

## O' Glorious Day

### Matthew 28:1-8

#### Introduction

Good morning, and happy Easter to all of you. Today is truly the celebration of a glorious day. I'd like to begin by reading a passage of Scripture to you. Our reading is from Matthew 28:1-8 this morning.

**Matthew 28:1-8** – After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. 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. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.’ Now I have told you.” So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

Today, as we remember the day that Jesus rose from the grave, we're going to talk primarily about VICTORY. Jesus's return from the grave proved Him victorious over a number of things, and as followers of Christ, we too today have victory over many things through our connection with Him. We share in the triumph of our savior when we put our faith in Him. We'll examine 3 primary areas in which the triumph is shared by Christ and his followers today. I want to prepare you and tell you that we are going to cover a LOT of scripture today, probably more so than any homiletics class would ever suggest. Nevertheless, I feel that God has led me to each of these verses, and can think of fewer better ways

to honor Christ on this day of celebration of His resurrection than to quote His Word extensively.

*First, we'll see that we and Christ have victory over...*

## Life

By saying that we have victory over life, I do not mean to imply that life itself is a nefarious obstacle to be overcome. Rather, what I am referring to is the CIRCUMSTANCES of life that are often difficult and sometimes defining of long seasons of our lives. Jesus faced many difficult circumstances during his ministry on Earth. He was rejected in his own home-town, persecuted, ridiculed, and faced multiple assassination attempts. Eventually, we know that he would be seized unlawfully and interrogated, mocked and beaten, and ultimately, crucified unto his death, but none of these circumstances would be the end of Jesus's story. He would rise again, in spite of all of these things, to obtain victory and dominion over life itself, rising above all of the circumstances that ultimately led to his death.

We share in the victory over the circumstances of life with Jesus when we choose to accept Him as our Lord and Savior. Through the trials of our lives we are ultimately not defined by our wins and losses in this brief time that we have on Earth. We are instead defined emphatically by the love that God has for us, and the future that He promises to us beyond life. We do not find ourselves adrift on a vast ocean, tossed about helplessly by the waves of our circumstances with no hope of dry land in sight. God gives us hope and a Rock to cling onto amidst the storms of life. King David sang of his hope in God in Psalm 18.

**Psalm 18:1-3** – I love you, LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I called to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I have been saved from my enemies.

In this long Psalm, he continues on to say.

**Psalm 18:16-17** – He reached down from on high and took hold of me; he drew me out of deep waters. He rescued me from my powerful enemy, from my foes, who were too strong for me.

And if the waters of our circumstances overwhelm us... If the enemies of our lives and our joy become too strong for us... We need only be reminded that in spite of his circumstances, Christ rose again. Similarly, because we are one with Him in faith, our circumstances are only temporary. We too will rise again. Victory over life... Yes, because of Christ's resurrection, we too can have victory over life!

*Next, we'll see that we and Christ have victory over...*

## Sin

Christ lived without ever having sinned. His victory over sin is one of the more obvious truths of Christian history. Nevertheless, he was tempted and did not sin. Read along with me from the following verses, again in the book of Matthew.

**Matthew 4:1-11** - Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written:

"He will command his angels concerning you,  
and they will lift you up in their hands,  
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone."

Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Take a quick note that each time Jesus was tempted, he countered with Scripture. That's one reason it's important that we stay in our bibles, my friends. But the original point remains, Jesus had victory over sin. Not only did Jesus not sin, but the sins committed against him would not keep him from rising again and overcoming! Sin at no point defined Jesus, but how do we as sinners share in this victory of Christ?

Peter reminds us that.

**1 Peter 2:24** – He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

When Jesus was crucified, he bore the penalty for sin for all in the world. ...All who were, and all who would be to come, who might accept his sacrifice and call Him Lord and Savior. Because of Christ's sacrifice, we might die to sin and live to righteousness. Sin no longer has power over our fate. Because our sins died with Christ, yet he rose again victorious over them, so can we rise again in Christ and be victorious over them. The apostle Paul takes it yet a step further when talking about sin and our ability to overcome. Listen to these words from Romans 7.

**Romans 7:15-25** –I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. **Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.**

So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? **Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!**

That battle against sin is always in us, but there are two points I want to hammer home from these verses in Scripture.

1. Our sin no longer defines us. Paul goes so far as to say that if he does what he does not want to do, it is no longer him who does it, but it is the sin living in him. That doesn't mean that we don't take responsibility for our sin, and it doesn't mean that we don't continue to endeavor not to sin in our daily lives,

but it does mean that our sin is no longer tied to our identity. Instead, our identity comes from our relationship with Jesus Christ.

2. Secondly, it IS Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ alone who delivers us from our sins. Remember, He bore the penalty of our sins from the cross, yet His death was not the end of His story. Remember always that the ability of our sins to define who we are and to more importantly determine our fate died on the cross with Christ, and as He rose again, so we will one day rise again with him, sin-free and reborn.

Romans 6:2-7 helps to bring this point home. It reads as follows:

**Romans 6:2-7** – We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

I just love the last bit of that passage. Let me read it again. “For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin – because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.”

Sin had no eternal power of Jesus, and because we have died with Christ and risen with Him again through baptism, sin no longer has eternal power over us either. We have victory over sin, because of the resurrection of Christ.

*Finally, we see that we and Christ have victory over...*

## **Death**

Don't get me wrong, physical death befalls all of us. Equally, I don't mean to imply that death was ever the end of any of us. Men and women were made in the image of God, and men and women are thus eternal. Death, however, for the one who has not be resurrected with Christ, is the beginning of a terrible final

chapter of life in which a man finds himself in a state of eternal separation from God. Nevertheless, Christ overcame Death, and so can we when we accept him as our Lord and Savior.

The death of Christ appeared to be the final blow for evil, but again, we know that Christ's death would not be the end of his story. He would go to Hell to preach to those who had not heard Him, and on the third day, he would rise again, appearing to many before finally ascending to the right hand of God the Father, where He lives yet to this very moment and beyond. Men and their schemes to kill Him... The devil and his plot for the victory of evil over good... All failed. When Jesus Christ rose again, it was evident that he was Lord over life and death.

As Jesus was victorious over death, so are we who have placed our faith in Him. Death marks the turning of a page in the life story of everyone. Some will spend an eternity without God, as they have spent their earthly life without God. Others, those who have placed their faith in Christ, will spend eternity with God. A splendid eternity that we commonly refer to as 'Heaven...' Jesus says plainly.

**John 5:24-25** – “Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life. Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.”

Put plainly, the Word has been given to us, and those who have believed will experience eternal life with God. Much like sin, death is no longer a negative defining moment in our lives. It rather becomes a positive one. It becomes that moment when we are reunited with our resurrected Savior once and for all. The apostle Paul recognized the beauty of this moment in his letter to the Philippians, in which he said.

**Philippians 1:21-26** – For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.

Let us be reminded on this day of celebration that there is still much work for us to do here on Earth. While we may desire to depart and be with Christ similar to Paul's desire, it is better for us to stay in the body. We celebrate our victories with Christ today, but many are not in this celebration with us. The task still remains to us to carry this message of hope to those who have not heard it or those who have not yet made a decision to allow Jesus Christ into their hearts. Nevertheless, on that day when we do depart the Earth, we as Christ followers depart the Earth into a wonderful place. It will have pearly gates and golden streets, and there will be no need for lamps, because God Himself will be the light. It will be a place where there is no pain, no disease, no tears, and no sin. We will spend every day worshiping the Lord, in his presence. All because of Christ's victory over death and our resurrection with Him... Paul states in his first letter to the Corinthians.

**1 Corinthians 15:20-23** - But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.

Mike Gilbert, not that guy we heard from this morning, is a pastor from Desert Springs Community Church in Arizona. He notes the following:

Jesus was the "first fruit" of the resurrection. What does "first fruit" tell you? Well, it at least tells us there will be more fruit to follow...and that's you and me. We will be resurrected also, when He returns for us, with the trumpet of God and the voice of the Archangel, the dead in Christ shall rise! That means I can live boldly, confidently, knowing that my future is secure, my home is already prepared, my Lord is present with me, and one day He's coming back to bring me to Him.–

**Mike Gilbert**

And with that, my friends, we share in Christ's victory over death. Oh what a glorious day was marked by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, not only to our own benefits, but to the glory of God Almighty!

### **Conclusion**

So what do we want to remember as we go about the Easter holiday today? It will likely be a time of good food and celebration. It'll likely be a time that we

spend with our families and loved ones. But just like Christmas, we must not forget the reason for this Easter Season. It marks a day a VICTORY. Victory of God over Satan... Victory of good over evil... Victory over the circumstances of life, turbulent as they may be, that can no longer remove our hope in the Rock that is Jesus Christ. Victory over sin, though it may still plague us, it can no longer define us or determine our fate. And finally, victory over death, in that as surely as Christ died and rose again, those of us in Christ will rise again into his marvelous presence, for all of eternity, praise God!

Remember today the following 3 things... The cross, is empty... The tomb, is empty... Jesus is risen... Let our hearts be full.

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