

Easter Sunday: “Resurrection - A Living Stone’s Eye View!”

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Scriptures

Mark 16:1-8

1 As soon as the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome who had bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him, 2 went to the tomb. It was very early on the first day of the week, just as the sun was rising. 3 But as they got closer they began asking each other, "Who will roll away that stone for us which blocks the entrance to the tomb?" 4 But then they looked up, and saw that the stone, which was huge, had already been rolled away.

5 When they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in white, sitting on the right side, which made them a bit apprehensive.

6 But he said to them, "Don't be alarmed! You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was executed. But he is not here, he has been raised. Look, there is the spot where they laid his body. 7 Go now and tell his disciples, particularly the one called "Rock" (Peter) that he is gone ahead of you to Galilee! There you will find him, just like he told you."

8 Immediately they left, running from the tomb, both fearful and excited. And they did not breathe a word of it to anyone because, after all, they were that scared!

Luke 24:4-6

4 And so, while they were still uncertain about what to do, two figures in dazzling clothing suddenly appeared and stood beside them. 5 Out of sheer fright the women fell to the ground, prostrate before them. And they said to the women, "Why are you looking for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen, just like he said he would."

Sermon: “Resurrection - A Living Stone’s Eye View!”

Hello, good morning! My name is Lyme, Lyme Stone. But you can call me, “Stoney.” Now I’ve been around for quite a long time, maybe a billion years or so? And I used to be a big deal, a really big deal - a mountain actually! But over the years, well, I’ve been whittled down now to this. Much of those changes of course happened long before any of your human ancestors showed up.

But then one day, as I was minding my own business, lying peacefully a couple feet under the cool earth, this dude uncovered me and began hammering away on me with a chisel knocking off chunks of me here and there. Then he and a bunch of his buddies, rolled me up one hill and then down another and then up again. Until finally I was rolled over an entrance of something they called a tomb and for the next thousand years or so that’s what I did.

But my job became obsolete when you folks started digging holes and burying folks in the ground instead. But back in the day I was pretty important, essential even. Without me blocking the entrance of those caves those corpses inside would have been torn apart by stray dogs and other wild animals and then scattered all over the place. Not at all hygienic!

Now your pastor, a brilliant young man by the way, asked me if I might come and share with you about a particular incident that happened not so long ago - well, at least not very long ago in rock time! He thought you might benefit from it. But first I wanna ask you a question. He told me that you’ve be talking about “Living Stones” for a couple of weeks! So what have you learned so far?

Kinda quiet in here, makes you wonder who's really the stone?

Okay, great, well let me get back to the story. I was there when a certain Joseph of Arimathea carved out a new tomb next to the one his father had been buried in. Then one evening, right before sundown, I watched as about a half dozen or so Roman soldiers escorted Joseph and a few others who were carrying a body wrapped in linen, and laid it inside. Then the soldiers rolled me in front of the opening, which I might add was a near perfect fit, before they ended their day sitting around the campfire until they were drunk.

I did feel sorry for the guy, he looked like he'd been through Hell! But I must also admit that I was a bit disappointed since I was used to protecting the corpses of much more consequential people, you know, folks who were more famous and wealthy than he. Another day passed into night again, filled with more tall tales about soldiering adventures, far too many bad jokes, more drinking, as well as stories about families far, far away until they finally fell asleep.

It was a silent night and so I fell asleep as well. That was until, "SHABAM!!!!" Lights started flashing, the earth started quaking and the thunder began a roaring! I literally began to rock and roll and rolled away from the tomb's entrance. Then at first I teetered a bit forward and then backwards and finally fell flat on my behind!

Which I must say is still much better than the other way! Because, since I can't move on my own, I could have laid face down for hundreds if not a thousand of years! But just as suddenly as the world seemed to have been ripped apart - it became silent again. I guess the soldiers must have run away since I didn't hear another peep outta them?

Then as the sun was coming up, I heard women's voices coming up the path. And I don't mean to sound paranoid, but I also got the impression that they were talking about me? When they got to the tomb I heard an audible "gasp!" And then after hesitating a bit they went inside. Then I heard a scream and they shot outta there like a cannon running full speed and screaming back down the hill. Well at least I thought it was screaming, it was sorta hard to tell if it was fear or happiness?

Then a few minutes later a couple dudes come running up all outta breath. They too hesitated and looked in the before they too went inside. Throughout the rest of that day other folks would come by quietly and carefully as if they were afraid to be seen. Most cried, some prayed while others even whispered words of gratitude?!

Some of the guards did actually return along with a small group of what appeared to be some pretty important folks. I overheard them discussing what had happened and they hatched some hair-brained scheme obviously based on some alternative set of facts that was no where near what I had actually experienced! Then they haggled a bit over what it would cost to buy the guards' silence, then forked over a wad of cash before leaving. But since I was flat on my back I didn't get a very good view, so sorry, but that's all I remember.

For awhile, folks would come by on a fairly regular basis and sit on me and have picnics - for some odd reason it was usually sharing bread and drinking wine? But then after awhile folks stopped coming around at all. And every so often I would be hammered into smaller and smaller pieces. I literally gave one arm and a leg to build a house around the corner. Another guy used my butt, most appropriately, to make a bench! I have no idea what or where my other leg and arm ended up? My head a torso became part of a huge wall until some Turkish speaking soldiers literally blew us in two.

So all I have left now, as you can see, is my head and until I landed this recent speaking tour gig, well, I spent most of my time just laying around.

But before I go, or before I “roll on outta here,” I got two more questions I wanna ask you. They are the same questions that I heard that morning long ago when those ladies came to the tomb, went inside and found it empty. “Who will roll the stone away for you?” And, “Why do you , so often, look for the living among the dead?”

As a stone I know for a fact that mountains can be moved. Sometimes it can happen in an instant while other times they move very, very slowly - mere inches in a millions of years.

So, who will you let help you move those stones that keep you trapped inside very dark and deadly places? When I was younger it would take a dozen really strong dudes to even budge me back in front of a tomb.

So, where will you look to find and experience that kind of “wonder working power?”

And when will you stop looking for life among phony people and sad places and in those things that can only lead to death, destruction, distractions and boredom?

Seek first that which gives life, love and peace!

Oh yeah, something did happen that night! Not only did it throw me to the ground in an instant, but it also changed the world for ever. And it is still the best hope we have for the entire cosmos! Love has something to do with it. Well not really — Love has everything to do with it! A kind of love that serves, suffers and is willing to die for others. Love, that also transcends death and thus lasts for eternity.

Love can create “living stones” stones that can never, ever die! That’s why, God uses “living stones” to build a true Kin-dom of Peace on earth, just as it is in heaven!