

**A WEEK OF WONDERS
GARDEN TOMB TO GLORY
JOHN 20, MATTHEW 28**

As a boy, I remember watching ABC's Wide World of Sports, and **the cliff-diving championships from Acapulco, Mexico**. Brave men would leap headfirst off a ledge 136 feet above a slender inlet of ocean.

The water depth below them varied from 6 feet to 16 feet depending on the waves. Their timing was crucial.

Even after the diver hit the water no one took a breath... not until he surfaced, and waved to the crowd. That's when everyone knew he was ok! He'd survived.

But the spectators at the cliff-diving championships all look!... They expect the diver to still be alive.

Not so with the disciples... When Jesus dove into the icy waters of death, they all assumed he'd never rise.

They saw the torture, the blood, His last breath. They held His lifeless body. No one expected Him to surface.

Roman soldiers guarded the tomb not because they anticipated a spark of life from Jesus. They were on duty to prevent a conspirator from stealing the corpse.

The most ominous characteristic of death is that it's **irreversible**. Lose a loved one and it doesn't really hit you until the first Christmas afterwards - or the Easter get-together - *that he or she is conspicuously missing*.

That's when you realize the person who was such a vital part of your family will never be around again.

Their departure is permanent - it's **irreversible**. *And this is what the disciples assumed about the Master...*

When the women came to the Garden Tomb to finish spicing up the corpse no one had any inkling of expectation that they would ever see Jesus alive again.

John 20:1 tells us, "On the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark..." Matthew says they came as the day "began to dawn." Luke reports, it was "very early in the morning."

The apparent differences are easily explained. They probably left the upper room pre-dawn - then the sun began to rise on their way to the Garden Tomb.

But I like to start the story of the Resurrection with John 20:1, *because it was dark in more ways than one.*

Even though Jesus taught His disciples that He'd be crucified and rise again the third day – the possibility of a literal resurrection had never crossed their minds.

They'd been overcome by the **irreversibility** of death.

Author Kent Hughes calls these disciples "**Saturday's Children.**" Saturday's Kids are *the defeated*. They feel cheated, and trapped, and stuck. Their dreams have died. Optimism is dim. Disappointment dominates. Life is not what they'd hoped. Its futility seems **irreversible**.

But one event transformed "**Saturday's Children**" into "**Sunday's Children.**" With the resurrection of Jesus sadness, and evil, and disappointment, and defeat became

reversible. Hope, joy, and faith became the new realities. A triumphant approach to life was born.

In the future the disciples will be *persecuted and plundered*, but nothing will get them down. They'll recall the empty tomb and the power of Jesus - and trust in His ability to transform sorrow into gladness.

So here's the question I want you to ask you, "*Are you Saturday's child, or one of Sunday's children?*"

Well... *Was it dark? Had the day begun to dawn? How early was it?...* You'll find other examples of ambiguity in the Gospel record of the resurrection...

Was it one angel or two? Who exactly made up the band of women who came to the tomb? I bring this up because it's obvious the four Gospel writers didn't all get together to make sure they had their story straight.

If the resurrection was a hoax they would've had a pow-wow to work out the details. Obviously they didn't.

They were too surprised, too stunned by the event!

Don't misunderstand me, none of the details mentioned by the Gospel writers contradict each other.

All four Gospel accounts can be reconciled, but I don't think coordinating details was their top priority.

The writers were too overwhelmed by the elephant in the room! They were trying to get their heads around a miracle of unmatched proportion. For the first time in history a man demonstrated that He had the power to reverse His own death. **What they had always assumed was irreversible had now been reversed.**

Mark tells us, as the women walked to the tomb they discussed how they were going to remove the stone. A huge stone - probably two ton - sealed the tomb shut.

But their concern was *needless fretting*... And since Jesus is alive a lot of our worries are *needless fretting*!

Matthew 28:2 tells us what happened as the ladies approached. "There was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it.

His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow." I'll bet millions of angels were on hand at the resurrection. Only two were made visible.

On my first trip to Israel I visited a place called "The King's Tomb." It's an out-of-the-way site - not on most tour itineraries. I went because it features a tomb with an example of how a stone was rolled over its opening.

A channel is cut in the rock in front of the grave.

A stone is placed at the top of the gutter, and a wedge driven under the rock. When it's time to roll the stone, you kick out the wedge, and gravity pulls the stone in place. This is how it *rolled* at the garden tomb.

When Mark writes, "the stone had been rolled away," the word he uses means, "to roll up a slope or incline."

The *angel induced earthquake* didn't just push the stone backward, but upward... John states "the stone had been taken away." He uses the Greek word, "airo," which means, "to pick up and carry." This stone caught air! A 4000 pound rock blew off the mouth of the grave!

This past February in downtown Atlanta, an underground fire blew a half-dozen manhole covers several feet into the air. Thankfully, no one was injured.

It takes quite a force to lift 300 pounds of cast iron.

But that was nothing compared to the resurrection power of Jesus. It blasted the stone right off the grave.

And the reason wasn't to let Jesus out.

We'll see later, the resurrected body of Jesus had supernatural capacities. He could walk through stone walls, and travel distances instantaneously. Apparently, a heavenly, immortal body isn't bound by mortal laws.

Realize the stone was moved, not to let Jesus out, but to let us in - *so the world could see that He'd risen!*

Apparently, the Roman garrison guarding the tomb had front row seats for the miracle. Matthew 28:4, **“The guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men.”** These Romans were special-ops, battle-tested soldiers - yet they quivered in fear before the angel.

They played dead... then they ran like rabbits.

Matthew tells us they were afraid of Pilate. His orders were to guard the tomb. That's why they went to the chief priests. The Jews bribed them, and promised to smooth things over with Pilate, if the soldiers told everyone that the disciples came at night and stole the body while they slept. Ironically, to save their own skin, the soldiers agreed to the lie they were sent to prevent.

But the Romans weren't the only people who ran from the tomb. John tells us Mary Magdalene left the other women who came to prepare the body of Jesus.

She raced to the Upper Room to fetch Peter and John. At this point all Mary knew was that the tomb was empty. She didn't yet know what had happened.

But the other women get informed...

In Luke 24:5 two angels appear in the tomb wearing shining garments. One of them asks, **"Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen!"** This is what's carved in the door at Jerusalem's Garden Tomb... **"He is not here, but is risen!"**

There are famous tombs all around the world...

Hadrian's Tomb in Rome... Lenin's Tomb in Red Square... the Taj Mahal in India... Westminster Abbey in London.. Pharaoh's Tomb, the Pyramid of Giza... the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, in Washington DC...

But it's ironic, that the world's most famous tomb, the Garden Tomb in Israel, is empty! Jesus is risen!

You can dance on Mohammed's remains, or on Buddha's body, or on Confucius' corpse, *but not Jesus!*

His body is risen! I've been inside the tomb where Jesus was buried, and He's no longer there! He's risen!

The world's most famous tomb is an empty tomb!

But the empty grave isn't all I've noticed at the Garden Tomb. Look at the top of the wall, and you'll see barbed-wire surrounding the compound. Sharp, glass shards form

a protective barrier. It's a sign of the tension, and conflict that exists just outside the gates.

Surely, folks who live near the tomb are familiar with the facts. They know Christ is risen. They live next door to the evidence - but the perpetual violence and turmoil is a sign they've yet to experience the risen Lord.

And I wonder how many of us here today are in the same boat! Intellectually, we believe Jesus is alive, but we've never met Him personally. We don't know His presence and power. We've never received His love.

Notice again the question the angel asked the women, "*Why do you seek the living among the dead?*"

In other words, why look in a graveyard for a man who's alive? Why are you treating a living, breathing human being as if He were dead? Yet Christians and churches are guilty of this crime every single Sunday.

They read His words and apply His teachings... They recall His past accomplishments, and learn from His example... they sing songs about Him... but there they stop! *Why not press further and seek to know Him?*

Don't just sing songs *about Him*, express your heart *to Him*... Make prayer a *dialogue*, not a *monologue*... Don't just work *for the Lord*, seek to work *with Him*...

Church isn't a *eulogy for a dead man*. It should be an *encounter with the living Lord* who's alive and well!

After speaking to the women, Mark tells us the angel instructed them to return to the rest of the disciples and let them know Jesus had risen! I love Mark's account, where

the angel says to these ladies, “But go, tell His disciples - and Peter...” Check that out... *“And Peter!”*

Jesus plans to reach out especially to Peter and reassure him that he’s forgiven. The love of Jesus never fails - *even when we do!* The Lord’s pardon is always available if we’re humble and willing to change.

Here’s a possible play-by-play of how the events of the day unfolded... Early in the morning, Jesus is resurrected... an angel and an earthquake remove the stone... women arrive at the tomb and find it empty...

The Romans flee, while Mary Magdalene races off to tell Peter and John... The other women encounter the two angels, who inform them that Jesus has risen. They’re told to tell the other disciples - *and Peter...*

As the ladies exit the garden Jesus appears to them.

Peter and John then arrive at the tomb - along with Mary Magdalene. John 20:4, “*They both ran together, and the other disciple (John) outran Peter and came to the tomb first.*” Notice, John has to mention he outran Peter. Even at such a holy moment, *boys will be boys...*

It also shows how much they wanted to believe!

Imagine, their return conversation, “*Could it be? After all that’s happened?*” Peter had to wonder, “*How will He ever forgive me, after I failed Him three times?*”

And just as Peter leaves the garden, Jesus appears to Him personally. *What a moment that must’ve been!*

I’ll guarantee a tear or two was shed by both men.

Mary though had stayed behind. At this point, she didn't know about His resurrection. John 20:11, "Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" The Greek word literally means "wailing." She wasn't just *whimpering* - she was *crying profusely*.

"She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him."

I love Mary's preoccupation with Jesus. *She's talking to celestial beings - angels, no less - but hardly notices them.* She's in all-out pursuit of Jesus, *King of angels!*

Verse 14 tells us, "Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus..." *Why didn't she know?*

We're not told. It could've been *power of suggestion*.

Mary concluded death was **irreversible**. She never expected to see Jesus, so she failed to recognize Him.

Here though, is what I think is the more likely explanation... **Recall His scars!** We'll see in a moment that even Jesus' resurrected body still bore the marks of His crucifixion. He'll hold out His scars to Thomas.

He'll show the scars in His hands and side.

I've heard it said, "The only man-made things we'll find in heaven will be the scars on our Lord Jesus."

Jesus may've also bore the scars in His face (*where they plucked out His beard*)

and in His brow (*where they screwed in the thorny crown*). I believe Jesus was severely disfigured by the brutal beating He endured.

We might be in for a shocker when we get to Heaven and first see Jesus. Initially we'll weep when we finally see for ourselves the damage our sin has caused.

But then our tears will turn to joy! We'll rejoice in His scars! They'll be a testimony to His grace and mercy.

Apparently, after His resurrection Jesus' appearance was altered. This is why both Mary and the other disciples didn't always recognize Jesus at first glance...

Verse 15 "Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!"

At first Mary doesn't recognize that the gardener is Jesus... *but when He spoke her name...* "She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher)."

And I'm sure it was the way Jesus spoke her name!

When Mary's **mom** addressed her it was to scold...

When the **men** in her life spoke her name they wanted to use her... When her **neighbors** whispered "**Mary**" they were intending to judge... But when **Jesus** spoke "**Mary**" His voice exuded peace and acceptance.

When Jesus said, "**Mary**," she knew she was loved.

Hey, listen... Jesus may be speaking your name!

When she knew it was Jesus, Mary fell on her face, and grabbed His feet. She loved Him so much... Before she met Jesus she was a prostitute - used and abused.

The Gospels say Mary was formerly a sleepover for seven demons. Jesus turned her whole world right-side up. He freed her and forgave her. Jesus, the carpenter from Nazareth, had built for Mary an entirely new life.

This is why Mary clung to Jesus with all her might. She had seen Him crucified – now she'd never let Him go again. She wanted Jesus to stay with her forever.

But Jesus speaks cryptic words in verse 17, "**Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father...**"

I use to think His concern was the body she was squeezing - *as if mortals can't touch glorified flesh*. But in Matthew 28:9 the other women hold on to Jesus' feet as they worship - *and He doesn't seem to mind...*

Here Jesus is reacting not to Mary's touch, but to *the intention of her grip*. She's holding on as if she'll never let Him go. But Jesus is about to ascend to His Father.

She'll have to let go... She'll need to develop a new kind of attachment to Jesus. No longer through flesh and blood, but through the person of the Holy Spirit.

In a sense, Mary is a prototype for you and me, and all disciples. *Wouldn't we love to have the flesh and blood Jesus with us, all the time?* Instead, we've been called to walk in His Spirit. Our attachment is spiritual.

Sunday's children relate to Jesus spiritually - by faith!

In Mary, the Holy Spirit came to live where demons dwelled. **Rather than tighten her grip, she now needs to strengthen her faith...** And the same is true for us!

Luke 24:11 provides us the skeptical reaction of the other disciples when the women arrive with the news of Jesus' resurrection. "Their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them." At first, not just Thomas, but all eleven disciples were doubters.

Jesus' flesh and blood siblings also had their doubts.

John 7:5 tells us not even Jesus' miracles convinced His family He was divine. It's hard for proud siblings to admit their *brother* might be *better*. But the resurrection turned the tide. Afterwards, Mary's boys believed.

1 Corinthians 15:7 tells us the risen Christ made a special appearance to His younger brother, James. As a result, James became a leader in the early church.

Luke records another of Jesus' post-resurrection appearances. It occurred on the Road to Emmaus...

Two of Saturday's children are headed home as a stranger approaches them and joins their conversation. They don't know it's Jesus. Their eyes are closed...

These two men were former followers. Now they're dejected. In Luke 24:21 one of the guys states, "But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel." Notice the man's wording, "*we were hoping...*"

Apparently, their hope had died. They'd staked their future on Jesus - *and He had given in without a fight...*

They even mention the ladies' report from the tomb, but they dismiss it as *the wishful thinking of emotional women*. The flame of their faith had been *snuffed out!*

For a time they'd longed for life on a higher plane, but the brief flirtation with heaven was shattered by the cruelty of the cross. They head home to hopelessness.

And let me suggest the Road to Emmaus not only runs seven miles northwest of Jerusalem, but at some point, it cuts through the heart of every single person.

Have you ever felt forsaken - disappointed - let down... even by God? You thought He loved you, but now, after all that's happened, you're not so sure.

The Road to Emmaus is a lonely road. But Jesus had joined these two forlorn disciples, and they didn't know it... In their sadness, He was with them - right beside them... *And the same is true for you and me...*

As they walked, Jesus quoted Scripture and showed them in the OT where God predicted all that occurred.

He was priming their faith with God's Word. *Then when Jesus broke the bread, their eyes were opened...*

And as soon as they realized it was Him... presto... Jesus dematerialized into thin air... He was gone!

They were so excited they high-tailed it back, to let the disciples know they'd seen the risen Christ. *Two more of Saturday's kids are now Sunday's children.*

Imagine, back in Jerusalem, these two men in the Upper Room behind locked doors. They're rehearsing their road trip to the scared and confused disciples...

Luke 24:36 tells us, *“Now as they said these things Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, “Peace to you.”* Without a knock on the door, Jesus just appears - *slips passed siding and sheetrock.*

The living Lord crashes a *pouter's party* with hope!

Jesus holds out His hands and feet. He invites them to squelch all doubt, *“Handle*

Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.”

It's amazing how Luke describes their reaction.

Verse 40, “When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. But while they still did not believe for joy...” I'm not sure what Luke means by that statement... *joy was the reason for their doubt?*

Maybe they felt it was too good to be true! They were so giddy seeing Him alive the reality didn't register.

But that's when Jesus tries to bring them back to Earth. He asks if they have any food? He eats a piece of broiled fish and sucks on honeycomb. Ghosts don't eat fish and honey. His resurrection is real, it's actual!

Acts 1:3 tells us, Jesus “presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.” *Astonished, awed, stunned, reeling from the irreversible getting reversed.*

This is how you'd describe the disciples on that first Easter evening. In a few short hours they climbed from *the ash heap of doubt* to *the mountain top of belief*.

But as soon as Jesus' lungs re-inflated, and His heart kick-started, and the amino acids rekindled...

As soon as the resurrection occurred - *the clock began to tick*. Now that redemption is paid, Jesus will ascend to His Father. He has only forty days to prepare His disciples. And these men have a lot to reassess.

Author Philip Yancey calls the Ascension of Jesus the most troublesome of all

Christian doctrines. *That Jesus would leave just six weeks after His resurrection!*

What a risk! Jesus took the Kingdom of God He'd worked so hard to plant - the Kingdom He died to redeem - and He turned it over to the folks who denied Him three days earlier. *How could He leave so soon?*

The answer is that He didn't - *not completely* - Jesus continued what He started through the Holy Spirit.

Here's how He ends that initial appearance to His disciples in the Upper Room. John 20:22, **“He breathed on them, and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit.”**

The joy, hope, love, power that came with the resurrection will be sustained through the Holy Spirit.

As Jesus said the night before He was crucified, **“It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper (or Holy Spirit) will not come to you...”**

The success of the Church in ages to come will hinge on our ability to relate to Jesus spiritually - *by faith*. Like Jesus said to Mary, **rather than strengthen our grip, all His disciples need to strengthen their faith.**

For some reason, one of the disciples had been missing at Jesus' earlier visit. The **“show me disciple,”** Thomas, had gone for pizza when Jesus popped in.

Imagine, Thomas, walking in with a stack of pizza boxes, and somebody says, **“Guess who you missed?”**

Which is why **you** should come to church - not only on Easter, but all throughout the year. When believers gather, Jesus shows up! *You don't want to miss Him!*

When Thomas was told that Jesus was alive, his skepticism turned stubborn,

“Unless I see in His hands the print of nails, and put my finger into the print of nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.”

Eight days later, Jesus silences Thomas' doubts. He surprises the gang again with an unexpected entry.

And Jesus invites the doubter to touch His scars.

Thomas responds with a powerful statement of faith, “My Lord and my God!” He bows before the risen King.

Then Jesus sets the stage for believers yet to come. For us, 2000 years later, He says, “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

Thomas, Peter, Mary Magdalene, James, the women, the men on the road, the Disciples, the 500 people who Paul says saw Jesus at one time... All the tangible sightings were infallible, undeniable proof that Jesus had risen. They were needed for history's sake.

We think we'd like to touch His scars... Faith would be easier if we saw with our eyes and touched with our hands. But tangible proof isn't the best way for faith to form - having seen they believed. For how often does our seeing get obscured? Life is full of fog and clouds.

This is why the *blessed* are those who form a spiritual connection with Jesus - *who walk by faith not by sight*. This is what the risen Christ wanted to instill. He wants followers who believe with their eyes closed.

John 20:30 is the most frustrating verse in the Bible.

“Truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book...”

And we'd like to know “*what signs?*” I'm sure, Jesus kept surprising them - *popping in and out*. But it didn't take long for Peter to grow weary from the suspense...

So, *what does a former fisherman do to rest and relax?* Peter, and six of his pals, decide to go fishing.

There's one other possibility... Peter knows Jesus has forgiven him, *but ministry?* That's another issue.

How can God use him after his colossal failure?

Peter may've been retiring from ministry. He figured he was better suited to be a professional fisherman.

He'd tried *fishing for men*. It's time *to return to fish*.

John 21 tells us the story. Peter and his crew were fishing on the Sea of Galilee, when Jesus appeared on the beach. At a distance, no one recognized Him.

He called, “**Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.**” Instantly, they had a boatload.

They'd fished all night and “**caught nothing.**” Now at the Lord's discretion they toss in their nets, and there's a bounty. *And here's a lesson...* If you want a harvest don't trust in your wisdom - follow the Lord's direction.

This was a repeat of an earlier miracle on the same shore. It was John who put it together... “**It is the Lord!**”

The living Lord Jesus was teaching His disciples that He could invade their world

any time, any place.

Jesus comes to us not just at church on Sunday - *but by the lake - in the hood - at a park - on the job...*

One author writes, "In many respects I find an un-resurrected Jesus easier to accept. Easter makes Him dangerous. It means He's loose out there somewhere. Like the disciples, I never know where Jesus will turn up... How He'll speak to me, what He might ask of me."

Another man put it, "We can never nail Jesus down, not even if the nails we use are real and the thing we nail Him to is a cross." Jesus is alive and on the move!

Peter was so excited that it was Jesus on the shore, he didn't even wait to land the boat, he jumped into the lake and started to swim... *You've got to love Peter. He wasn't afraid. He was willing to step out of the boat.*

And on the shore, after breakfast, Jesus beautifully reaffirms His calling on Peter's life. Peter had denied the Lord three times - now three times he's renewed.

Jesus asks him, "Simon... do you love Me more than these?" *These what? These fish?* Does he love fishing more than Jesus? If so, why return to his former life?

Or maybe, *these men?* Peter had boasted, "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble!" But he had. *Did he really love Him?*

Peter replies, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love you."

And here's what we miss in English. The first two times Jesus asks Peter, He uses the Greek word "*agape.*" *Agape* is God's love - sacrificial and unselfish.

But Peter doesn't reply with the same word. Instead of *agape*, He uses "*phileo*" - or **brotherly love** - *love, but of a lesser sort*. Peter isn't as quick at making boasts.

He's grown humble. He's learning to walk by faith, and trust in the power of the Spirit, rather than his own.

Each time Peter says He loves Jesus, the Lord tells him to prove it by *tending or feeding His sheep*. Peter can fish for fortune... or He can care for God's flock?

In a gentle way, the living Lord picks up a fallen Peter, and reinstalls him to useful service. And He's been doing the same with fallen believers ever since.

Three of the four Gospels mention the Ascension of Jesus to His Father in Heaven. From our perspective the resurrection was the most exciting day in history, *but for Jesus it had to be the day of His ascension!*

Like a soldier coming home from a tour on the battlefield - or a fish taken off a hook and tossed back into the stream... *Jesus is returning to His element!*

For 33 years He had braved a hostile environment, and now He's headed home to receive His reward.

When Jesus lifted off from the Mount of Olives and vanished in the clouds, it put an exclamation point on the Gospel. It was obvious, Jesus had accomplished His task, and the Father had accepted His sacrifice.

And now as He *ascended*, He *sent out* His disciples to continue His work. I love what Walter Wink writes, "**Killing Jesus was like trying to destroy a dandelion by blowing on its head.**" The Jews who wanted to ground Jesus' message gave it wings through His disciples!

They were the seeds through which His Kingdom sprouted. Today, 2000 years later it continues to grow!

In Matthew 28:19 just before His Ascension, Jesus gave His disciples - *both then and now* - our marching orders. He commanded us, “Go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them... and teaching them...”

Did you know, the reason the lily is associated with Easter is because its blossom is shaped like a trumpet. And in Bible times trumpets made big announcements.

Sunday’s children are all about trumpeting to the nations the good news, “Jesus is risen from the dead!”

And it’s the Spirit of God who empowers us... In Luke 24:49, Jesus qualifies His commission to “Go...” Before they “go” to the nations, they’re to “wait” in Jerusalem...

He says until “I send the Promise of My Father upon you... until you are endued with power from on high.”

The Holy Spirit is the breath that blows the trumpet!

Jesus’ final words may be the last verse in Matthew, “And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” *What a promise!* Jesus will remain on Earth in hearts that believe, through the presence of His Spirit.

Augustine said, “You ascended before our eyes, and we turned back grieving, only to find you in our hearts.”

Here is the genius of Christianity... The risen Christ still moves in the world today. Paul says, “Christ in you, the hope of glory!” The risen Christ dwells within His

followers, in the person of the Holy Spirit. Jesus works today in and through those people who trust in Him.

To sum it all up this morning, there are two ways you can look at life... You can accept the cold, cruel world that crucified Jesus as the norm... and view such things as sin, and sorrow, and sadness as *irreversible*.

Or you can see resurrection power as the new norm. The triumph of Jesus' was the first step to a new day, a new world, a new life. Hopelessness is now *reversible*.

The resurrection of Jesus proves that through Him what we thought was *irreversible* can now be *reversed*.

Why sit and pout over a world gone bad - why not believe in the risen Christ and help change that world?

Make a spiritual connection with Jesus today! Open up your heart to the His Spirit - the Holy Spirit.

Are you Saturday's child or Sunday's child?