might even go so far as to say what G.B. Hardy the

scientist asked when he said, "Just answer one question, is there a way through death and has anybody ever made it possible for me to get through?" And the answer is yes, Jesus died and He rose again and He blazed a trail through the grave and out the other side. There is a future.

Some people might even go that far, as to say, "Yes, I believe in the afterlife. I believe there's more. I believe this isn't the end. I believe we're not in a cul-de-sac. I believe we're not at the end of a black tunnel that closes in with a final wall. I believe that there's a thoroughfare of death and Jesus went through and there's something on the other side. And that means there's a future." Some might even go that far. There was a future for the women. They could see the fullness of all that future knowing who Jesus was. But that wasn't the end of their transformation.

There's another attitude that comes in verse nine, "Most wonderfully," I love this - they're walking along or running to the disciples to tell them this message from the angel that He's alive and they're to meet Him in Galilee. "And behold, Jesus met them," on the way, there He is in resurrected glory, "and greeted them." I love that.

You know what he said to them in the Greek? "Hello. Hi." I mean, it wasn't any great profound statement. It was, "Hi. Good morning, ladies." Boy, it's a common greeting for such an immense event. It was the ordinary salutation of the marketplace, the highway and the home. He must have said it in a majestic tone, but it must have put their hearts at ease instantaneously. It was Him, and they knew it. And they came up, and they took hold of His feet. And what did they do? They worshipped. That's the next attitude.

They moved from sympathy to fear to joy to worship. This is, by the way, no spirit. This is no apparition, no figment of their imagination. This is not a group hallucination. You can't grab the feet of a group hallucination. This is a person. They grasped His feet. They seized Him with adoring love. They were overwhelmed with thanks, overwhelmed with wonder. They fell at His feet and they worshipped Him.

What does that mean? They acknowledged Him as Lord and God and Christ. They offered homage and worship. They bowed the knee to Him. They recognized His deity. They recognized His glory. They recognized His lordship.

So they had gone from sympathy for His death to fear of the supernatural power to joy over the reality of resurrection to worship at the feet of the risen, exalted Lord. That's where God wants to take you. Your sympathetic feelings toward a crucified martyr will damn you if that's all you've got. Your amazement and wonder and awe - your astonishment over the reality of a resurrection will damn you if that's all there is. And so will your joy that there may be another life because Jesus conquered death unless you come to the place where you bow your face before Him and confess Him as Lord and worship Him. And that's what they did.

And that wasn't even the last note. There's a fifth attitude, and it's bound up in what Jesus said to them. Verse ten, "Then Jesus said to them," - this is the same speech that they heard from the angel, "Do not be afraid. Go in and take word to my brother to go and leave for Galilee and there they shall see me." Boy, that angel really did his job right, didn't he? He gave the right word. And here, they get it from Jesus.

And what does this produce? They've gone from sympathy to fear to joy to worship to what? Hope - hope. "What? We're going to see Him again? We're going to be with Him again? We're all going to go together to Galilee and we're all going to be together." And the last vestiges of fear crumble.

At first it was all fear. Then it was fear mixed with joy. Then it was fear mixed with worship. And Jesus had to say to them, "Stop fearing." And now the fear is gone and the heart is left with hope. "Stop your fear. Just go tell my brother we're all going to meet in Galilee."

Well, that's the right response - hope. Not that we're all going to meet in Galilee, but that we're all going to meet in glory. That's the way to respond to the resurrection. There's a place for sympathy. There's a place for holy fear. There's certainly a place for joy. But what really matters is that you fall on your face and worship and that your heart be filled with eternal hope. That's the evidence of salvation.

Father, as we close this great service together. We are so thankful that Jesus lives. That the one who went through that tomb in the dawn of that Jerusalem morning still lives - ever lives and will return for His own. We thank you that He is our Lord, our God, the one in whom we hope, the one who will bring us to the great reunion in glory. Father, we thank you for the gift of Christ in His death and in His resurrection. A resurrection that proves the word of God is true. That proves the Lord Jesus is God, that salvation is complete, that the church is begun, that judgment is coming, that heaven is waiting. So much is built on the resurrection. Move every heart to worship and hope. May there be no one who comes only as far as sympathy or amazement or even joy. May everyone come all the way to worship and be filled with hope. And, Lord, I pray that in your mercy and grace, you will call many today to believe. Call many to name the Son as Lord and King. To fall on their face at His feet, thanking Him for dying for them, for rising again, having paid the penalty for their sin. Lord, bring many to the Son; bring many to salvation before this day closes around the world. May it truly be a resurrection day. May many pass from death into life. For the glory of Christ, Amen.

Available online at: <http://www.gty.org>

COPYRIGHT (C) 2015 Grace to You

You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (<http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright>).