

The Stone Was Rolled Away

Empty is not usually good...

- Empty wallet when you go to pay for something
- Empty milk jug when you already poured your cereal
- Empty Chick-fil-A when you roll up all excited on a Sunday
- Empty gas tank in your wife's car when you get in it

But you can praise God for the empty grave! JESUS IS ALIVE!

Mark 16:1-4 (NKJV)

Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. 2 Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. 3 And they said among themselves, "Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?" 4 But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away—for it was very large.

This stone...weighed approximately 1 ton (2000 lbs)...as much as a giraffe, or polar bear, or great white shark, or 333 bricks, or a Mark 84 bomb.

The stone was rolled in front of the opening. The stone would start out uphill from the opening and would sit in a channel cut in the rock. When they would close the tomb, the stone would be rolled downhill. This would discourage grave robbers as it was very difficult to roll the one ton stone back uphill.

On top of that, Pilate had the stone sealed. They would have used a moldable clay that would seal around the stone and they would imprint the Roman imperial seal in it. So It would harden and you could tell if the stone had been moved.

So picture the Marys heading to the tomb. Who will roll away the stone? Meaning who will roll it back uphill? Nevermind the seal and the Roman guard...but you know these ladies weren't afraid of no soldier...they were probably a couple of momma bears...

You know what I mean...when my son was a baby we were having trouble getting him to sleep. Our neighbors across the street liked to party which involved yelling and fighting. Well this night they were fighting out in the street not too far from the baby's room. Momma had enough, you know that "don't you DARE wake up my baby" kind of momma. Kristi heads out the door before I can say a word. They must have seen her coming and they went inside. She knocked on the storm door, she could see them in there hiding. She knocked harder "I can see you in there" and all of the sudden you hear someone say "dude, it's for you!"

I picture the Marys like this, guard or no guard...we're not scared and ain't nobody gonna keep us from seeing Jesus!

And as they get there, they see the stone was rolled away.

Mark 16:5-8 (NKJV)

And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed.

6 But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. 7 But go, tell His disciples—**and Peter**—that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you."

8 So they went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

What's so significant about the stone being rolled away? Jesus didn't need it rolled away did He?

If you recall, He would later walk through walls. He's in a glorified body. It's still a physical body but without physical limitations. It's an eternal body unlike our dying bodies. Jesus didn't need the stone rolled away. In fact He was already gone!

An angel rolled away the stone to share the good news...He is not here....He is risen!

This was the evidence that the Father had accepted Christ's sacrifice for our sin. He has been resurrected! Just as He said He would be!

I want you to picture the stone.

STONE PHOTO

This stone separates the dead from the living...it's a barrier. Death is behind the stone. Life is outside the stone.

This stone separates light from the dark. Darkness is contained and light is kept from getting in.

And if you're inside...you can't remove the stone on your own...you're stuck, trapped, in darkness, in death.

The stone represents our sin and when it was rolled away, it represents our sin being overtaken by Jesus's resurrection.

It is sin that is the barrier between death and life, darkness and light, and you can't remove sin on your own..you're stuck, trapped...but...

THE STONE WAS ROLLED AWAY! Praise Jesus.

Who makes a way when there is no way? Jesus!
Death, where is your sting? Grave, where is your victory?
There ain't no grave gonna hold His body down! And our God lives!
He's defeated hell, death, and the grave and is seated in heaven in victory and power today!

So this stone that represents our sin being rolled away...I want to look at 3 types of stones...

STONE OF FEAR

Mark 16:8 (NKJV)

So they went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed.
And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

They just got great news...Jesus is alive! Why were they afraid?

Was it the angel? It did say they were alarmed when they saw him. Maybe it was the soldiers who "lost" Jesus. But I think it was something more...

Consider the fact that in their society, women were not messengers. They were to stay quiet, yet here they are the first to see the empty tomb...and they are told to go tell the others.

Maybe their fear is "what will people say?" or "will anyone believe us?"

But we see over and over that when man's fear gives way to Jesus, the power of God breaks through!

Proverbs 29:25 (NKJV)

The fear of man brings a snare,
But whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe.

The resurrection rolls away the stone of fear. Fear keeps you in the dark, feeling hopeless, powerless, unworthy. But the resurrection is evidence that YOU do not have to fear...for He is with you!

Things may be uncertain...but those alive in the Spirit are not bound by fear...for God doesn't give us a spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and a sound mind!

What do you fear...the unknown, rejection of people, being different, failure...Is there a stone of fear keeping you from the life Jesus has for you? He's rolled away the stone!

STONE OF DOUBT

Mark 16:9-11 (NKJV)

Now when He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons. 10 She went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept. 11 And when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe.

Mark 16:12-13 (NKJV)

After that, He appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country. 13 And they went and told it to the rest, but they did not believe them either.

Jesus' followers sure didn't seem to be expecting His resurrection. He had told them...but the Marys were coming to anoint a dead body. The men on the road to Emmaus thought He was dead and the body was missing. In Luke it says the disciples thought through the women's words seemed like nonsense or idle talk...

And we all know about ol doubting Thomas...he said he wouldn't even believe unless he could put his fingers in the nail holes in Jesus' hand and his hand in the wound in His side!

Some of us are like Thomas...I want to see. I want proof. I want evidence. But you see faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. And without faith it is impossible to please God.

The resurrection rolls away the stone of doubt.

John 20:30-31 (NKJV)

And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

John himself testifies of these things as someone who was there. John was there at the last supper at Jesus' side. He was at the foot of the cross when Jesus was crucified. And he was the first of the men to make it to the empty grave when he heard Jesus had risen!

John and the other disciples were willing to be put to death rather than deny the fact that they had met the risen Jesus. It just doesn't seem to add up does it? Would you die for a lie? I'd die for a lot of things: my family, my faith, my integrity – but I wouldn't die for a lie.

Every word that Jesus said was true. He is who He says He is. And He has done what He said He'd do!

Is there a stone of doubt that's cutting you off from the light today...that stone was rolled away!

STONE OF SEPARATION

John 21:3-4 (NKJV)

Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing."

They said to him, "We are going with you also." They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing.

If you don't know...Jesus told Peter that he'd deny Jesus 3 times before the rooster crowed. Peter denied it, then he did it. Peter was full of guilt and shame. Peter found himself in a place of separation.

He dealt with both the stone of fear and of doubt. He denied knowing Jesus because of the fear of man. He doubted Jesus' saying that Peter would do this. And those stones caused the sin of separation. Peter disqualified himself and went back to fishing...what he knew before Jesus...

This stone of separation, this is what sin does to a man, causes separation from a holy God. Locks you in darkness with fear and doubt...But Jesus paid the price and rolled away the stone...and He offers you restoration!

He came to Peter and restored Peter to his place as a disciple and apostle.

And He comes to you today to restore not only your relationship with Him, but your identity IN HIM.

You are not defined by your past failures. You are not your mistakes. These don't have to be your name or your future. Jesus rolled away the stone of separation and says come, be redeemed and restored!

When the stone was rolled away, it showed that Christ had overcome death on the cross and the sins of all his people. The stone couldn't stop Jesus. Guards couldn't stop Jesus. Death couldn't stop Jesus. Jesus is alive today, and like the angel who sat on the stone, he is sitting at the right hand of the father offering his good news to all who will accept his gift.

Only through Christ do we experience the freedom, peace, forgiveness and grace of the stones of sin and strongholds in our lives being rolled away.

If there is a God who claims to be the Son of God, and says He is the only way to the Father, and He predicts his death, and He predicts His resurrection, and He dies, and He rises again, I'm following Him.

I'm following Him because He came for someone like me, a sinner who is lost and troubled. He showed me what God is like. The heart of God who sends His son not for the healthy but for the sick, not for the righteous but for the sinners. Because of what He did for me, my only reasonable response is, "Jesus, take my whole life."

FEAR - DOUBT - SEPARATION → PEACE - FAITH - RESTORATION