

I Know My Redeemer Lives

It is hard to imagine that day—those sad and discouraging days. The Son of God lies dead in the tomb. All the hopes and dreams of the disciples had been dashed. They must have been numb as their minds were spinning with the memories of the Passover Supper, the Garden scene, Jesus' prayers, the betrayal, Caiaphus, Annas, Herod, Pilot, the cock crowing and the denials three times over. How can you push out of your mind the image of Jesus having been scourged within an inch of his life, the crown of thorns, the cries from the crowd to crucify him, and then the wooden cross placed on his shoulders and the walk to Golgotha. Could they ever forget the sound of the nails being driven through flesh into wood, the sound of Jesus' voice as he cried for water and for God to see him? And then it was over. Darkness enveloped the earth. It was Friday, Sunday is coming.

He was lovingly laid in that new tomb by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus who must have played over and again in his mind the words Jesus said to him when they first met that night. You must be born again! But now the spices are applied, the body is wrapped, the lifeless form of God's beloved son is held in the arms of two men who loved him. He is placed in the tomb and the stone is rolled across the entrance and it is done. Finished. No more.

And then the Sabbath. Could there possibly be a sadder or more devastating day in the history of the world. Our world has endured many major shocks. It has endured Katrinas and other devastating storms. It has endured tornados, famines, blizzards, floods. It has endured days of terror—Pearl Harbor day and 9-11. But never before and never since had God's Son lay dead in a tomb, crucified by humankind. We have little mention of that Sabbath, but we can imagine

can we not. We can imagine the incredible disappointment. We can imagine the fear and dread that hung over all the earth. We can imagine the deep despair. It was a day when you would rather not even get up. Fallenness had finally hit rock bottom. Sin put God's own Son in the tomb, but it is Saturday, Sunday is coming!

Early that Sunday morning Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to the tomb before it was daybreak. They saw an incredible sight. The stone had been removed from the entrance of the tomb. She quickly ran back to Peter and John and told them what she had seen. Both men ran to the tomb and saw the burial clothes of Jesus folded up, but there was no body. A flutter of excitement filled them as they looked into the tomb. Could it be true? The disciples left but Mary stayed at the tomb. As she cried, she bent over and looked into the tomb and saw two angels standing there where Jesus' body had been laid on Friday. They asked her, "Woman why are you crying." "They have taken my Lord away and I don't know where they have put him."

She turned around and saw Jesus standing there but did not realize that it was him. He said, "Woman, why are you crying. Who are you looking for?" Mary thought it was the gardener and she said, "Sir if you have carried him away please tell me where you have put him, and I will go get him." Jesus said, "Mary" and in that instant Mary knew it was Jesus. She cried out "Rabboni" and obviously was holding on to him with all her might, so much so that Jesus assured her that she didn't have to hang on to him because he was not yet returning to his Father. He sends her back to the disciples to tell them that he is alive. He lives.

That same day in the evening, the disciples were all in one place with the doors locked for fear of the Jews and Jesus appeared before them. He showed them the marks of crucifixion

on his body and breathed on them the Holy Spirit. The only disciple who was not there that evening was Thomas. Thomas was the thinking among the disciples but he was not a coward. When Jesus headed to Bethany to raise his friend Lazarus from the dead, it was Thomas who said lets go with him so we can die with him. It was Thomas who on that last terrifying night heard Jesus' words about how he was going to prepare a place for all those who love him, asked the question that must have been on everyone's mind, "We don't know where you are going so how can we know the way?" We are then not surprised when we read these words.

John 20:24-29 –

24 Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it."

26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

28 Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

29 Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Jesus is the firstfruits of those who have been raised from the dead. That means that we who have loved him and have served him and have depended on his grace will someday follow. We will rise also. The grave cannot keep its hold on us either.

Why does resurrection matter? Why do we come to this place and this time every Sunday and talk about this same thing?

1. Because my past is forgiven. Col. 2:14 – He has forgiven all our sins and has cancelled every debt we owe.

2. My present problems can be managed. Ephesians 1:19, 20 – There is incredibly great power for those who believe. To change situations, break bad habits, save relationships, get out of debt, manage our hectic lives. Phil. 4:13 – I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

3. My future is secure. We will all die but we can be filled with hope. We cant get there alone.

So:

Who taught the sun where to stand in the morning?
And Who told the ocean you can only come this far?
And Who showed the moon where to hide 'til evening?
Whose words alone can catch a falling star?

The very same God that spins things in orbit
Runs to the weary, the worn and the weak
And the same gentle hands that hold me when I'm broken
They conquered death to bring me victory

To take away my shame
And He lives forever, I'll proclaim
That the payment for my sin
Was the precious life He gave
But now He's alive and
There's an empty grave

In that moment, that precious moment in time, Thomas knew what many of us have come to know. It is true! I know my Redeemer lives! Whether you say it, Christ the Lord is Risen from the dead, He is risen indeed! Or you sing it, you can hear the proclamation. It is unmistakable and undeniable. I know my redeemer lives! Can you hear it even today?

Well I know my Redeemer lives
I know my Redeemer lives
All of creation testifies
This life within me cries
I know my Redeemer lives yeah

What about you? Do YOU know that your redeemer lives? Can you join the proclamation this morning? Come to Jesus!