

The Road to the Empty Tomb Part 4

Resurrection Sunday

Celebrate Jesus

Mark 16:1-7

Chippie the parakeet never saw it coming. One minute he was peacefully perched inside his birdcage, and the next he was sucked in, washed up and blown over. His problems began when Chippie's owner decided to vacuum out his birdcage. She stuck the attachment inside the cage, and about that time the telephone rang and distracted her attention. When she turned, Chippie was gone. She immediately hung up the telephone and looked inside the vacuum cleaner bag – sure enough, Chippie was there – alive, but stunned. Since he was covered with dirt and debris, she grabbed him and raced down the hallway to the bathroom where she stuck him under the faucet and ran cold water over him for two minutes. She then realized that the bird was soaked and shivering, so she did what any compassionate bird-owner would do – she reached for her hair dryer and blasted the bird with hot air. Poor Chippie never knew what hit him.

Several days later, the reporter who covered the story called to see how Chippie's recovery was coming along. The owner said, "Well, Chippie doesn't sing much anymore. He just sits and stares."

Well, I guess so! After being sucked in, washed up and blown over, that's enough to take the song from the stoutest of hearts.

When circumstances suddenly change for the worst and take us out of fairly peaceful territory, it's never an easy adjustment.

Maybe you can relate to Chippie.

Perhaps you've gone through times when things changed rather quickly:

Pink slips were handed out at work

Divorce papers were served

Policeman on your doorstep

GF/BF broke up with you unexpectedly

Someone close to you passed away

At that time, your song was gone, and perhaps you thought you'd never be humming its tune again.

Maybe still today you could use a reason to celebrate.

If so, you're not much different from the disciples.

Things had been going great for them.

Over the past 3 years they had traveled with Jesus, seen him perform miracles, and grown to trust him deeply.

But now He had been crucified – gone – dead – never to be seen again.

Talk about being sucked into a dungeon of despair.

Talk about getting doused with a measure of cold reality.

Talk about getting blown over with empty promises!

If you would have inquired about the disciples after Jesus' death, you might have heard, "They don't sing much anymore. They just sort of sit and stare."

But then something happened.

Their world and ours would never be the same.

Jesus rose! He didn't stay dead! He defeated death!

Another place in the Bible tells us that when the disciples heard the news, "They were overjoyed!"

I imagine that's somewhat of an understatement.

Their song was gone, but now they had reason to celebrate.

What I'd like to share with you this morning is that: **Jesus' victory over death brings celebration to life!**

(Why is this so?) **3 reasons**. #1: Jesus' victory over death brings celebration to life b/c...

I. **WE CAN HEAR, "GOOD JOB!" "Don't be alarmed...He has risen!" (Mark 16:6)**

The resurrection expresses God's satisfaction with what Jesus has done.

In the resurrection, God was shouting, "Good Job, Jesus! Way to go! You did it!"

You completed the work I asked you to do!

Or as Jesus so rightly said on the cross before he died, "It is finished!"

S. Lewis Johnson has said, **"The resurrection is God's 'Amen!' to Christ's statement, 'It is finished.'"**

Jesus' resurrection gives us hope

You know there are a number of things I'll never hear...

A call from the Bulls asking me to suit up and play

Regis Philbin asking me if that's my final answer

A stranger stopping me to say, "Excuse me. Aren't you Sean Connery?"
My wife saying, "Honey, could you turn up the stereo, I can't quite hear the music!"
One other thing I know I'll never hear
God saying, "Don, you make me sick!"
Instead, the Bible says, because Jesus rose again after he died, those who follow him can look forward to hearing, "*Well done, good and faithful servant!*" (Mt. 25:21,23)
Good Job!
Because Jesus lives we can also live and hear those words – "Good Job! Well Done!"

TRANSITION: There's a second reason why Jesus' victory over death brings celebration to life. It is that because he lives...

II. WE CAN EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED "...He is not here..." (Mark 16:6)

Stone wasn't rolled away so much to let Jesus out as much as it was to let us see in

The US Postal service once had to return a letter addressed to "Christ the King." The yellow label they stuck to the envelope read, "Return to Sender. Christ the King: Moved – Left No Address – Unable to Forward. Return to sender postage due - \$.25.

We won't find him in a tomb. He's not there.

Where is he? In bodily form he's seated at the right side of God in heaven.

He is present wherever Christians gather.

Always with us because he lives inside believers through His Holy Spirit.

Since He's still alive, we can expect amazing things to happen!

We live in a world where the extraordinary has already taken place!

If he rose from the dead, maybe he can fix my marriage too!

Maybe he can help me get my life turned around

Maybe he can help me know what to do with that big decision I'm facing

**God rolled the stone of death out from in front of the tomb,

**God is still rolling stones out of the way for people who face dead ends today

TRANSITION: One final reason why Jesus victory over death brings celebration to life. His resurrection proves that...

III. WE CAN HAVE A FRESH START "Go, tell his disciples and Peter..." (Mark 16:7)

I don't think it's any coincidence that the discovery of the empty tomb took place, "very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise." (Mark 16:2)

It was dawn

It was the first day of a new week

A new beginning

A fresh start

No one would have appreciated this more than Peter.

He was one of Jesus' disciples, and promised Jesus early on Good Friday that he would always stick by Jesus no matter what happened.

Peter, like the other disciples, fled when Jesus was arrested.

But he also carries the distinction of being the one who denied knowing Jesus 3 times that same night.

It's very likely that Peter dictated the events in the book of Mark and Mark wrote them down.

If that's the case you can almost picture it, can't you, as Peter gets to this part in the story about Jesus rising from the dead – and he begins to say those words that he was told the angel said – those words that must have meant the world to him, he might have gotten a lump in his throat just saying them...

go, tell his disciples AND PETER – and Peter!

Make sure Peter knows that Jesus rose from the dead – because as guilty as he feels right now, he especially needs to know that he can have a fresh start.

Perhaps you've made some mistakes

You know what it's like to suffer the consequences of poor decisions

Maybe you're feeling guilty

Sometimes you wish you could just start over

Maybe you could use a fresh start on life – b/c Jesus rose from the dead you can have one!

It's called new birth and it happens by letting Jesus Christ into your life.

When you believe in him and admit your need for His help, He will forgive you of everything you've done wrong.

When we follow His instruction to be baptized it's an incredibly visual reminder that with Jesus the old stuff gets buried, and a new life begins.

It's pretty easy to see, isn't it, that **Jesus' victory over death really does bring celebration to life.**

One of the most important battles ever fought was on June 8, 1815 in Belgium, at a place called Waterloo. England, under the command of General Wellington joined forces with the Dutch, the Belgians and the Prussians to defeat a military genius, who was a madman by the name of Napoleon. If Napoleon could defeat Wellington and England then he would have most all of Europe, his lost empire would be rebuilt and France would be victorious. So the battle raged on and on, and all of England waited for word that would come out of Belgium. There were no radios, no phones. A ship would flash a message through light signals from the battle-front on to another spot who in turn would signal to England. On the final day the ship got as close as they could to the battle and as the signal came back, England wondered who was winning the war as it was getting near the end. Then one of those dense fogs set in that England is so famous for. Just as the message was flashed, "Wellington Defeated", but they couldn't make out the rest of it, due to the fog. So, they went to bed that night convinced of defeat and wondering how soon it would be until the army of France would march into the streets of England. But, early the next morning the fog lifted and they could read the whole message, "Wellington defeated the enemy at Waterloo."

On that Judean hillside, Jesus was crucified and the fog was there on Good Friday, but it was clear on Sunday morning.

The message was clear.

Jesus Christ defeated the enemy at Calvary. He rose!

And he gives us reason to celebrate.

If you've been sucked in, washed up and blown over...If you could use a reason to celebrate, I hope that maybe you've found one today.

I hope that you'll leave here this morning with a song in your heart and a tune on your mind.

The kind only Jesus can give.

The promise of Jesus is not to add years to your life, but to add life to your years from your acceptance of him and the resurrection story.

Live with the hope of hearing, "Good Job!" – expect the unexpected – enjoy a fresh start – but, by all means if God's calling you to a new way of life – don't go home the same!

If you have a decision to accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior or to make your confession of faith to join this church come as we stand.