

"Written In Stone" Mark 16:1-8 Resurrection of Our Lord 2024

Alleluia, He is risen. He is risen, indeed, Alleluia!

It was Saturday evening. The sun had set. The Sabbath had ended. People were out in the streets, and shops had reopened for the evening. But for these three women this was no ordinary shopping trip. They were on a mission: to buy spices to anoint the body of Jesus the next day. They need the spices and there was no time to buy them on Friday. Even if they had had the spices, they could do no work on the Sabbath. Now in the cool of the evening, they had just enough time to complete their shopping. The real work of anointing would have to wait until morning.

Dawn had just come – it was daybreak o'clock. The threesome go to the tomb with their spices. So much had changed. Jesus had been with them, and they with Him. Yet in 24-hours their world had turned over completely. Blocking things out, they kept their minds focused on the tasks before them. The first of which would be how to get into the tomb, which was carved into a stone cliff, for a great wheel of stone had been rolled in front of its entrance. Who might we find there, or who might we get, to roll the stone away for us? Although it could roll, it was too much for them. They could not roll back the stone any more than they could roll back time.

Of course, it isn't just those three women. None of us can roll back time. Yet, although we cannot move time backwards, there are many of things in life that we can undo or re-do or do over. But this wasn't one of them. Death punctuates time. As those of you who have had a loss know, there is before death and there is after death. But there is no going back. Death is monumental, unchangeable, written in stone. It is so monumental that we put up a monument and literally write the day of death in stone.

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They reached the garden and as the tomb came into view, they saw that the stone had already been rolled back. How could that be? Who moved it? Well, at least it's out of the way, we'll find out later. They went in.

Instead of seeing the body of Jesus laid out, wrapped in white linen, they see a young man robed in white. "Oh!" They are startled and taken aback. "Don't be alarmed," he said, "You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth. He has risen, He is not here. Go and tell Peter and the disciples that Jesus is going up to Galilee. You will see Him, just as He told you."

They left the tomb. Their world was changed again. He had said, "Don't be afraid," but they are shaking like a leaf, the situation had gripped them so. What was that situation? Yes, an angel was there. But more than that. The stone was rolled back. Jesus was alive!

Jesus had been dead. This they knew. They were there. They saw him die. They saw His dead body. They saw him wrapped in linen and laid in the tomb. They saw the stone.

Jesus had been dead. A fact as unchangeable and unmovable as that stone. But it did change. The stone of His tomb was rolled away. It was moved. Christ has risen! The fact that Jesus had died did not change. But He was no longer dead. Death was no longer the stone-cold monumental changer of reality. Christ is the changer of reality. By and through Him the world was created, in and through Him we are re-created.

My death, your death, is a fact. An inescapable, unmovable, unchangeable fact. It hasn't happened yet, but it is a solid fact. We just haven't caught up with our death yet. Our death is written in

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stone. But your resurrection in Christ Jesus is also written in stone. It is written on the stone tomb of Jesus, which is empty, and on that stone that was rolled away. Your resurrection is an inescapable, unmovable, unchangeable fact. It hasn't happened yet, but it is a solid fact. You just haven't caught up with it yet.

There are two tombs in Israel that make major claims to being the tomb of Christ: The garden tomb and the holy sepulcher. Which one is the real one? It doesn't matter. Both are empty. In two thousand years no one has found the tomb of Christ. And considering that the opposition against Him was so strong that the religious leaders schemed and succeeded in having Christ crucified, if there were any tomb with His body, they would have quickly found it and publicized it.

Those women did not find His body that morning, but you have found His body. Not His corpse, but the body and blood of the risen Christ which He gives to you in His holy supper. Your sin is washed away by Christ. Your death, written in stone, is defeated by His resurrection, written in stone. Your reality has been changed by the changed reality of Christ and His resurrection.

Romans, Chapter 6: Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried therefore with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with Him in a death like His, we shall certainly be united with Him in a resurrection like His.

Because Christ is raised, you too shall be raised from the dead. In Him you are a new creation and you shall live with Him in the new heaven and the earth. It's a solid, unmovable, unchangeable fact.

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It's written in stone. For Christ has died, Christ is risen, and Christ shall come again. Amen.

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