

Beloved people of God,

Today is resurrection Sunday. Indeed, for the Christian every Sunday, more than that, every day is resurrection day. And if Jesus had not risen from the dead, then what we spoke about on Good Friday morning would not be true either. But we need not worry, for Scripture tell us that Jesus indeed rose from the dead. Jesus told us He would, and many people saw the resurrected Christ, as many as 500 at one time it records in 1 Cor 15:6.

This morning I wish to invite you to a grave that marks a new beginning. I am extending the same invitation as the angels of the Lord gave to the two Mary's. "Come see the place where he lay." That is what I want you to do this morning. I want to invite you to look into a grave to see what we can learn. And this invitation is for the believer and unbeliever alike. It is for those who love the Lord Jesus so that they may be encouraged and comforted. It is for those who do not yet believe so that they may be challenged. So I say to all, "Come, come and see where He lay." Come, see this empty grave! For surely we desire to see it.

We want to look at this grave where Lord of the universe once laid down his life for sinners. We want to come to the grave of our nearest and dearest friend who said He would be with us always. We want to see the grave of the one who said that if we believed in Him we would not see death. We want to see this grave because it represents our Saviour's victory, the one who conquered death and hell. So come, come and see where he lay. I say come, for this empty grave stands behind everything that we believe and live for.

I am very much aware of what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15, that if Christ wasn't raised from the dead then we are of all people to be pitied, for we are still dead in our sins and the wrath of God is still upon us. What a dreadful thought. If resurrection Sunday wasn't true, then every time we lowered a friend or loved into an open grave it would spell disaster. It would cause us endless anguish and grief. If resurrection Sunday wasn't true than our prayers would be futile for no one would be listening. If Christ wasn't raised we might as well eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we may die. So I ask you to come, come and see where he was laid. That is the invitation. Not just an invitation from me, but from one of God's very own servants. The angels say, "Come and see where he lay," for the Lord Jesus was their Lord too.

Now there are a number of things we must see and know about this grave, this tomb. The first thing we see is that this tomb was cut out of a rock, a borrowed tomb from Joseph of Arimathea. For three days the Lord borrowed it, and then gave it back to its owner. Spurgeon suggests that this borrowed grave was not to dishonour the Lord, but just as he had borrowed the sins of another, so now he borrowed the tomb of another. And now that Jesus had paid sinful man's debt to his Father in heaven, His Father is already paying him honour.

No longer did He need to suffer, for his work was complete. No longer despised and rejected but now being honoured with a new tomb, no longer beaten and spat upon, but embalmed with spices. Yes, that is where the King of kings was laid; that is where the Lord of the universe was laid to rest. A rock, a rock of ages, plain, simple, and yet lasting. People will be able to see this tomb for ages to come and they will see it is empty. Yes, the Lord has risen.

The second thing we notice about where he was laid is that it was the first time that this place for burial was used. We read in Ch 27:60 that it was a new tomb. No one could say that someone else arose on the Sunday morning, nor can anyone say that Jesus touched someone's bones and that they had some mystical power, like Elisha's bones had on the man they threw him into his grave (2 Kgs 13:21). The Lord Jesus had the power to lay down his life and to pick it up again [Jn 10:18].

Now are you ready to see where he lay? Or are you still frightened to look into the tomb. Don't let the earthquake frighten you. Don't let the darkness frighten you. The guards are so frightened; they seem as dead men. The angel is there, his appearance is like lightning and his clothes as white as snow. He has rolled away the stone. "Come, look where he lay." Don't fear brother and sister to come, for Christ is not in the tomb nor is he in hell or purgatory. "He is in the grave no more. He has risen". And that is why we dare to stoop down and look into the grave. Psalm 16 reminds us that His body would not see decay [Psalm 16:10].

Yes, for three days his body lay in the grave, but he arose for death could not hold him, for he no sin of his own. He had said it so often when he had walked the earth, (Mat 26:32 cf. 16:21; 17:23; 20:29) but the disciples had failed to understand.

“Come, see the place where the Lord lay.” Brothers and sisters have I struck a cord of emotion? Does the invitation to see an empty grave touch your heart? Oh I wish it would. Have you seen the place where they laid the Lord, and have you understood that we were the murderers who put him there? As an old hymn goes, “My Lord, what you did suffer, t’was all for sinners’ gain. Mine, mine was the transgression, but yours the deadly pain.”

Or perhaps you like a new song: “Behold the man upon the cross, my sin upon His shoulders; ashamed, I hear my mocking voice call out among the scoffers. It was my sin that held Him there until it was accomplished” Yes, our sin was the reason our Lord was slain. We were responsible for his cruel death. Our nearest and dearest friend we killed. We killed the one who loved with an everlasting love. We killed the one who loved the unlovable.

Oh when I consider that Christ should have to die for me, I am also tempted like Peter to cry out that he should never die for me. But that is not the love that Jesus wants. For Jesus drank the cup of wrath for my sin that his own Father placed before him. He saw me dying and going to hell, and he died in my stead. So come and see where he lay and with joy and gladness realize he lies there no more. Rejoice with me this Easter Sunday morn, because the grave is empty.

My dearest friend has conquered, crushing death beneath his feet. Rejoice, O Christian, for he is no longer in the grave, he is risen. “Come, see the place where the Lord lay.” One more thought if I may. One day soon, for life is short, unless the Lord returns soon, we all will be lowered into our grave. Yes, you and I will also have to lie in a grave, whether that be a hole in the dirt or a jar in a wall or have our ashes scattered in the winds.

We sometimes forget the reality of it all because we hate thinking about our greatest enemy. Yet the reality is that in spite of all our power, medical knowledge, all our position and status, all of us must lie as low as the Saviour did. Some of us are blessed with only a few short years and we enter glory, almost early promotion. Some of us have to suffer and fight the good fight of faith a little longer, perhaps even three score and ten or four score.

But no matter how long, one thing is sure, we all must lie as low as the Saviour did. But do not despair oh Christian for the grave is empty and Jesus has risen. In fact, if you believe in Jesus as your Saviour, then your eyes will not see death. Yes, our earthly shell will decay and decompose, but our living breath, our soul, will be in glory at the twinkling of an eye! “I am the resurrection and the life” said Jesus, “He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die” [Jn 11:25-26].

And one day soon, Christ will return and our decayed bodies will be raised into newness of life, to be joined with our souls. Oh what glory, what a day that will be! Come see where he lay, and yes you too sinner and you who still don’t believe, because you too will die just like the rest of us. Oh you can rant and rave all you like and put up all sorts of arguments, but your bodily death is inevitable. Your good works, your family, your church affiliation, nor your elder or minister will not keep you from the jaws of death. Come and see where he lay. He has risen. And just as Jesus rose, so all shall all, both Christians and non Christians alike.

Yes, granted, it is a mystery, but our God can do all things. He will gather the dust particles of my earthly body, from the four corners of the earth if necessary, for Scripture tells us that all have to face the Judge. Death and grave is not the end but the door way to a new beginning. And the Scriptures tell us clearly – believe in Jesus’ completed work which the empty grave signifies and you will be saved to eternal life to the glory of God the Father. So please one and all, come see where he lay and rejoice that today is resurrection Sunday and it is still the day of grace, the day of salvation. Don’t live all your God given days being frightened of death and the grave. Come and see that Jesus who died for your sins has risen.

“Death is no longer the stronger; hell itself is captive led. Christ has risen from death’s prison, over the tomb he light has shed.” Come see where he lay, the tomb is empty, a sure sign of our acquittal. If any sin remained, then Christ’s body would still be in the grave.

But thankfully Jesus has paid the debt in full. What a beautiful, comforting thought hey. So come, come see where our precious Lord and Saviour was laid and believe. Come and see the grave is empty, meditate upon the results. Come and see where he lay unrepentant sinner, and may it convict you to repent and to seek his face. Come and see where he lay, you who doubt, think about the empty grave. Come and see where he lay, you who think they are more righteous than the rest, and see that this is where you will end as well. Come see where he lay Christian. May it drive you to tell others that Jesus has risen. Come and see where he was laid and rejoice that his resurrection means we who believe will be with the Lord forever and ever. Amen.