

# Easter

## A Resurrection Celebration

*Grace Fellowship Church / March 27, 2016 / Pastor Brad Bigney*

The decision you make regarding Jesus and the resurrection is in a category all of its own. You can't put a price tag on the consequences of this decision for your life because it has to do with your soul and eternity, which are priceless.

Let's look at one day in scripture where we see very different reactions and two very different outcomes.

### I. Let's Start with the Day and Some of those Different Reactions

Read **Matthew 28:1-15**.

- Did you see the first reaction with the women?

#### **A. Those First Women at the Tomb Rejoiced When They Saw that Jesus was Alive and they Made a Decision to Worship Him and Tell Others**

They had gone to the tomb that first Easter morning carrying spices to further embalm Jesus' dead body, but they found that the stone had been rolled away. And they heard the greatest announcement ever made, "He is not here; for He is risen, just as He said!"

What life-changing words! What a fulfillment of all the prophecies that had ever been made about this God-Man, Jesus Christ.

**Matthew 28:8-9** "So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word. And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, 'Rejoice!' And they came and held Him by the feet and worshipped Him."

That's where many of you are today. You know He's alive and not dead, so you hold onto Him, love Him, worship Him, and tell others about Him.

- But did you notice another group of people that saw the same things but responded quite differently?

#### **B. It's the Roman Soldiers and Religious Leaders of the Day Who Made a Decision to Try and Cover it Up and Deny it even in the Face of what they'd Seen and Knew to be True**

Look again at the decision they made beginning in **Matthew 28:11-15**.

They were troubled by the very information they did have and they wished it wasn't true because they understood the gravity of what this meant and all that would be impacted by the truth of His Christ resurrection.

They made the decision to deny it and cover it up even in the face of evidence they'd seen for themselves!

Every person who chooses not to believe in Jesus and the resurrection doesn't do it for lack of evidence.

Often the refusal is in spite of evidence and is driven by the realization deep down inside that, 'IF this is true, it changes EVERYTHING and I have to re-think life itself and what I'm doing and WHY, because if He CONQUERED death and is LORD, then I'm ACCOUNTABLE to Him and I don't want life to be that way.'

That's how the religious leaders in Matthew 28 felt. They knew it was going to rock their religious world, shatter all their fixed categories of what they understood, and that they'd be displaced from all their traditions and positions of authority. They didn't want that.

There were still other responses that relate to where many people are today. Look at **Acts 17:22-34**.

When Paul introduced the resurrection of Jesus into the conversation, it went to another level altogether.

### **C. And that's Because the Resurrection of Jesus was Never Meant to be Some Philosophical Idea for Us to Toy with and Bat Around in our Free Time**

Notice all the reactions in this passage we just read. It's still a snapshot of what's going on today! Nothing's changed.

When you raise the subject of Jesus and His resurrection from the dead you better buckle up because it elicits a strong response one way or another! That's the nature of resurrection.

You have to recognize that there's no place for simple disinterest, because the implications and consequences of what you decide about the resurrection of Jesus have to do with life and death issues – beginning in this world and carrying on into the next.

## **II. Two Very Different Outcomes that are Based on the Decision You Make about Jesus and the Resurrection**

Turn to **John 3:16-19**, then read **v.36**.

**John 3:36** “He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

Two very different outcomes: life or death; condemnation or forgiveness; God’s love or God’s wrath.

- What determines God’s posture towards you today?

It’s what you decide about His Son and the free gift of eternal life that He offers to every one of you.

Put your trust in Christ. Believe that He IS the Son of God and that He died the only perfect death in payment for your sins and that when He rose again from the dead He conquered sin, Satan, death and hell for us!

**When you believe and put your trust in Jesus...**

- You’ll have FREEDOM for the first time to say ‘No’ to your flesh and to stop living by every urge and impulse that surges through you, because Jesus will be living in you helping you.
- You’ll have HOPE in the face of unsettling circumstances because your hope will be tied to a confident expectation of future blessing that’s based on the character and promises of God.
- You’ll have PEACE and JOY that’s grounded in something deeper than your circumstances.
- You’ll have a sense of PURPOSE and CALLING to something that’s worth giving your life for.
- You’ll have a broadened PERSPECTIVE on life that sees past the temporary and time-bound trinkets and baubles of this world because it’s caught a glimpse of the eternal.
- You’ll have a sense of being LOVED, and ACCEPTED and BELONGING like you’ve never experienced before!