**Week of April 21, 2019**

**Matthew 28:1-15**

1 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 sepulcher. 2 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. 3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: 4 And for fear of him the keepers did shake and became as dead men. 5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. 6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. 7 And go quickly and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. 8 And they departed quickly from the sepulcher with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word. 9 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. 10 Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me. 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. 12 And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, 13 Saying, Say ye\*, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. 14 And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure\* you. 15 So they took the money and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

**Understanding the Scriptures**

Today’s lesson examines the days after the death of Jesus. In the early morning hours of the third day after the death of Jesus, the women (Mary Magdalene and another woman named Mary) went to the tomb where Jesus was laid. An earthquake rolled back the stone that was placed in front of Jesus tomb. An angle, sitting atop of the stone, appeared with all grandeur expressive of the heavenly abode from which he came. When the guards saw the angels, they were overcome with fear and fainted. The angels announced to the women that Jesus had already rose from the dead! The angel did not remove Jesus’ body, but came to make the announcement of Jesus’ resurrection! The Resurrection is at the heart of Christian faith. The angel told the women 1) to not be afraid; 2) Jesus is not here; 3) look at the place where Jesus lay; and 4) go and tell others about Jesus’ resurrection. There are many proofs of the resurrection of Jesus, which include the empty tomb, Jesus post-Resurrection appearances and the eye witnesses. The women ran off obediently to find the disciples. In the meantime, the guards explained everything that had happened to the chief priests. The news that the body of Jesus was gone was significant. The Jewish authorities’ reputation was a stake here. The chief priests gathered members of the Sanhedrin to discuss how to handle this situation. The religious leaders agreed to bribe the guards to keep their mouths shut about what happened and what they had seen. They instructed the guards to say the disciples stole Jesus’ body from the tomb. The guards accepted the bribe and went along with the lie. The resurrection is a reminder that Jesus is alive! Jesus has conquered the grave and death! The same power that raised Jesus from the dead and opened the tomb of Jesus is the same power that resides in God’s people today.

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