

OBEDIENCE REWARDED

NO. 2323

A SERMON

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, AUGUST 27, 1893

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

ON THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 1, 1889

“And they departed quickly from the sepulcher with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word. And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.”

Matthew 28:8-10

THESE holy women, these consecrated Maries, shall be our instructors tonight. They were highly-favored to be the first witnesses for our risen Lord. Do you wonder why He chose them? Was it because their hearts were tender and they were very sad at His death, more sad than the men? And is not His wont to come first to those who need Him most, and to pour in oil and wine where the wound gapes widest? It may be so.

Was it because they had been the more faithful of the two, and while some men had denied Him and all had forsaken Him, the women were last at Golgotha, as they were now first at the sepulcher? Did their Lord reward them by dealing with them as they had dealt with Him? That is but His wont. “If ye will walk contrary unto me, then will I also walk contrary unto you,” said the Lord to Israel. And He also said, “I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.”

These holy women did seek their Lord early on the morning of His resurrection and they found Him to a certainty before all others. Was this because Jesus had found the women more spiritual than the apostles? Certainly, I think that was the case. They had attained the very climax of love, washing His feet with their tears. They had reached the very center of discipleship—one of them had chosen the good part and sat at His feet. Sometimes, where there is less power of understanding, Jesus does give keener powers of perception, and though Mary Magdalene and the other Mary would never have become Pauls, yet they were of quick eye, like John, and were, therefore, the most fit to see the Savior in the dawning of the morning, and they were permitted to have the first glimpse of Him.

At any rate, be it how it may, they were the first to see their risen Lord and we will try to learn something from them tonight. It should be an encouragement to those members of the church of Christ who are neither pastors nor teachers that, if they live very near to God, they may yet teach pastors and teachers. Get clear views of your Lord, as did these holy women who had no office in the church, and yet taught the officers, for they were sent to bear to the apostles the tidings that Jesus Christ had risen from the dead.

Not first to them who were the heads of the church, as it were, but first of all to lowly women did the Lord appear—and the apostles themselves had to go to school to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to learn that great truth, “The Lord is risen indeed.” We will go to school with the apostles tonight, and may the Lord grant that while we learn from these holy women, He who taught them may come and teach us! May He who met them meet with us in this house of prayer tonight!

First, I ask you to look at these women *in the way of obedience active*. They ran to bring the disciples word. Secondly, look at them *in the way of obedience rewarded*, for, as they went to tell His disciples, Jesus met them. And then, thirdly, we will go back to the point where we started and see these women *in the way of obedience refreshed*, for, after they had seen the Lord, they persevered in their

heavenly errand and still went to tell His disciples that He would go before them into Galilee, and that there they should see Him.

I. First, then, notice these women **IN THE WAY OF ODEDIENCE ACTIVE.**

They had gone to the sepulcher to see and also to embalm the body of Christ, but while they were there, an angel appeared to them and committed to them this charge, “Go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead.” And they went upon their errand with most commendable alacrity.

Now, you and I, dear friends, must try to imitate them. What you have seen, you must tell. What you have been taught, you must teach. To you, believer, has been committed the oracle of God. See that you keep it. Hold it fast and hold it forth. You have not this light for yourself alone, but that it may shine before men. See you to this. Peradventure, these women may help you in so doing.

Observe first, then, that they went about their errand *not doubting the revelation*. The angel said to them, “Tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and behold, he goeth before you into Galilee.” They did not stop to ask any question, to make any demur, to utter any critical doubts, but they believed.

Now, it is to be thus with you—you cannot be a messenger from God unless you believe. If you do not believe the Gospel, do not pretend to preach it. Go home, my dear friends, and bury your head in your doubts, twist your brains about, and tie them up into knots, and amuse yourself as you like, but do not pretend to go and tell that of which you are not yourself sure. Otherwise, you will lack the accent of confidence, and consequently you will lack the power of persuasion. He that is not firm himself cannot move others. If there is no fulcrum for your lever, where is your power? “I believed; therefore have I spoken,” said the psalmist, and he did well, for there must first be the believing and then the speaking.

Leave the message to another if you are not sure of it—let another who is sure of it tell it until you, too, are sure of it—then may you also run with good tidings from your Lord. These godly women leaped at once into the full conviction that Christ was risen and therefore they hastened to tell the tidings to the disciples.

And again, they obeyed, *not discussing their authority* to go and proclaim this news. What use is it if I believe the truth and yet am not empowered to teach it? According to some, I can only be authorized by some special ceremony—I must undergo certain processes before I may be permitted to preach. But the angel said to these women, “Go and tell,” and they went to tell. They did not hesitate. They asked no question about apostolic succession, or episcopal ordination, or anything of the kind. They were told to go and they went.

Have you heard Jesus speak to you? Do you know His love? Have you an inward persuasion that you have to tell your friends what great things He has done for you? Then go in this your might. If you have any hesitancy about your right to labor for your Lord, if you doubt that passage, “Let him that heareth say, Come,” then go not, for, if you do not believe that you have a right to go, your going will be with an inward weakness, and you will be taken up rather with yourself than with your message and with the heart of Him to whom you carry it.

I love to hear men say that they *must* do this and that, for only that which is done under the imperious necessity of a divine impulse will ever be followed by any great result. If you can live without preaching the Gospel, do live without preaching it, for if God has sent you, you will say with Paul, “Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!”

And you, my sister, if you are sent to do any work for God and have a yearning to win souls, you have a fire in your bones which cannot be restrained—you could no more be stayed from speaking of Jesus than the sun can be stayed from shining in mid heaven. May God grant that we may have among us many who, in going forth to work for Christ, are sure about what they have to tell and sure about their authority to tell it!

This being so with these women, we notice, next, that they went on their errand *not declining on account of weakness*. They might have said, “Oh, we are not the people to go to the apostles!” Mary Magdalene might have said, “You know what I used to be. Would you have me go and talk to John, and James, and Peter?” Indeed, the holy women might at once have refused the commission and said, “We

do not feel ourselves qualified. We have a natural timidity and modesty which put it out of the question that we should go on such a service as this.”

But not a word of that kind did they utter, and dear brethren and sisters, while souls are dying, dare we hesitate on account of weakness? Do you not think that it is the man who is most conscious of weakness who is usually the chosen man for the Lord’s service? Did not Moses wish to decline the office of leader of Israel because he was slow of speech? Did not Isaiah cry, “Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips”?

And if you are conscious of weakness as great as that of these godly women, or greater even than theirs, yet I still say that the pressure of human necessity and the pressure of the divine message should be so heavy upon you that you should say, “I will go even as did the lepers of old, when they had found out the plenty that there was in the camp of the Syrians and knew of the sore famine in Samaria.” They could not sit still, but all over with leprosy as they were, they must go to the king’s household and tell them that there was bread enough and to spare, and that the people need not die of hunger.

Oh, yes, we must go. Even we must go! The time may have been when only the choice and pick of the church were needed for holy service, but these times are not now. When sin abounds, when error rages, when the faithful are but few, then every man, and every woman, and even every babe in grace, must speak, or lisp, or prattle the good news that Christ is risen from the dead and is able to save and bless.

Then, dear friends, as these women were not detained from this work by a sense of weakness, so they obeyed, *not held back by curiosity*. They might have stayed to look at the sepulcher. They were invited to come and see the place where the Lord lay and like the two disciples, they might have gone in and observed how the napkin was laid by itself, and the linen cloths were folded. I think that if you and I had had the opportunity of looking into that wonderful sepulcher where the Lord lay, we should have liked to linger there all through that day to worship and adore.

But no curiosity—nay, no devotion, kept them at the sepulcher when they once had the command to go and tell the disciples that Christ was risen from the dead. Now, these days are full of temptation. We have a thousand fields for curiosity to wander in. How shall we settle this debate? How shall we answer that criticism? Every day brings to light some fresh objection, some new theory. Shall we stop till we have answered every objection, till we have destroyed every theory?

No, my brethren, we cannot afford to stop. Let others debate—we must declare. Let others discuss—we must proclaim that Jesus Christ has come into the world to save sinners. Sinners, look to Him and looking, you shall live. We must make this the burden of our daily conversation, the constant theme of our talk, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, even the very chief of them.” We must keep to this. As these women were not turned aside to make any curious observation, so must not we be, but we must keep to our one work of telling His disciples where to look for Him and bidding them follow Him.

And dear friends, again, I want you to notice that they were not *hampered by their emotions*. It is a very blessed thing sometimes to have an opportunity of indulging your emotions. These women were subject to the influences of two opposite currents, “fear and great joy.” Fear put wings to their heels and great joy seemed to lend them extra speed. By the two together they ran to bring the disciples word.

It may be very pleasant to get alone and spend much time in close communion with Christ—the more of it the better. It may be well to practice introspection until you see the evil of your heart and are filled with fear. It may be well to look up and see the beauties of your Lord and the glories of His advent till you are filled with great joy. But neither of these must be allowed to keep you away from actual service and the continual telling out of the Gospel of Christ. I have known it to be the case.

I remember a good man who was a great authority on the Book of Revelation. I am sorry to say that, great as he was on the Revelation, his influence was very bad on his children at home. He knew all about the seven trumpets, but he did not know much about the seven boys and girls he had at home—so they grew up very badly.

Never break the balance of holy emotions and sacred duties. Let us have our fear and our great joy, but at the same time, we must not sit down because we have great joy, but we must run on the Lord's errand—joy and all. Let us run as fast as we can, whether we fear or whether we rejoice. Learn that lesson from these godly women.

You feel very dull—go to your Bible-class. You feel as if you had done no good for a long time—go on in the Lord's work. But God has greatly blessed you and you are getting rather old and you want rest—go on with your work—run to bring the disciples word whether you feel fear or joy. Stand over your work, be *in-stant*—standing over it, in season and out of season, constant and instant in the service of your blessed Lord and Master. If you are not, these holy women will put you to shame and I must send you to this dames' school, old as you are, to learn a little lesson from these godly dames as to how you ought to serve God.

Once more, notwithstanding all that might have been said to make their footsteps slow, we find that they were *not hindered by propriety or indifference*. They traveled to their work as quickly as they could “and did run to bring his disciples word.” Now, one hardly likes to think of Mary Magdalene and that other Mary running. My good sisters here are many of them very diligent in their service, but they do not forget that there is a kind of reputable pace for ladies—yet these holy women ran. They will get out of breath by running! Never mind. Never mind. “They did run to bring his disciples word.”

We are great slaves to propriety, are we not, the most of us? The other day a brother called out in the middle of a sermon. And on another morning, a sister exclaimed while I was preaching—and some of you thought that it was very improper, did you not? Well, I suppose that it was, but I was very glad of it and I did not see the slightest objection to the impropriety when I felt that the truth that was being preached was enough to make the stones speak. Why should not those persons cry out?

When you are about the Lord's work, you know that it is well to be very quiet and calm and take things steadily. That is well, but sometimes we can do better than well. We have the steam up and we cannot help it, and we have to go ahead and we must go. Thus these godly women were running along. They will put their garments out of shape. They will spoil the look of their faces! I do not know what will not happen, but they do not care about that. “They did run to bring his disciples word.”

How often have I seen it, in the country, when somebody has stepped into a cottage—perhaps it has been the minister, or some dear Christian friend, and the good woman has said—“I must run and fetch in my neighbor,” and she has rushed out of the door, and down the front garden, and across the street, and she has brought her sister or her friend to come and hear the good Word, and she has never thought that it was at all improper for her to do it.

Dear friend, in the service of God, impropriety is often piety. It was said that Mr. Rowland Hill, “rode upon the back of Order and Decorum.” “Well,” he said, “I will try to make that true,” so he called his two horses, Order and Decorum, and thus, if he did not ride on their backs, he made them pull him to and from Surrey Chapel. Order and decorum are hardly worth more than to be used as horses. They are very respectable animals, but sometimes disorder and the lack of decorum may be predicated of an earnest, zealous heart—and may be very much to the credit of that heart. “They did run to bring his disciples word.”

Brethren and sisters, some of us ought to run, for we have not much time. We are getting grey, years are telling upon us, so let us run. We may not have many more opportunities—we may be kept to our bed or tied to the house—let us run while we can. Sometimes we are warned not to do too much. Let us try to do too much. Let us be indiscreetly loving to our Lord. Let us run to bring the disciples word, even at the cost of putting ourselves out of breath.

I think that we have now learned all that we need to learn from these good women about their being in the way of obedience, that is to say, if we *have* learned it—but have we learned it? Are all of you Christian people who are here to-night running on your Master's errands? Have all of you received a commission from Christ? Have you all had a message from Him? Are you carrying it? Some of you are

strangers here this evening. Let me beg you not to live a single week without having something to do for your Lord, knowing what it is, and getting to it in the spirit of these holy women.

II. But now, secondly, observe these holy women IN THE WAY OF OBEDIENCE REWARDED.

First, they were rewarded by a *most delightful visitation*, “As they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them.” He has ways of meeting His disciples now, in the power of His Spirit, manifesting Himself to them. There are some of His disciples who never get these visitations and I think that it is because they are not running to bring His disciples word.

Nobody fidgets a busy person like an idle body. Have you ever had a servant doing some work for you and crawling about in such a way that you could hardly bear yourself? Well now, the Lord Jesus Christ does not feel at home with lazy Christians and I believe that He reserves His fellowship for the sufferers and the workers. When you are in the way of service, He will meet you. So you have not seen His face for a long time? Have you a class in the Sabbath school? Are you a tract-distributor? Are you a preacher in the villages?

“No, dear sir, I do nothing of the sort.” Well, then, I do not think that you will meet Him just yet, but I think that if you had a call to some of these good works, and you obeyed it, it is highly probable that you would then say, “Being in the way, the Lord met with me.” Oh, yes, when you have love, and joy, and light in your heart, it will often happen that while you are talking about Christ to others, you will have a blessing come to your own soul!

Many times has it occurred to the preacher that if he has not edified anybody else, he has preached himself into a right state of heart, and he is sure that he has had one hearer who was the better for the sermon. Beloved Christian brothers and sisters, especially sisters, for the text, you see, comes from the sisters and ought to go back to the sisters—get into the path of duty if you would win this reward of a delightful visitation. You sometimes sing,

“When will Thou come unto me, Lord?”

You can answer your own prayer, to a large extent, by running upon your Lord’s errands.

The next reward these women received was a *very cheering salutation*, “Jesus met them, saying, All hail.” I do not know whether it was in the Hebrew that He spoke. If so, I suppose that He uttered the usual salutation, “Peace be unto you!” As we get it in the Greek, one is inclined to think that He used the Greek language and spoke the word which signifies, “Rejoice! Joy be unto you!”

Our translators very properly thought that the best thing they could do was to give you the old Saxon expression, “All hail! Health be to you! May you be in good health, may you be hale!” “All hail!” You know that we use the expression, “Hail fellow, well met!” Well, that indicates great sociability and hence you can see the wrong of a Christian saying it to an ungodly man, but Christ comes to His people, and says, “All hail!”

I often wonder that He ever used that word, since by it He was betrayed when the traitor said, “Hail, Master!” But yet it was His mother’s word. Did not the angel Gabriel say to Mary, “Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women”? And He used it here, “All hail!” Well, when Jesus Christ comes to us with words of such endearment, such brotherhood, it ought to make us glad.

Last Tuesday night I saw a brother who, I trust, has just been converted to God. He may be here tonight. If so, he must excuse my telling you this. He cannot read well, but he is teaching himself to read, and he said to me something that touched me very much. He said, “Do you know, I read this week the most wonderful thing I ever heard of. I dare say you know all about it, sir, but it was a very wonderful thing to me.” I asked, “What was it?” “Well,” he replied, “you know, I was spelling it over and I found that Christ said, ‘I call you not servants; but I have called you friends.’ That knocked me over,” he said, “*me* a friend of *His*, me a friend of His? And He calls me so. I was obliged to think that I must have made a mistake, and I had to read it over to see if it could be so, that He really called me a

friend. And further down He said, ‘These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.’ There, I thought, what difference would it make to Him if I were offended? And to think of my being offended with *Him*! It is much more likely that He will be offended with me. It is very wonderful.”

That is a most blessed way of reading the Bible for the first time—to see these wonders as they break upon you. Well, now, it is just as my friend found it to be—the Lord comes to us with very sweet familiarity—He uses what the French call “tutoyage.” In speaking to us, He utters the familiar, “thee” and “thou”—and He sits down to eat in company with us, calls us to His table and there bids us eat and drink with Him. It is wonderful, as my friend said, but it is thus that Jesus deals with those who love and serve Him.

And what a reward it is for the Lord’s servants when He says to them, “All hail! I am your Companion. I have done well to meet you. I am glad to see you. All health be to you! Every blessing rest upon you!” Something more than, “Salem,” the “peace” of the old covenant, is this, “All hail!” of the new covenant, of which the Incarnate God is the great Expositor. That was the cheering salutation with which the risen Savior rewarded the obedience of these godly women.

They also had *an assuring satisfaction* as another reward of their obedience, for they were permitted to prove that their Lord was really risen from the dead. Before Thomas had done it, they did it. “They came and held him by the feet.” He was no specter, no phantom. It was no dream that deceived them. Christ was really risen. There He stood in solid flesh and blood, and they held Him by the feet.

I believe that when we are at work for the Lord with all our heart, He sometimes enables us to get grips of truths that we do not have at other times, and we lay hold on them with unrelaxing grasp. People talk about “honest doubt” and ask me to doubt. I cannot doubt. I live in the enjoyment of the eternal facts. I could sooner doubt my own existence than doubt the doctrines of Christ, they have become such substantial verities to me. I have tasted and handled them. I cannot have a doubt about them. It was so with these godly women—they knew that Christ was risen, for they came and held Him by the feet.

But at the same time, they had, mixed with this experience, *a rapturous adoration*. “They held him by the feet, and worshipped him.” It is of no use to be persuaded of a doctrine—that is, mentally to hold it—unless there is the spirit of worship going with it, so that you adore your Lord while you hold to Him and His truth. These women not merely felt that Jesus was there as a man, but they knew that He was also God, they were sure of it, and therefore they worshipped Him.

It takes a lot of faith, while you are holding a man, to worship him at the same time, because your grip of the human body is a proof of its materialism—and you say to yourself—“This is a man.” And therefore you do not worship him. But these women knew that Jesus was God as well as man, so they could mingle the holding of His feet with the worship due to His Godhead. In a natural sense, none of us can exactly imitate these worshipping women, but those who are taught of God the Holy Ghost, and who know how to be familiar and yet to be devout, will draw near to Christ, and hold Him by the feet and at the same time, worship Him with solemn awe and sacred joy.

Now, this is the reward that I want my dear friends here to have. I know that the most of you have some work on hand for the Master. If you are getting at all dull and heavy, I beg you not to give it up. Stick to it, but pray the Lord to meet with you. May He meet you here tonight. If not, may He meet you on the way home or in your bedchamber!

Nothing is so sweet as the sight of our Lord risen from the dead—to know that He lives and that we also shall live because He lives, and to get a sight of Him as alive and living for us. This puts nerve into us and sends us back to our service greatly refreshed. That is to be my last point and upon it I will speak very briefly.

III. Thirdly, notice these holy women **IN THE WAY OF OBEDIENCE REFRESHED**, for, having seen and touched their Lord, they were now sent away to His brethren.

Before they went forth the second time, *they were perfectly calm and happy in the Lord*. I think that it is almost essential to any great success in serving the Lord that we should be on the best of terms with

Him and not be fluttered, frightened, worried, perturbed, questioning. Having worshipped and held Him and heard Him say, “All hail,” you will then feel that, by the power of His love and the authority of His divinity, He sends you forth as His messenger.

Notice, next, that the angel said to the women, “Go quickly, and tell His disciples.” But Jesus said, “Go tell my brethren.” Thus, *their commission was sweetened*. And if it is with you as it was with them, you will get to be more tender in the delivery of your message. You will begin to feel nearer of kin to those to whom you speak. You will perceive more of the love of Christ to them.

You will not merely be talking in your Sunday school class to “boys and girls out of the street,” you will feel that you are speaking to those of whom Jesus said, “Suffer the little children to come unto me.” I shall not be preaching to mere “men and women of our fallen race,” but to those in whom I hope to find the brethren of my Lord.

In seeking to do good, there is nothing like the plan of getting close to the people. Up in Scotland, I have often seen the fishermen standing right in the middle of the river—that is a good place to fish—it is better than being on the bank. Get among the fish and you will catch them. Get to feel your relationship to the soul you deal with and your Lord’s relationship to him, and you will preach or teach much better than you have ever done in the past. Thus these women went with their commission sweetened by their Lord’s loving words, “Go tell *my brethren*.”

Notice, again, that *their confidence in their message was increased*. They believed it when the angel uttered it, but they believed it still more emphatically when their Master repeated it to them. Besides, His telling it to them was the best proof that it was true. He could not have told them that He was risen from the dead if He had not been risen from the dead. So truth, when it comes to us in Christ, is its own proof. You may doubt it while it is simply preached by men, but you surely will never doubt it when Jesus Himself, in His own person, comes to you and says Himself, “This is the truth. Open your heart and soul and receive it.” May the Lord do this for many here!

And then, *these women went on their way with increased joy*. They had no great fear, nay, not even a little fear, for their great joy had swallowed up their fear. I should have liked to have seen them go in among the apostles, exclaiming, “The Lord is risen indeed.”

They might say, “But Mary, we saw you last night looking as miserable as possible.” “Ah!” she would answer, “but Christ is risen. I have seen Him and He said to me, ‘Be not afraid,’ and I am not afraid, either of the Jews or of anybody else, for He is risen. He said to me, ‘All hail,’ and it is all hail. All is well, for the Lord is risen.”

Testifying of their Lord in this spirit, they expected to be believed and they were believed. May the Lord put you also into such a condition tonight that you may say, “I know now more than I ever did before the truth of my Lord’s Gospel, and I will tell it as though I could not think that anybody would doubt it. I will tell it expecting that they must believe it.” And they will believe it, for according to your faith so shall it be unto you.

As for you, my dear hearers, who do not know my Lord, how I wish that you did! He is a living Christ. He is no lifeless picture on the walls, not a dead character in a book. He is the living Lord. He has come to us and given us eternal life—and if you come to Him, He will in no wise cast you out. If you only look to Him, you shall live. If you take His yoke upon you and learn of Him, you shall find rest unto your souls. I would that you might do so this very night. May the Lord bless you in so doing!

Thus I have preached to you and now there are some believers to be baptized. That is the second part of our work. At the end of this chapter we read, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” We will at another time go on with the teaching that follows this evening’s meditation, if the Lord will.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

MATTHEW 28:1-15

Verses 1-2. *In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.*

See what concern angels have about our Lord. Are they here tonight? Do they make a habit of coming where the saints meet together? I think they do. We have intimations in Scripture that that is the case. Let us behave ourselves aright tonight, “because of the angels.” And as they worship and count it their highest honor to serve the Son of man, let us also worship Jesus and adore Him. What a picture this scene would make!

3-4. *His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.*

He said nothing as he rolled back the stone. He did not shake a sword at them, or over them, to thrill them with terror. The presence of perfect purity, the presence of heavenly things, is a terror to ungodly men. May you and I be such that our very presence in company will cast a hush over it! “It was even as though an angel shook his wings,” they said of one good man when he spoke in common conversation. May there be about us enough of the heavenly to make the powers of evil quail before us!

5. *And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye:*

But I notice that they did fear, although the angel said, “Fear not.” Neither men nor angels can so speak as to silence fears in trembling hearts, but Jesus can, as we shall see farther on. One word from His lips has infinitely more power than all the words of angels or of saints.

5. *For I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.*

And if you and I tonight can truly say that we are on the side of Jesus, that we seek Him who was crucified, then we can bear all the shame with which philosophy would fain cover the cross and we have no cause for fear. Ridicule and all that it brings from this ungodly generation will not hurt you.

6. *He is not here: for he is risen, as he said.*

“As he said.” A few words, but what a world of meaning. “As he said.” He always does “as he said.” He always gives “as he said.” He always reveals Himself “as he said,” not otherwise. He never fails to fulfill a promise, or forgets even the mode of promising. Not only does He do what He said, but as He said. “He is risen, as he said.”

6. *Come, see the place where the Lord lay.*

For even the place where He lay is hallowed to you. And beloved, if there is a place where you have ever had communion with Christ, you will remember it. You might bless the spot of ground where Jesus met with you. Here, tonight, I hope that some of you can see the place where the Lord appeared to you.

7. *And go quickly, and tell His disciples that he is risen from the dead;*

Such good news ought to be spread quickly. “Go and tell his disciples”—they are trembling, they have fled—“that he is risen from the dead.”

7. *And, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.*

Brethren, this is good news for us tonight, though all may not, perhaps, feel the power of it. “He is risen.” We have no dead Christ. We serve a living Savior. He is risen, and therefore He can come to us tonight in the power of His resurrection-life, and He can make us glad. “Behold, he goeth before you into Galilee.”

There is a great deal about Galilee in Matthew’s Gospel. It is the Gospel of the kingdom and yet it often talks about Galilee, that border-land which touches Gentiles, as well as the chosen seed of Abraham. There is the place where Jesus will meet His people, in the border-land between Jew and Gentile—there the risen Christ will hold the first general assembly of His church.

8. *And they departed quickly from the sepulcher with fear and great joy;*

What a mixture—fear and joy! But notice that the fear was not great, and the joy was—“Fear and great joy.” Observe the proportions of the mixture and if tonight you have some fear, yet I hope you will have great joy—and then the bitterness of the fear will pass away. A holy fear, mixed with great joy, is one of the sweetest compounds we can bring to God’s altar. Some of us have brought those spices with us tonight. These holy women brought other spices to the sepulcher, but these were the spices that they took away from it—“Fear and great joy.”

8-9. *And did run to bring his disciples word. And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.*

He would not let Mary Magdalene do that when they were alone, but He said to her, “Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father: it is more needful for you to go now and tell My disciples that I have risen from the dead. There will be time by-and-by for further fellowship with Me.” But now Jesus permits these godly women to hold Him by the feet. It was an act of humility, worshipping and holding, and holding not His hands, but His feet. They must have seen the nail-prints before Thomas did, as they held Him by the feet and worshipped Him.

I do not find that these women ran to the angels—they rather shrank back from them—but they came to Jesus, for we are told that they came and held Him by the feet. I think that there must have been a new attraction about Christ after He had risen from the dead, something more sweet about the tones of His voice, something more charming about the countenance that had been so marred at Gethsemane, and Gabbatha, and Golgotha.

10. *Then said Jesus unto them,—*

As He saw their palpitating hearts and perceived that they were still all in a flurry, for the angel had not dispelled their fears,—

10. *Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.*

The angel talked of “disciples.” Christ talks of “brethren.” He always has the sweeter word.

11. *Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.*

While good people were active, bad people were active, too. It is wonderful to think of how much good and evil is being done at the same time. While we are thankful that holy women are running with holy messages for Christ, here come the soldiers of the watch and they are going in to those vile priests.

12. *And when they were assembled with the elders and had taken counsel,—*

They ought at once to have repented when the watch came and told them that Jesus was risen. Ought they not to have gone and fallen at His feet, and begged for mercy? But instead of that—

12. *They gave large money unto the soldiers,—*

Money, wherever it comes in, seems to do mischief. For money Christ was betrayed and for money the truth about His resurrection was kept back as far as it could be. Money has had a hardening effect on some of the highest servants of God—and all who have to touch the filthy lucre have need to pray for grace to keep them from being harmed by being brought into contact with it.

13. *Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.*

If they were asleep, how did they know what happened? How could they know it if they were asleep? Evidence which is borne by men who were asleep at the time is evidently not worth regarding. But when you have to tell a lie, I suppose that, as any stick is good enough to beat a dog with, any lie will do to slander one whom you hate.

14-15. *And if this come to the governor’s ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught:*

No doubt you have heard of the man who said that he did not believe all the articles of his church because his salary was so small that he could not be expected to believe them all for the money. Oh, the depraving and debasing power of the whole system of bribery and falsehood! May none of us ever be

affected by considerations of profit and loss in matters of doctrine, matters of duty, and matters of right and wrong!

15. *And this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.*

You may start a lie, but you cannot stop it. There is no telling how long it will live. Let us never teach even the least error to a little child, for it may live on and become a great heresy long after we are dead. There is scarcely any limit to its life and to its power.

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