

**Introduction:**

- Two Roman soldiers stand staring at a giant stone which has been rolled away from an empty. The one says to the other, "I guess now the only thing certain is taxes!"
- When we look at the life of Jesus it is interesting to note that it is bracketed by two impossibilities: a virgin's womb and an empty tomb. Our focus this morning is the empty tomb. And we will look at two things: First, The great stone speaks; And second, But the empty tomb speaks louder.
- Please hear me, "The stone has been rolled away and the tomb is talking."
- Mt 27:59 and John 20:1-10
- Terminology:
  - "By *resurrection* I do not mean something like living forever in a spirit existence. But living again in bodily form after the body has died, coming back from the dead in real bodies, but, ultimately, in transformed bodies."

**I. The Great Stone Speaks**

- A. The great stone is rolled into place. *"Joseph placed the body of Jesus in his own new tomb, which had been carved out of the rock. Then he rolled a great stone across the entrance and left."* (Mt. 27:60, NLT) The great/large stone that is rolled into place is there to silence the message of the empty tomb. It was there to declare the death of Jesus. It was there to declare the finality of the Son of God. Death has a way of making all of us believe in the finality of life.
1. The great stone says... (in light of these three figures: Joseph, religious leaders, Pilate.)
    - a) Jesus is dead. When Joseph rolls the stone over the mouth of the tomb. He is saying, "It is over." This was a customary act for those who had died. It was the experience of all mankind upon death. Back to the dust from which we came. The problem with Jesus He did not come from the dust so He could not return there.
      - (1) The stone placed over the mouth of the tomb declares:
        - (a) Closure...literally.
        - (b) Darkness...hopelessness...no longer any vision, we cant see what's ahead.
        - (c) Defeat...it is finished, it's over.
        - (d) Disillusionment...our dreams have been dashed/destroyed.
        - (e) Sin and death win the day.
      - b) Truth is contained. The religious leaders went to Pilate. Mt 27:62-ff
        - (1) They were concerned about what Jesus had said. "I will arise!"
        - (2) They wanted the tomb sealed as in secured.
          - (a) They wanted the tomb secured. DO NOT LET THAT STONE BE MOVED!

- (b) A sealed tomb meant that the people would be kept in the dark.
- (3) That is what a religion spirit does. It keeps people in the dark. Whether it is a religious cult, false religion, or legalistic Christianity.
- (4) They wanted sealed as in an inscription that threatens penalty of death if defied.
- c) The problem solved. My hands are clean. I'll send soldiers to guard it.
  - (1) Pilate just wanted peace in the city, not justice.
  - (2) Pilate did not want truth. He wanted what bothered his conscience to disappear.
  - (3) Like many people who hear the Good News of Jesus Christ we just want the troubler of our conscience to just go away. And we will assign soldiers of sinful distractions to quiet our conscience.
  - (4) With the stone put in place...hell rejoiced! It rejoiced that Jesus was dead, the truth was contained, and the problem solved!
- 2. Hell thought...
  - a) Hell thought it took His life, but Jesus feely gave it.
  - b) Hell thought it killed Him and sowed Him in the ground, but the life was in the Seed.
  - c) Hell thought it reigned over Him, but Jesus' reigns supreme.
  - d) Hell thought it defeated Him but Jesus wins over death hell and the grave.
  - e) Hell thought He was finished, but Jesus was just getting started.
  - f) Let me say this morning... "Hell thought WRONG!"
- B. The great stone is rolled away. *"Early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance."* (John 20:1, NLT) Note to self: The stone had been rolled away from the entrance not the exit.
  - 1. The story is being told from outside the tomb. The Father and the apostle John want us to 'see' something in this picture. Open your eyes and see!
  - 2. Who was the stone rolled away for? Let me tell you who it was rolled away for:
    - a) It was rolled away for the women who came to the tomb; that they would see that He is not there. He's Alive!
    - b) It was rolled away for the disciples to go in and see that He is not there! He's Alive!
    - c) It was rolled away for us so that we would see by their testimony that He is not there He is alive! And that by believing He is alive we would know that He is still rolling stones away. Stones of doubt, stones of fear, stones of uneasiness, stones of distress, stones of addiction, stones of sickness, etc. He is still a stone moving God. In fact, He is a mountain moving God. *"Then Jesus said to the disciples, "Have faith in God. I tell you the truth, you can say to this*

*mountain, 'May you be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' and it will happen. But you must really believe it will happen and have no doubt in your heart. I tell you, you can pray for anything, and if you believe that you've received it, it will be yours."* (Mark 11:22-24, NLT)

- d) The stone was not rolled away for Jesus! He did not need it rolled away! We needed the stone rolled away! So that we could "see!" He Is Alive!
- C. A rolled away stone says... come and see! Just like John the apostle heard, "*Come up here and I will show you*" ...you will see! So why was the stone rolled away?
1. The stone is rolled away because God wants us to look in **and see** the tomb is empty and the grave clothes are left behind.
  2. God wants you and I to 'see'; to have the revelation of the empty tomb.
  3. The revelation of an empty tomb is what is important to us. Our very faith hangs upon this revelation/truth: "He is alive." It is what God wants us to see! The revelation of an empty tomb does 4 things:
    - a) #1 This revelation confirms what Jesus said would happen. "Death cant keep me down!" Kill me and in three days I will rise. Destroy this temple and in three days I will rebuild it.
    - b) #2 This revelation fulfills old testament scriptures that prophesied His resurrection.
      - (1) "*And after my body has decayed, yet in my body I will see God! I will see him for myself. Yes, I will see him with my own eyes. I am overwhelmed at the thought!*" (Job 19:26-27, NLT)
      - (2) "*For you will not leave my soul among the dead or allow your holy one to rot in the grave.*" (Psalm 16:10, NLT)
      - (3) "*In just a short time he will restore us, so that we may live in his presence.*" (Hosea 6:2, NLT)
      - (4) "*He will swallow up death forever! The Sovereign Lord will wipe away all tears...*" (Isaiah 25:8, NLT)
      - (5) The dry bones live Ezk. 37. Declares that we will live again.
    - c) #3 This revelation announces that Jesus has victory over death...hell...and the grave.
    - d) #4 This revelation declares to us, 'we should believe', that we too shall live!
      - (1) *If any man be in Christ He is a new creation.* 2 Cor 5:17
      - (2) *Whoever believes has eternal life.* Jn 3:16
      - (3) *And anyone who believes in God's Son has eternal life.*(John 3:36, NLT)
      - (4) *Those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life.*" (John 5:24, NLT)
      - (5) *Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.* (John 6:35).

D. When the stone is rolled away it is obvious the tomb is empty! The great stone speaks...

**II. But The Empty Tomb Speaks Louder...** Mt 28:5-7 When the stone is rolled away from the mouth of the tomb, the tomb declares the resurrection message!

A. What does it say? Straight from scripture...

1. He is not here. *"Then the angel spoke to the women. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He isn't here!" Mt 28:6 NLT*
2. He is risen from the dead. *"He is risen from the dead, just as he said would happen. Mt 28:6*
3. Take a look. See for yourself! *Come, see where his body was lying. Mt 28:6*
4. Go and tell. *And now, go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and he is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there. Remember what I have told you."* (Matthew 28:5-7, NLT)

B. What are we to do?

1. Believe!
2. Believe and become a follower of the The Christ!
3. Believe, follow and tell!

**Conclusion:**

- The Stone was rolled away so we could see!
- That the tomb was empty.
- That Jesus is alive.
- That Jesus conquered death, hell and the grave.
- That hell has no hold on those who see and believe!
- Will you put your trust in Jesus this morning.
- *"Where, o death, is your victory? Where, o death, is your sting? Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."* (1 Corinthians 15:55, 57)
- *"Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying."* (John 11:25, NLT)