

The Power of Jesus Resurrection

Part 1

After Jesus died on the cross he was buried and laid in a tomb as we can read in the following Scripture:

“57 As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. 58 Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him. 59 Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60 and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away. 61 Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb. 62 The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. 63 "Sir," they said, "we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise again.' 64 So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first." 65 "Take a guard," Pilate answered. "Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how." 66 So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard.” (Matthew 27:57-66) The place that Jesus' body was laid got secured and scrutinized in a way that it will not be feasible to be reached. As if the enemy, the devil would still fight to even hinder Jesus from rising from the dead. But it was impossible even to the grave to lay hold on Him, ***“Death has been swallowed up in victory.” 55 "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1Corinthians 15:54b-57)***

Three things were at the entrance of the tomb of Jesus that may hinder reaching to him and may deceitfully work to hinder spreading the good news of His resurrection. The same these things may oppose the church today and work to hinder the spread of the good news of Jesus' victory on death. But the resurrection has power and is at work this very day to aid us, we who are His church, to combat all the following obstacles and forces:

1- The old tradition represented by the stone at the entrance: “59 Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60 and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away.” (Matthew 27:59-60) “Who put this stone? Joseph. Who is he? The gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John give good account about him of who he really is.

A- Had himself become a disciples: “57 As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. (Matthew 27:57)

B- A prominent member of the Council: “43 Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body.” (Mark 15:43)

C- A prominent member of the Council: “Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man.” (Luke 23:50)

D- Was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jews: “38 Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jews. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. 39 He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. 40 Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs.” (John 19:38-40)

When we put all the four together we can conclude that Joseph of Arimathea is still following the Jewish tradition, he was part of the Jewish council, he had faith in Jesus but he kept that secretly so that his privileges from the Jewish side will not be affected. He is still rooted in the tradition as he showed his interest more in burying the body of Jesus according to Jewish customs more than his interest to follow the word of God.

The women who went to the tomb were asking each other who will remove the stone that Joseph of Arimathea had placed at the entrance, ***“1 When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. 2 Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb 3 and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?" (Mark 16:1-3)*** It is really a question ***“Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?”*** The same obstacle and the same question the church today is facing. There are many Christians today are living in the old tradition, they believe in Christ and they claim that they are His disciples but they are still clung to old traditions and practices that contradict and does not agree with the word of God. They are like Joseph of Arimathea, themselves they put obstacles but are unaware of that. Their teachings and ways of life rooted in many customs and traditions that hinder others from reaching Christ and know Him in the right way.

But here is the good news, ***“4 But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away.” (Mark 16:4)*** The stone that the women were thinking of got removed and in this way, ***“There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it.” (Matthew 28:2)***

My dear and beloved: In the same way God will handle whatever obstacles that comes from the traditional churches and Christians who are not sound in their ways of life. You do not need to worry because Christ's Resurrection power is able to move away whatever hindrances and enable us as church to continue to testify about Christ Resurrection and go forward with the guidance and the power of God The Holy Spirit to continue to preach the gospel and making new disciples for Jesus.

My Prayer: *Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the Cross for my sins and rose from the dead to give me eternal life. Lord thank you for your encouraging word to me. Lord I put in your hand the following obstacles _____ . Lord I trust that you can handle and you can remove from our way whatever obstacles, so that we can continue as workers and as Church of God to testify about your goodness to others. Lord continue to encourage us and provide for us and gives us the joy and the strength so we can continue spread the good news of Christ's death and resurrection. This is our prayer in Jesus name, Amen.*