

The Power of Jesus' Resurrection

“57 When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple: 58 He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. 59 And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60 And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed. 61 And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre. 62 Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, 63 Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. 64 Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. 65 Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. 66 So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.” (Matthew 27:57-66 KJV)

After Jesus died on the cross he was buried and laid in a tomb. The place that Jesus' body was laid got secured and scrutinized in a way that it will not be feasible to be reached. As if the enemy, the devil would still fight to even hinder Jesus from rising from the dead. But it was impossible even to the grave to lay hold on Him, *“54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 15:54-57 KJV)*

Three things were at the entrance of the tomb of Jesus that may hinder reaching to Him and may deceitfully work to hinder spreading the good news of His resurrection. *The same these things may oppose the church today and work to hinder the spread of the good news of Jesus' victory on death. But the resurrection has power and is at work this very day to aid us, we who are His church, His workers to combat all the following obstacles and forces:*

1. The old tradition represented by the stone at the entrance: “59 And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60 And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.” (Matthew 27:59-60 KJV) Who put this stone? Joseph. Who was he? The gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John give good account about him of who he really was.

A. who also himself was Jesus' disciple: “57 When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple:” (Matthew 27:57 KJV)

B. an honourable counsellor: “43 Joseph of Arimathaea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.” (Mark 15:43 KJV)

C. a counsellor; and he was a good man, and a just: “50 And, behold, there was a man named Joseph, a counsellor; and he was a good man, and a just:” (Luke 23:50 KJV)

D. being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews: “38 And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. 39 And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. 40 Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.” (John 19:38-40 KJV)

When we put all the four together we can conclude that Joseph of Arimathea was still following the Jewish tradition, he was part of the Jewish council, he had faith in Jesus and was a disciple of Him but kept that secretly so that his privileges from the Jewish side will not be affected. He was still rooted in the tradition as he showed his interest more in burying the body of Jesus according to Jewish customs more than his interest to follow the Word of God.

The women who went to the tomb were asking each other who will remove the stone that Joseph of Arimathea had placed at the entrance, *“1 And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. 2 And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. 3 And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?” (Mark 16:1-3 KJV)* It is really a question, *“Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?”* The same obstacle and the same question the church today is facing. ** There are many Christians today are living in the old tradition, they believe in Christ and they claim that they are His disciples but they are still clung to old traditions and practices that contradict and do not agree with the Word of God. * They are like Joseph of Arimathea, themselves they put obstacles but are unaware of that. Their teachings and ways of life rooted in many customs and traditions that hinder others from reaching Christ and know Him in the right way.*

But here is the good news, *“4 And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.” (Mark 16:4 KJV)* The stone that the women were thinking about, got removed in the following way: *“2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.” (Matthew 28:2 KJV)*

In the same way God will handle whatever obstacles that comes from the traditional churches and Christians who are not sound in their ways of life. You do not need to worry because Christ's resurrection power is able to move away whatever hindrances and will enable us as church to continue to testify about Christ's resurrection and go forward with the guidance and the power of God, the Holy Spirit to continue to preach the gospel and making new disciples for Jesus.

2. The manipulative corruptive church leaders represented by the seal, and the persecution represented by the guards: “62 Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, 63 Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. 64 Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by

night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. 65 Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. 66 So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.” (Matthew 27:62-66 KJV)

The chief priests and the Pharisees wanted to abolish any possibility of Christ’s resurrection from the dead. They were assuming that His disciples would go and take Him out from the tomb and claim that He rose from the dead. So they went to Pilate and requested him to give order for the tomb to be secured. Pilate knew very well the Pharisees and the chief priests how they were manipulative in attitude and had great jealousy toward Jesus, so he told them, *“Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can.” (Matthew 27:65 KJV)*

Not only that but when Christ resurrected on the third day and the guards reported that, still the chief priests and the Pharisees wanted to oppose that and hinder the good news of Jesus’ victory over death. Let us read what they did: *“11 Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. 12 And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, 13 Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. 14 And if this come to the governor’s ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. 15 So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.” (Matthew 28:11-15 KJV)* The chief priests and the Pharisees had the following wrong attitudes:

A. Accusation against Jesus and his disciples: They accused Jesus as a deceiver and accused His disciples that they came and stole the body of Jesus to make false proclamation about His resurrection.

B. Cheating: In the form of using money to bribe the guards in order to change their witness and testimony.

C. They were liars: They put words in the mouths of the guards and instructed them to say lies.

Now a day inside the church many leaders who take position and authority inside the church but they are corrupt people. They know the Word of God very well but they do not practice the truth because they need to give up their positions and certain privileges that they are happy to have. It is a very discouraging fact today about the church that those who lead are corrupted, and accuse badly genuine workers who are not willing to please them. These bad leaders they use their position, lies and money to pervert the truth.

In spite of all that we are still called to preach the gospel in such atmosphere. Even there are liars and false teachers and manipulative pastors who know the truth but they keep their hand in corruption to keep receiving their privileges, God still wants us to be honest and truthful to Him and to the people and live in honesty living and proclaiming the message. The power of Christ’s resurrection will enable us to combat all these evil forces inside the church and we will receive the victory and will be able to preach the message and reach new people and make new disciples.

The early church believers and disciples (for example Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had driven seven demons) were feeble in position, reputation and resources in comparison to the chief priests and the Pharisees, **but God was with them as He is with us today and the power of Jesus’ resurrection worked for their behalf as today is working and aiding us to combat all lies, manipulations and corruptions, and the message is preached! Therefore we need to continue to preach the truth so the gospel message will be available to those who are willing to follow.**

Furthermore the resurrected Christ combated the acts of the Pharisees and encouraged His disciples and motivated them to go forward and spread the message, *“19 Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. 20 And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the LORD. 21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.” (John 20:19-21 KJV)* **The same Lord will do the same for us today and will continue to inspire us to reach new areas with the gospel.**

The Resurrected Christ further more appeared and commissioned others to continue to do the work, *“3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: 5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: 6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. 7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. 8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.” (1 Corinthians 15:3-8 KJV)* **This Word of God should encourage us that the same Lord will continue to reveal Himself to others, will change their lives and commissioned them to serve Him with us.**

The other obstacle that had faced the early disciples and faces us today is the persecution and this represented by the guards. Pilate was the source for the guards at the tomb of Jesus. But Pilate would not do that unless the chief priests and the Pharisees were the people who invited him to do that. In the same way, persecution will come from the non believers, but the corrupted and manipulative leaders have hand in that. They were the one who recommend to Pilate to crucify the Lord because their interests got affected with Jesus’ sound teaching. The non believers will not know the details of the body of Christ unless people from inside who are jealous and angry with the truth will report to them and invite them to harm. **The corruptive church leaders will use the non believers and the government of the countries and nations in order to harm and stop the true followers and disciples of Christ who delight and live the truth, “12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” (2 Timothy 3:12 KJV)**

The early church was persecuted by Pilate and Herod prompted by the Jewish, but Christ’s resurrection power prevailed over these forces. Paul in his letter to the Philippians he mentioned to them the following *“22 All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar’s household.” (Philippians 4:22 KJV)* The Roman soldiers who crucified the Lord, now their country mates became saints and faithful disciples of Jesus.

Paul said and desired the following as we can read in *Philippians 3:10*, “*That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;*” Paul delighted and desired the following:

- A. ***That I may know him:*** Paul wanted to know more about Christ’s justification and sanctification. *Let us desire the same.*
- B. ***and the power of his resurrection:*** What we described in this message is the impact of Christ’s resurrection and what can do to us. Let us desire as Paul desired to know and experience more of that power.
- C. ***and the fellowship of his sufferings:*** We will experience more of Christ’s resurrection power as we are willing to humble down and share in His suffering.
- D. ***being made conformable unto his death:*** We need to be willing to be like Christ, to imitate Him by full submission to the will of God, forgiving those who hurt us, and in surrendering to His plan and purpose.

My dear and beloved: The way you see things and understand events in the light of His Word can mark and bring great victory in your life. *God is with His church, His disciples and He is with us to combat whatever old tradition that comes from the traditional churches and traditional Christians, and whatever corruption and persecution that we may face from hypocrites who know the truth but delight in worldliness and wickedness to pursue their evil motives and wrong purposes in serving God.*

** We must know that Jesus’ resurrection power is real and can overcome whatever hindrances may come in front of us that deceitfully work to hinder spreading the good news of His resurrection. * Let us be encouraged by the message so we can go forward treading the power of darkness and overcoming by Christ’s help all the obstacles that the enemy might placed before us.*

Let us pray ...

My Prayer: *Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the Cross for my sins and rose from the dead to give me eternal life. Lord thank you for your encouraging Word to me. Lord thank you for all the miracles that you have done to remove many and various obstacles that hindered my walk with you and thank you for all the protection I received from you. Lord thank you for all the teaching, the rebukes, the corrections and admonishment that we received in this message.*

Come now to God and confess and renounce all your sins. Confess and renounce all your traditional practices that contradict the Scripture. Confess and renounce your lack of faith and full trust in God. Confess and renounce your lies, cheating, corruption and hypocrisy. Confess and renounce your worldliness, your greed, and your love for money and material things. Confess and renounce your anger, hatred, revenge, un-forgiveness, grudge and bitterness. Confess and renounce your envy and jealousy. Confess and renounce your lust and your sexual immoralities. Confess and renounce your yoke with non believers, and in bondage with the Media, News and games. Confess and renounce your non willingness to suffer for Christ and got persecuted. Lord forgive me, I repent of the following sins

Lord I put in your hand the following obstacles _____ . Lord I trust you that you can handle them and whatever obstacle else that you can remove them from my way so that I can continue to preach the gospel and proclaim your will and plan to others. Lord continue to encourage me and provide for me and give me the joy, the good health and the strength so I can continue to serve you and live according to your will.

Lord thank you for my Brothers and Sisters who responded to the message and gave their lives fully for you to serve you. Lord continue to lead them to serve you, remove obstacles from before them and protect them from persecution, provide their needs, fill them with the Holy Spirit and make them fruitful to bring more souls unto you.

Lord, bless us and aid us as workers and Church of God to testify about your goodness to others. Lord continue to encourage us and provide for us and give us the joy and the strength so we can continue spread the good news of Christ’s death and resurrection. Lord increase our faith and trust in you and we ask you to help us to overcome the following obstacles _____ . Lord we commit ourselves to go and preach the gospel of Jesus and to live in obedience to your Word that we received in this message. Lord protect us and guide us to handle those troubles that are caused by the traditional Christians and the corrupted church leaders. Lord we ask you to refill us with the Holy Spirit and give us the spiritual gifts that we need to go on and evangelize, and make new disciples and train new workers to go and plant more Bible studies and congregations for the church. Lord fulfill the vision of the church, ‘Multiplication in peace with implementing the whole will of God.’ Lord bless us, enlarge our territory, let your hand be with us and free us from harm so that we will not feel pain. May the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus name, Amen.

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