

The Moral Implication of the Resurrection of our Lord

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April 10, 1955

I cannot let this day close without pointing to the moral implications of the resurrection of our Lord. And that would be the topic I would assign myself tonight, "The Moral Implications of the Resurrection of our Lord. And we'll continue to think about this 28th chapter of the book of Matthew. In the end of the Sabbath, that is, not at night, but in the morning, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and that other Mary, to see the sepulcher. I suppose they hadn't been asleep all the night. And as soon as there was any hope of light, they appeared. 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.

It would be very easy for a vivid Christian imagination here, to introduce a lot of things that are not in the text. Why did the angel from heaven sit upon the roll back stone? I think I know. If God had said to me, now you go down. My Son is in the grave. And I want you to go down and roll back that stone. He is coming out to be alive forevermore. He will never die again, but He'll stay in life forever, a mortal life forever. Go down and confound hell and glorify the Father. And I think I know where I would have set when the stone was rolled back. I think I'd have sat where the angel did. Now that might not be the reason the angels sat there, but it looks all right to me.

Then verse three, the countenance of this angel was like lightning and his raiment white as snow. And for fear of him, the keepers did shake and became as dead men. And the angel answered, that is, answered the unspoken inquiry of the women and said, fear not ye. For I know whom ye seek. It is Jesus which was crucified. But He is not here. For He is risen as He said. And if you are doubtful about it, come and see the place where the Lord once lay, but lies no more.

Now, there are two thoughts here, the magnificence of this angel that rolled the stone away, this messenger from God and the warm love of these two Marys that came to the sepulcher to mourn their Lord. And then, the annunciation, He is not here. He is risen. Come and see the place where the Lord lay. And then in verse eight it says about these disciples, that they departed quickly from the sepulcher with fear and great joy and did run to bring His disciples word.

The fear that was here was not the fear that they had once felt. Not the fear that keeps men in bondage all their lifetime, that is, fear of death. The fear that they felt was another kind of fear. It was a fear that was replete with joy. That is, it was reverence. It was the sense of being suddenly found in the presence of the supernatural and the heavenly, and to know that the Lord had risen

and was out of the grave. This brought a sense of the heavenly-ness upon them, a sense of another world, the sense of mystery and life and well-being and the presence of God.

And so, there was the fear of it there, and it was a fear mixed with joy. And they departed from the sepulcher. Someone said, I don't recall whom I was talking lately, that religion lies in the prepositions. And here we have religion lying in another preposition. They departed quickly from the sepulcher. "From" is a preposition. It is a word of direction. They had come to the sepulcher. That was their religion that they had before they knew Jesus had risen from the dead. The direction was toward the sepulcher. They came to the sepulcher. There you have a preposition. The direction is toward the sepulcher.

And as soon as they heard the joyful news that He had risen from the dead as He said, and that you could actually see the place where He lay. Then the Scripture said, they departed from the sepulcher. They changed their preposition from to, to from. The direction was now not toward the grave, but away from the grave. Not toward the end, but the end was past and now it was toward endlessness. And they departed quickly from the sepulcher and did run to bring the disciples word.

And then verse sixteen, the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. What a wonderful thing for a man to do. He appointed to meet these disciples before his death, apparently, and said, I will meet you. I'm going to die tomorrow, and in three days, I will meet you; make an appointment for three days after He was to die. That's what He did alright. And so they came and they found Him there. Verse eighteen, Jesus came. They saw Him and they worshipped Him. But being like you and me, there were some that were wondering about it all. It says, doubted, here.

In verse eighteen, Jesus came and spake unto them and said, all power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth, all power. He had died in weakness. And they had seen Him limp and cold and dead on the cross. They'd seen Him taken down and removed and placed in a grave. Now, they heard Him say, all power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. That might have been hard to believe except for one thing. He was there to prove that His words were real. If He had said that and not come through, and they had been looking down on His dead face and they had remembered that he said, all power is given unto me, they might have shrugged and looked at each other and shaking their heads and walked sadly away. For it would have been speaking, and not making good on your speech.

But there He was, keeping an appointment three days after death. There He was, present, in His own warm, living, pulsating, immortal person. And He said, all power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth. Now, how could they deny it? If a man just makes talk, you have a right to doubt him. But if a man stands before you risen from the dead, then you have a right to listen to him.

And when Jesus said, all power is given unto Me, He was there out of the grave, alive, to give weight and meaning, finality to what He was saying. And the church has believed that, that all power belongs to Jesus Christ our Lord. He doesn't exercise it all yet, but He has it all. He can command the armies of the world any moment. He can change the course of nations with a wave of His hand or word of His mouth. He can raise the dead, for they shall hear His voice and come forth from their lowly graves. All power is his, all authority, the authority of a raised and living Savior, the authority of a dying Lamb, the authority of a King, the authority of a High Priest forever, the authority of the second person of the Trinity, it's all his authority and it's all His power.

So, He said, all power is given unto me in heaven and earth. That is why I for one, cannot as the old writers would say, I cannot away with, it means I can't tolerate this pitying kind of religion. It's pitying the Lord Jesus Christ all the time. Come weep with me awhile. Come, weep with me awhile. Let us kneel down by the cross and let us weep a while. Come weep awhile as though the Lord were a victim, a martyr, a victim of his own zeal, a poor pitiable man with good intention, but that found the world was too big for Him and life too much for Him. So, He sank down in the helplessness of death. And now, when we weep for a while beside His tomb and grieve awhile beside His cross and walk around in black.

No, no my brethren, He says, all power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Here is the mighty Jesus, the mighty Christ, the mighty Lord. At Christmas time I said, the power doth not lie in the manger. And now I say to you that power does not lie at the cross. Power lies in the glory. The man who died on the cross died in weakness. The Bible says so. But He rose in power. And if we forget the resurrection and the glory and the fact that He is seated at the right hand of God, we lose all the meaning of Christianity.

Power does not lie with a babe in a manger. Power does not lie with a man helpless on a cross. Power lies with a man who died on that cross and went into a grave and came out the third day and rose to the right hand of power. There is where power lies. And the Savior that we serve is not a Savior to be pitied. And our business is not to mourn and weep awhile beside a grave. Our business is to thank God with tearful reverence that He ever went into that grave. To thank God, with joy, that He ever went to that cross. To understand what that cross meant and means and understand what that burial means, and then understand what the resurrection means that placed a glorious crown upon all His sufferings.

So, at His Father's right hand, He sits in absolute majesty and kingly powers, sovereign over all the world. But you say, Mr. Tozer, isn't that just big talk? If He is sovereign over all the world, what about Russia? What about juvenile delinquency? What about atom bombs and hydrogen bombs? If He is Sovereign over all the world, why is the West at the throat of the East? And why is there an armament race? Because, He has a prophetic plan that He's working by.

And His plan calls for the nations of the earth to play themselves like checkers over the face of the world as over a checkerboard. And it calls for the return of Israel to Palestine. And it calls for the king of the north, to beat himself out. And it calls for the West to evangelize the world. And He's waiting, waiting, though He has all the power, He's waiting to exercise it. He exercises it in a limited way now through His church and would exercise it with unlimited power if His church was ready to believe that He would and could do it. All power is given unto Me in heaven and earth.

Now what are we to do? What are the moral implications of it? The answer is, go ye therefore. Therefore, is the word that means, as a result of what I just said, that all power is given unto Me in heaven and earth. Go ye and disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son of the Holy Ghost.

Now, my friends, I want you to see here that Easter did not come and end. It's not something to be celebrated each year as a something in itself, that began and ended in itself. It was but a beginning of some vaster and grander thing. I am out of the grave. I'm alive forevermore. All power is given unto me. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of 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. And then the rest of it says, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

You know how tenderly we take the knife of bad teaching and separate that little passage from the rest, as you might take a rind off an orange. We peel it off and put it on our mottos and on our calendars and in the back of our book or draw a line through it, lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world, but He didn't say that. Don't make him say something He didn't say. Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. He didn't say that. He said, and lo, I am with you always. That conjunction is not there by accident. He said go ye therefore and lo, I am with you always.

There's the point. Easter did not come to give you and me a chance to smell sweet flowers. And you can't imagine what a circle of fragrance there is around those lilies, beautiful, and I'm a flower man. I don't know one from the other, but I love them. I do know that's a lily. And I love all that goes with it. I'd whisper to you ladies that I even like the color that comes with Easter in the clothing. I don't mind it at all. I'm not such an old fuddy duddy and just frown upon color. I like color. God made color. He made all in color there is. The devil never invented a color yet. He doesn't know how. He can't do it. He can't make anything pretty. God makes the pretty things, and the devil makes the ugly things.

But Easter isn't a time for us to smell flowers only, not a time for us to buy the new clothing only. And certainly, God knows it's not a time to be the proudest fellow in the Easter parade. It's a time

for us seriously to consider the moral implications of the resurrection. If this is all true, if this is not more Santa Claus stuff. This isn't simply more sentimentality and poetry. If this is history. If this is real. If this happened, and this church is founded upon the belief that it happened. And I stand tonight upon the faith that it happened. This is historically true.

Then if it is true, what does it mean to me? Does it have any bite in it? Does it get hold of me? Does it mean anything to me? Am I to listen to a cantata and sing, up from the grave He arose, smell the flowers and go home and forget it? No, it has a moral application. It lays hold upon us with all the authority of sovereign obligation, and says, go, you. You go. Everybody knows the grammatical construction here. You is the subject of that sentence. Go is the verb go. You, you go and teach all nations. Or as the margin has it, make disciples among all nations, or make Christians in all the nations.

So, the moral obligation of the resurrection of Christ is the missionary obligation. It is the obligation to carry the message and to tell the story and to be a financial and personal and praying part of this great commission. There are those who so rightly divide the Word of Truth wrongly, that they put this great commission in what they call the tribulation days and say it doesn't belong to the church of Christ.

The devil is slicker than the communists. Communists are dumb. Every time they try to pull a fast one. They're so dumb that it's amazing how they can get along at all. If they didn't have so much brass, they couldn't. They cover their ignorance and stupidity with brass. But the devil isn't so stupid. And he well knows that if he can succeed in getting us to be satisfied with a celebration, and say, oh, He's risen from the dead. Let everybody say amen.

I even heard a man last night on the radio as I was sampling the station to see if there was anything worth listening to, comparing Jesus Christ to a baseball player who died when he was 38, Lou Gehrig. He said, Lou Gehrig, he was 38 years old when he got leukemia and died. He said he was a wonderful fellow, and incidentally, he was, a wonderful young man, a prince among young men from all I can learn about him. But he died when he was 38, and said, the unctuous voiced announcer, he died at 38, and come to think of it, Jesus died about that time. But look what Lou Gehrig accomplished, and look what Jesus accomplished.

And so, if we can get all soft voice and dewy-eyed and talk about Jesus and Lou Gehrig, the devil will be a happy boy. He'll say, that's what I want them to do. I want them to talk about Easter. I want them to have cartoons about Jesus rising from the dead. I want them to put on cantatas and sing great anthems and preach sermons about Him. But I always want them to think about Him as being just like any other big hero, a Lincoln, a Lou Gehrig, I don't ever want them to remember for a minute that He is now seated in the place of power, and I'm a poor frightened fugitive. The devil

never wants that, He wants us to think about Easter and buttercups and the bluebirds coming back.

But he doesn't want us to remember that his Lord is at the right hand of God now and can put him in hell when the time comes. He can send him there and chain him and hurl him down the moment He wants to do it in the prophetic plan. He doesn't want anybody to remember that. He knows he can keep the Christians mourning a while. Oh, mourn with me a while and weep with me beside the tree. He knows he's got us. And he knows that he's got a bunch of sentimental blubberers.

But if we can see that He is risen, and that He's no longer dead, no longer mortal. Not even mortal, to say nothing of being dead. He can't die anymore. Death has no more dominion. And that He has all the authority in heaven, earth and hell, and holds the keys thereof. Then we get our chest back and begin to look and think and feel differently about things. And it'll be no more a celebration once a year, and no more mournful thinking about a pitiful Jesus that went out to die. But we'll understand what the cross was for.

Next Saturday on the radio, I'm going to preach on, what did the cross mean? And as soon as we get a hold of that and we know the meaning of the cross and the meaning of the resurrection, then power begins to move in, and we take the offensive and become the aggressors. And our witness and our testimony become positive and final, and we're to spread this all over the earth. I wouldn't be pastor five minutes of a church that wouldn't be a missionary church and wouldn't have missionary interests, missionaries clinging around and missionaries going out sometimes and missionaries coming back, because that's the obligation.

That's the moral obligation of our Lord's resurrection. It is that we surrender to His Lordship. All power is given unto me. It is that we obey His command, go ye therefore and teach all nations. It is that we believe His promise, lo, I'm with you always even unto the end of the world. But let's not separate them. Let's not refuse to have anything to do with the going or the sending. Let's not forget the nations and then say, lo I'm with you. He didn't say it. He said, you do what I told you to do and lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Well, next week we begin our 33rd missionary convention. Next Sunday night I'm going back to John again. I'm still in John. I'm going to preach a missionary sermon out of John following Brother Notson's missionary message. And then I'm going to pray, and I know you will and do everything possible to see whether we can't push up our missionary offering another \$10,000 this year from whatever it's been before.

Then, in addition to that, we have a crop of teenage young people now coming up in our church. Now, what's it going to be for them? Where are they going? Are they going to mature, marry, settle down, get old, quick thinking, get into a groove and wear it deeper and deeper as the years go by

as so many, many have done, or are they going to hear the voice of God speak to them? Are they going to listen to this voice spoken, O earth, hear the word of the Lord, says the Holy Ghost. And here it is. I am no longer in the grave. I am out and here I am, He said. And My power is all power there is. It's mine. Heaven listens. Earth listens. Hell listens. It's all mine. Now because it's all mine, I can protect you. I can support you. I can go ahead of you. I can give you effectiveness and meaning and efficiency.

You therefore go and make disciples out of all the nations of the world, all the nations, and I will be with you. I will be with you. The American soldier goes out. He has the goodwill and the good wishes and the prayers and the love of his people behind him. But he may be caught somewhere in a foxhole all alone. And all 160 million Americans and all the unthinkable power of our American military, can't help him at all. But there was never a Christian caught in a foxhole alone. Never. Paul said, my friends all left me, but nevertheless, the Lord stood with me. Hear that? He remembered that the Lord stood with him. Nobody, nobody's ever been deserted by the Lord yet.

Twelve to fourteen years ago, a great big handsome fellow used to play with my boys. Oh, they were big enough now, 17-18; but they still played and fooled around there. They used to come over and I'd see him, a round-faced, handsome big fellow full of smiles; a very close friend to one of my boys. He became a flyer over Germany. He went out one night, and I think over the English Channel if I remember. Some of the mates, some of those who were with him in the squadron flying, saw his plane take fire and start to spiral downward and plunge. And I don't know if they have ever found the body yet after all these years. Nobody could help him then. 160 million Americans back here, untold power, flew the air and floated on the sea and marched on the land, Marines, Air Corps, WACS, WAVES, Army, military power untold, but a handsome, young fellow, too late, spiraled down into the sea with the rest of his crew. And they have never been heard of since.

But no soldier ever went out yet for the Lord Jesus, ever went anywhere yet by himself. Never could be said yet of a man, a missionary, or a messenger of the truth. Here he is, all alone. Jesus Christ has all the power there is, but he's way yonder and the man is alone. Poor fellow, it's too bad, Jesus couldn't get some of that power to him, too bad.

No, no, nobody ever said that that had sense in his head. For you said, lo, I am with you always even to the end of the world. And there never was a martyr yet on a mission field of the world, never a missionary that laid down his life in a cannibal jungle. Never a missionary that perished shooting the rapids or going over the falls, never a one, but the Lord Jesus Christ didn't have him by the hand and lead him triumphantly victoriously through. Lo, I am with you always. But that itself is based upon the obligation, understood and accepted. Go ye therefore and teach all nations.

I hope that this church and all of us here and myself and these pastors and all of you friends, I hope that we'll all see that Easter is not a time for celebration only. It's a time for obligation. It is a time for moral implications. It's a time to understand that if He rose, then we've got to do something. If He rose, then we can't sit. If He rose, then we can't settle back down in religious apathy. If He rose, and all power is His, then there's something for you and me to do!