

Christ Is Risen, Part 2

Scripture: John 20:11–29

Code: 43-112

For this morning I want to take you to the 20th chapter of John, and now we begin to look at the appearances of our Lord after His resurrection. We've gone through the opening ten verses, and we've looked at the empty tomb, that is the first evidence of our Lord's resurrection. We also noted the angels, the appearance of the angels, we'll see that again. That is the second evidence of our Lord's resurrection. And the third are the eyewitnesses, and we'll begin to look at them today, and particularly Mary Magdalene who is the one featured in verses 11 through 18. Let me read it to you.

“But Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping; and so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb; and she saw 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 have laid Him.’ When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus.

“Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?’ Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said to Him, ‘Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Mary!’ She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, ‘Rabboni!’ (which means, Teacher).

“Jesus said to her, ‘Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.’ Mary Magdalene came, announcing to the disciples, ‘I have seen the Lord,’ and that He had said these things to her.”

This is the first eyewitness to the risen Christ, first appearance of Jesus. The women, and Peter and John, Mary Magdalene included, have seen the empty tomb; but this is the first appearance of Jesus. And remarkably He appears to this lady named Mary from the town of Magdala. We know she was a long-time follower of our Lord. We also know that her life was as severely demonic as a life could be before she met the Savior.

In Luke, chapter 8, where we first meet her, we find that she was possessed by seven demons. It doesn't tell us anything about her life and how it may have been that she became such a welcome spot for the minions of hell, but obviously her sins were vast. There is nothing in the Bible at all that says she was a harlot or a prostitute. But certainly she was a sinful woman so that demons felt at home and exacerbated the wretchedness of her condition by their very indwelling presence. It strikes us as remarkable that such a woman with such a past and with no significant role in religion would be the first person to see the risen Christ, not the apostles.

But we also remember back in the 4th chapter of John, there was a woman of Samaria; we don't know her name. She too had a very sinful life. She had been married many times and was, at the

time she met Jesus, living with a man who was not her husband. She was an adulteress. Multiple marriages and adultery in any culture is treated with scorn. But it was to that woman by that well an outcast from her own society that Jesus first declared that He was Messiah, and she wasn't even a Jew, she was a half-breed outcast Samaritan. The religions of the world throughout their history generally mistreated women; that just goes with false religion. If you have any questions about that do a little study, see how the religions of the world treat women up until even this very hour, including Islam.

Christianity is utterly different. We know from Galatians 3:28 that in Christ there's neither male nor female. We know that God is no respecter of persons. God has exalted women in the truest and purest way by giving them significant places, even in the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For a moment, go back to Matthew, chapter 1. The New Testament begins with the genealogy of Jesus just prior to the record of His birth, so that we know He comes through the line of Abraham and line of David. He is a Jew and He has royal blood. Genealogies like this are lists of men and their sons, but this one interestingly enough has four women. All the way back in verse 3 where the genealogy is just getting started, "Jesus the Messiah, son of David, son of Abraham: Abraham the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar." Tamar prostituted herself to seduce Judah in an ugly immoral act.

And then there is in verse 5 Rahab, a Canaanite prostitute living in Jericho. And then there is Ruth in the same verse, and Ruth was an idol-worshipping Moabite, and the Moabites were cursed by God. And then there is in verse 6 that very famous woman named Bathsheba who had been the wife of Uriah, who committed adultery with David, and by them was born Solomon who is in the Messiah's line. She, an adulteress, and really the cause of the murder of her husband. It's one thing to put four women in a genealogy, it's another thing to put those four in.

What is God saying to us? He's giving us, from the very opening of the New Testament, a message of grace, a message of grace extended to men and women, and particularly elevating women, because in the world they are so suppressed. Christianity is the only legitimate woman's liberation movement, and here we find the first eyewitness of the resurrection is a woman with a horrendous past. This in itself would be something to scorn and mock if you were a Jewish religious leader, and a Pharisee. Women were not allowed to testify in court. Why would she be a witness? But she's the first. We will see that account in the text this morning, and then we'll see the apostles who follow her first later in the chapter without Thomas, and then finally with Thomas. Those are the eyewitness accounts that John gives us, the first one is Mary Magdalene.

Now it's not as if the resurrection was a marginal event, so you could let a woman be the eyewitness. The resurrection is the event without which there is no Christianity, without which there is no salvation, without which there is no forgiveness, without which there is no heaven. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ was the divine affirmation of His work of atonement on the cross. When God raised Jesus from the dead He was declaring that He was satisfied by Jesus' perfect sacrifice, had accepted it as full payment for the sins of His people. Resurrection then demonstrates that sin was atoned for, death was conquered, and eternal life is available to those who believe.

And it's impossible to be a Christian and not believe the resurrection. Romans 1:4 says, "God declared Jesus as the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead." And Romans 10:9-

10 says, “that if you confess Him as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you’ll be saved.” There are within the ranks of Christianity and have been for a long time people who deny the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ, people who think that it didn’t really happen, and they’re a part of Christianity; that shouldn’t surprise us. I read the other day that there is now a woman who is pastoring a Methodist church who is an atheist.

The resurrection is the event by which God validates the sacrifice of Christ. All those animal sacrifices for all those centuries could never take away sin; but the one sacrifice of Christ removes sin on the part of the people of God who believe forever. And God indicated that by the resurrection, by ripping the veil in the temple, ending the ceremonial system and the sacrificial system at that point. Christ was the complete and satisfactory offering.

And furthermore, not only is there no salvation and no Christianity if Christ doesn’t rise, but if Christ doesn’t rise, then He is a liar and a deceiver and a charlatan and a fraud, because He said in Matthew 12, “As Jonah was in the belly of the great fish three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the earth.” He said in John, chapter 2, “Destroy this body, in three days I’ll raise it again.”

If He didn’t rise He lied. And as we have been learning in 1 Corinthians, chapter 15, if you pull the resurrection out of Christianity you have nothing left. Paul writes, “If there’s no resurrection of the dead, if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain; your faith also is vain. We are false witnesses of God, because we testified on behalf of God that He raised Christ whom He didn’t raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. If the dead are not raised, not even Christ is raised. If Christ is not raised your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.” The resurrection is everything, and because it is, it is relentlessly assaulted, relentlessly assaulted.

There are people sometimes going to the title neo-orthodox – I won’t bother to define that – who believe that Christ did rise, but in some spiritual way, not in a literal physical way. And there are other liberal “Christian” teachers, ministers, and theologians who say that He didn’t really rise, but it doesn’t really matter; He gave us a wonderful example of self-sacrifice for a great cause for God. The resurrection is just too much for them to believe, so they have other theories.

And I want to remind you, those who reject the resurrection do not do that because of lack of evidence, they do that because of love of iniquity. They do that because they love sin. They don’t want a risen Christ; they want an ethical religion, the ethics of which they can define, so they come up with all kinds of explanations.

A favorite in the past eighteenth, nineteenth century is still around; it was called the swoon theory. It argued that Jesus didn’t die on the cross, He went into some kind of a semi-coma, and He was taken down from the cross and buried while He was still alive. And then they say laying in the tomb, the spices with which He was wrapped, the coolness of the tomb revived Him. So He woke up, rolled the stone away, defeated the Romans, and went to the disciples and told them He had risen from the dead.

This theory obviously has insurmountable difficulties. It is one of those Romans 1 illustrations, “professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.” It is an idiotic explanation. In the first place, the Roman soldiers who crucified Jesus were experienced executioners. That was their craft, that

was their trade. They knew when somebody was dead, that's why they didn't break His legs, they knew He was dead. They also knew He was dead because they ran a spear into His side and out came blood and water, indication of the rupturing of His heart.

But even beyond that, the swoon theory has to explain how Jesus, weakened by the brutal blood-letting scourging that He received before the crucifixion, and then the punishing effects of being crucified, and then three days without food and water, freed Himself from the grave clothes – something Lazarus couldn't do; Jesus had to tell somebody to loose him and let him go – rolled the stone away, overpowered the Roman guard, and then took a nice leisurely walk to Emmaus seven miles away on nail-pierced feet, and had a wonderful chat with a couple of disciples. Swoon theory doesn't explain how a half-dead individual desperately in need of triage could have then managed to convince His disciples that He had died and risen again, so much so that they would give their life for that belief.

There's a second view that has been popular, it's called the hallucination theory. These folks argue that Jesus' followers were so overwhelmed with grief and so overwhelmed with sorrow, and they wanted so desperately for Him to be resurrected that they imagined it. They literally hallucinated it into their own sort of semi-consciousness. The problem with a hallucination is it's a very personal experience. You don't have group hallucinations.

And by the way, Jesus is recorded to have appeared ten different times. So were all these people in all their various groupings, including 500 at one time, all having this sort of common hallucination? And then you have to ask the question: if they were hallucinating Jesus into some kind of imaginary existence, why is it that in three of those occasions they didn't know who He was. That's a little difficult to explain. And then you have to explain how a hallucination can eat a piece of fish, point out a school of fish to be caught, and make breakfast. And then you have to account for the empty tomb and the missing body.

Because those didn't work, somebody came up with another one; it's called the wrong tomb theory. The women went to the wrong tomb. Yes, even though they had been there Friday with Joseph and Nicodemus anointing the body, putting it in there, they went to the wrong tomb. Mary Magdalene went to the wrong tomb, the other women coming later went to the wrong tomb, Peter and John went to the wrong tomb, everybody went to the wrong tomb.

You know how to debunk that theory of resurrection? Go to the right tomb and point to the body. How obvious is that? If they went to the wrong tomb the body was still in the right tomb. The Romans would have known the right tomb because they sent the guard there. The Sanhedrin would have known the right tomb, they sent the guard there. They would have simply gone and said, "This tomb is occupied; He did not rise."

But the most enduring theory of the resurrection, apart from the truth of it, is that the disciples stole the body; and that basically was initiated by the Jewish leaders. When the Roman soldiers came back and they told their story, you remember there was an earthquake, an angel rolled the stone away, an angel even sat on the stone. They had been literally put to sleep by some divine anesthesia.

The next thing you know there's an earthquake, the stone's rolled away, and the body is gone, and

the soldiers come to the Jewish leaders in Matthew, and they give this report, Matthew 28", that, "The earthquake came. We were all asleep, and we don't know how to explain it." And so the leaders of Israel say, "Here's what you're going to say. 'While we were asleep they stole the body,'" – which is stupid to begin with, because if you were asleep, how do you know they stole the body? "But that's what you say."

They know they're going to get in trouble with Pilate, because a Roman guard is supposed to do his duty. So the Jewish leaders say, "Well, we'll handle Pilate for you. You just go and tell everybody the disciples stole the body, and we'll give you this money. So they bribed them, paid them a sum of money, and that became the dominating theory of the resurrection. And Matthew writes in Matthew 28:15 that it was still the dominant view much, much later in the first century. So they will do anything to deny a resurrection.

The reason the disciples stole the body view doesn't work is because the disciples didn't even expect a resurrection. The disciples didn't even believe He would rise from the dead. And, furthermore, the disciples didn't overpower the Romans or the Romans would have said that. That doesn't work. If the disciples stole the body to fake a resurrection, believe me, the Jewish authorities would have done everything they could to find that body to disprove the resurrection.

Because that doesn't work very well, somebody came up with the idea that the Romans stole the body. Why would the Romans steal the body? What point would they have in stealing the body? They didn't expect anything from Jesus. Would they fake a resurrection for a religion that they had nothing to do with? "Well, grave robbers stole the body." Well then why did they unwrap the body? Nothing like that works.

More importantly on the positive side, Jesus made about ten appearances after His resurrection. He appeared to Mary Magdalene. He appeared to the other women. He appeared to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. He appeared to Peter, appeared to John, appeared to the ten without Thomas, then the ten with Thomas. He appeared to seven of the apostles on the shore of Galilee, then to 500 brethren, probably on a mountain in Galilee. And then He had appearances with them over 40 days. Acts 1 says He was with them for 40 days teaching things concerning the kingdom, and a final appearance in Acts 1 before He ascended into heaven. Massive eyewitness testimony.

Now one other thing to say about it: all His appearances were to believers. All of them were to believers. He made no appearances to nonbelievers, with one later exception. There was one unbeliever to whom He appeared after His resurrection, and that was the apostle Paul on the road to Damascus, and He stopped Paul in his tracks – and you know the story. He is the only unbeliever that our Lord ever appeared to.

His normal method of reaching the lost and convincing them of His resurrection is not to make appearances, it's not to make appearances. The way He's going to proclaim the saving gospel is through the preaching of that gospel by the apostles and those who follow them, and the preachers throughout redemptive history.

In John 12:37 John says this of Jesus: "Though He had performed so many signs, so many miracles before them, they were not believing in Him, they were not believing in Him." And Jesus Himself said in Luke 16:31, "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if

someone rises from the dead.”

There was proof of that. Not too long before His own death He had raised Lazarus from the dead, and everybody knew about it. And He had raised a couple of other people that are recorded in the gospels, and maybe more that aren't recorded. All the books of the world couldn't contain all the things that He did. That didn't convince anybody.

Peter and John and the women have seen the empty tomb, and just seeing the empty tomb, they don't believe in a resurrection. There was not an eagerness to believe in a resurrection; and even if the resurrection was true and Jesus appeared, they would not believe. Our Lord did not decide through all of redemptive history He was going to keep making appearances until the end of the age. He determined that He would make some appearances for a 40-day period, and the eyewitnesses would give a record, and they would preach the resurrection from the eyewitness accounts, and every generation subsequently would preach the gospel of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. And by the preaching of that gospel and faith in that gospel, the Holy Spirit would bring people into His kingdom – only to believers, only to believers.

First Corinthians 15, tells us that He appeared to Peter, to the twelve, five hundred brothers, to James, the apostles, and then untimely fashion later to Paul – all believers. No sense in appearing to Israel, He had already pronounced judgment on them. No sense in going all through human history making appearances to people to convince them of the resurrection, just eyewitness accounts in the hands of preachers was His method. So here we meet the first eyewitness, the first eyewitness. Now let's look at the text, then we'll hurry through in a few minutes. Simple narrative.

But Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping, and so as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb. She goes there, as you know, to make sure everything's okay, and maybe somebody would be able to roll the stone away. She has a little conversation with some women who were with her – but she got there first – that maybe somebody would roll the stone so they could put some more spices on the body of Jesus to minimize the stench of decay. She's going there because she loves Him. She goes there, she finds the tomb is empty. She is weeping; she is literally sobbing. She is sobbing because He's not there, He's not there. She sees into the tomb stooping down, looking, and it's empty.

Her tears are needless; they're in vain. Her love is manifest in those tears. The idea of weeping here is sobbing. It's kind of constant, unrestrained sobbing. She gives full course to her pain and sorrow, her helpless love sobs uncontrollably. She reminds me of Hagar in the wilderness. She had a well of water by her side, but she couldn't have eyes to see it. She expects the worst, because she doesn't expect the resurrection. Somebody's stolen the body.

J. C. Ryle once wrote, “Two-thirds of the things we fear in life never happen. Two-thirds of the tears we shed are thrown away in vain. Her tears are for the tears of a broken heart forlorn, frustrated, lonely, not understanding anything that had happened, having lost the object of her pure love. So she looks in and she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet where the body of Jesus had been lying.”

Matthew 16 says that the angel was a young man, one of the angels was a young man. And Luke 24:4 says there were two young men, two men. So these are angels who are spirits who have

taken on, as angels do, some kind of male form. She likely didn't know they were angels. Why would she be able to recognize an angel in human form as an angel?

Furthermore, she's weeping, she's sobbing. Her eyes are blurred with tears. It's early in the morning; the shadowed interior of the tomb would make things difficult to see, so she sees what are angels, but also in human form, and doesn't really know who they are. But by the way, the presence of angels is proof positive that the tomb was not rifled by human hands, that the body was not stolen, but rather that heaven has a vital interest in the resurrection of Christ. She looks in and there is the place where the body was to lie and an angel on each end.

When I think about that I am immediately carried back to Exodus 25 when the Lord gave instructions to build the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle. He identified a place called the mercy seat. That was the place where God met men in mercy. That's where the high priest would go on the Day of Atonement, sprinkle blood to satisfy God. It was the mercy seat. It was of pure gold. It was inside the Holy of Holies. It was two-and-a-half cubits long, one-and-a-half cubits wide.

"At each end, each end of the mercy seat, make two cherubim of gold, one at each end, two ends of the mercy seat. Make one cherub at one end, one cherub at the other end. There" – verse 22 – "I will meet with you. There I will meet with you. Between the two cherubim, I will speak to you, I will meet with you."

Here, again, she looks in and there are two angels, and then a wonderful analogy: God is saying, "I will meet you in the empty tomb. Here I will meet you. Here I will speak with you." Once God met men in a tent, and once in a building on a golden mercy seat with two angels. Now God meets men in the empty tomb.

The angel said to her in verse 13, "Woman, why are you weeping?" Woman is a term of dignity. "Why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they've taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him."

Again, no idea of a resurrection, no thought of a resurrection. Even though our Lord had said He would rise, they just didn't believe it. She is sobbing the tears of unbelief, and she thinks that they – whoever they are – "they have taken away my Lord, and I don't know where they have laid Him."

She's not sure who, but that's the only thing that can explain an empty tomb. She is alone; she is forsaken; she is forlorn; she is brokenhearted. She had loved as she had never loved, and been loved as she had never been loved. This woman rescued from seven demons had been in the sweet fellowship of the blessed Son of God, Son of love. And now He's gone, and He's dead, and she can't even do a courtesy of putting some spices on His body.

Before the angels apparently could say anything in response, verse 14: "When she had said this, 'They've taken Him away, and I don't know where they've laid Him.'" By the way, she called Him "my Lord, my Lord." He was still her Lord in her mind, even though He was dead.

"When she said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus." She lingered at the tomb hoping to find Him dead; He lingered at the tomb waiting to show Himself to her alive. She lingered out of love; He lingered out of love. She lingered out of love for

Him; He lingered out of love for Her, this first eyewitness, this woman, the nobody. Jesus is standing there in verse 14, she doesn't know it's Jesus. Her tears, again, are blinding her. Her doubts are blinding her. She has no reason to believe in a resurrection, at least in her mind.

And, oh, by the way, every time Jesus appeared after His resurrection He had to identify Himself, because He was in a different form; He had a glorious resurrection body. And while there would have been familiar elements to that body, this was not the body that went to the cross, this was an eternal resurrection body that would never die and never be decayed. That is why on the road to Emmaus, as recorded in Luke 24, when Jesus joined those disciples on that resurrection day and walked along with them, it says, verse 16 of Luke 24, "Their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him."

Prevented by what? Well, He was not the way they knew Him. It's like Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:16. He says, "I once knew Christ after the flesh, but in that way I know Him no more. And once I had a vision of Him, but I don't see Him in the physical anymore." And later on in that 24th chapter, "While He was at the table with them, He took bread," – verse 30 – "blessed it, broke it, and began giving it to them, and their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight." Even when He appeared to the disciples they were terrified because of His entrance and because of His glory. His resurrection form was different, it was different. So Mary didn't recognize Him. Nobody did unless He disclosed Himself to them.

Jesus then in verse 15 does that. "He said to her" – and these are the first words spoken by Jesus after His resurrection, and they are to this woman. And He says the same thing the angel said exactly: "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" And she says to herself, "Hmm, this must be the gardener."

"So she said to Him, 'Sir, if you've carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away.'" She is sure He is dead, and somebody has taken the body. She thinks Jesus is the gardener.

Again, early morning, hazy vision because of her tears, and then verse 16 – incredible – "Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' When she heard that she turned and said to Him in Jewish Aramaic, or Hebrew, 'Rabboni!'" – which is sort of an emphatic way of saying rabbi, or teacher. All He said was, "Mary!"

Do you remember what our Lord said in another context back in the 10th chapter of John. This is a wonderful illustration of that. He said, John 10:3, "The sheep hear his voice, he calls his own sheep by name." Verse 4, "They know his voice, they know his voice. They follow him."

She knew that voice. She knew the way He said that name. There's a song that's been written, a Christian song, and the title of it is *He Knows My Name*. That's true, He knows your name.

Mary is the Aramaic equivalent of the old Hebrew Miriam, the name of the sister of Moses. Immediately she knows when she hears Him say Miriam that it's her teacher. And, of course, we know she falls at His feet, because that's what all the women did. Matthew 28 says that when the women met Jesus they came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him. They just put their arms around His feet, prone in front of Him, clinging to Him, worshipping Him.

And that's what Mary does. The shock of being more sorrowful than you'd ever been in your entire

life to a moment of the most exhilarating explosive joy ever comprehended, the transition is to profound, and the one thought she has in her mind is, “I don’t want to lose Him again.” And so she takes hold of His feet kind of like the Shulamite woman in Song of Solomon who said, “I found him whom my soul loves. I held him and would not let him go.” So she hold on, not going to let Him go again. This is pure love.

So He says to her in verse 17, “Stop clinging to Me.” Mary’s holding on for dear life. “Stop. Stop clinging to Me.” Strong word. Why? “I have not yet ascended to the Father. I have to ascend to heaven. I have to ascend to heaven.”

He told them this many times that He was going back to the Father. John 13, the night, Thursday night, the upper room, the great Passover began, John says, with Jesus knowing that His hour had come, that He would go to the Father.

Chapter 14 of that, all of that Upper Room Discourse, “I’m going to the Father.” Chapter 17, the High Priestly Prayer, “I’m coming to You, Father.” Before He ever got to the cross, He was looking past the cross to going to the Father. That was the joy that was set before Him that allowed Him to endure the cross, because He knew it would take Him to the Father.

“I can’t stay,” He’s saying. “Mary, I can’t stay, I have to go to the Father.” And this is sort of metaphoric. It’s beyond just, “Just let go of Me in this moment.” It’s, “You’re not going to be able to keep Me here, because the plan is I ascend to heaven.”

And as He had told them, “When I get back to heaven I’m going to send the Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of Christ who will be in you. And you will have all that I am in you, and all the resources of heaven in you: all the peace, all the joy, all the power. I have not yet ascended to My Father. But for now” – He says – “go to My brothers.”

I want to stop there. That’s the first time believers have been called brothers in the gospel of John. This is new. “We are called” – as the disciples were – “friends, slaves, but never brothers. This is a first. How did we become brothers who were once friends and once slaves? How did we become brothers?” The cross made us brothers. The cross made it possible for us to become the children of God, brothers and sisters.

Hebrews 2:9 says that “Jesus suffered death, suffered death, so that He could bring His own to glory because He’s not ashamed to call them brothers.” This stretches any kind of thought in Judaism. To say that you are a son of God individually is to claim to have the divine nature, and it’s blasphemous. To say you are the brother or sister of deity would be equally blasphemous, but it’s the truth. By His work on the cross we have been placed in Christ, in His death, in His burial, in His resurrection. We are in Him everlastingly. We are now His brothers, and He is not ashamed to call us brother.

What does that mean? Well, just listen to Romans 8: “You are sons of God. The Spirit Himself” – verse 16 – “witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God. And if children, then heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, who will be glorified with Him.” When it says brothers, it means we’re the brothers of Christ, brothers and sisters of Christ, and we share His inheritance. That’s how Isaiah 53 ends. We share His rewards. We share the spoil with Him and He with us. That’s what it means to be a Christian, to become a brother of the Son of God.

Listen to Galatians 3:26, “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.” This is new. What does it mean? “Say to My brothers, ‘I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.’ You have now entered into the relationship that I have with My Father.” Incredible.

What it means to be a Christian: your God is Christ’s God, your Father is Christ’s Father, because you are in Christ, one with Him. The spiritual implications of that are unpacked through the rest of the epistles of the New Testament. “Go tell them we’re all brothers. We share the same common life, the same relationship to God as His children, the same eternal inheritance.”

“Mary Magdalene came announcing to the disciples,” – so you can imagine – ‘I’ve seen the Lord,’ and that He had said these things to her.” What a moment. I hate to rain on this parade, but the sad reality is they didn’t believe her.

Listen to this, Luke 24: “The women came telling these things to the apostles.” Eventually the other women showed up. “They’re talking to the apostles,” – Luke 24:10 – “but these words appeared to them as nonsense, and they would not believe them.”

They did not believe in a resurrection. They didn’t even believe when somebody they knew well said, “I have seen the Lord.” But their turn’s coming later that night. But that’s not for today, that’s for next time.

Lord, again, Your Word is so rich and so encouraging. Our hearts are literally overflowing with gratitude for all that has been granted to us in the glory of Scripture – a book without parallel, a book without equal. Nothing even comes close to the revelation of glory in this book. We thank You that Christ rose and that He lives, and that we live in Him, and He’s not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters, and we share the same common life; and as You are His God and His Father, You are our God and our Father. And as You grant Him all the inheritance of heaven, You grant us that same inheritance; for we are in Him, joint heirs. We thank You for the resurrection. May we be faithful in believing and proclaiming its glories. Amen.

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