

““Where Do You Get Your News?”

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Texts: Mark 5:21-43; 16:5-8

The women who came to Jesus’ tomb to anoint His body, for the Sabbath was past, were alarmed by what they discovered: an empty tomb **occupied by a young man clothed in a long white robe. He said to them: Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. But go tell His disciples—and Peter—that he is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him as He told you.** *The evidence before them, and the explanation provided led them to be freaked out!* It is apparent that the women were doubly disobedient. The angel, if we take the **young man** to be such, had said **Don’t be alarmed.** But they were **alarmed**, and so, should we be. They were terrified, they trembled, amazed and fled away on wobbly legs. Then they disobeyed for a second time: **they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.** They said nothing because they were speechless before the facts: Jesus was not there because ***He was raised*** from the dead **and thus they were confronted with the reality of resurrection life—of life beyond life.**

The novelty of this occurrence, its nonexistence prior to this moment in time both contributed to their initial reactions of terror (fear, amazement, and horror). We skip too quickly to the joy of Easter and obscure the stunning unbelievability of what is reported here in the Book. So, preliminarily, I would share that I get my “news” mostly from books—books and thoughtful articles, or essays and blogs—but mostly books because they afford a long, reviewable and digestible form of communication. Yes, at my pace and under the control that quietly reading affords. So, I do not read picture books, or comics and I do not trust media driven outlets to give me reliable news. In addition, most of the news from the worldly media is bad news and I prefer the good news of the Scriptures such as we have shared this morning.

What does this terrifying episode at the tomb have to do with the healing of a woman and the raising of Jairus’ daughter? Rather a lot. These two incidents, which occurred as two among the many signs and wonders performed in Capernaum (Jesus’ residence while He ministered in Galilee) also filled people with **great amazement.** Yes, great amazement which is the affect of the two Mary’s gathered at the tomb. Word of these miracles no doubt preceded Jesus’ trip to Nazareth where He did some circuit preaching, despite being astonished at His teaching, alongside His mighty works(!), his friends and neighbors especially in the synagogue **took offense at Him.** And Jesus, for His part, **marveled at their unbelief.** (Mark 6:3, 6) As an aside, I would note that Jesus would be similarly astonished at the unbelief in our day! And that unbelief probably has the same effect today as it did when Jesus made His rounds in Nazareth: it suppresses the performance of **mighty works.** This observation has the marks of a self-fulfilling prophecy: we don’t believe because we don’t see and we don’t see because we don’t believe.

Be that as it may, terror, fear and amazement over the resurrection of our Lord and Savior would supply a major antidote for fear over other lesser things. You have heard **Fear God and fear no man, fear not God and fear every man** (See Luke 18:2) so make application of that saying here. As Leonard Ravenhill wrote: *Fear God and fear no man.*

Fear the resurrection of the Lord and you will never fear death again. I believe it to be true that both death and the fear of death belong to the Devil. And worldly powers, in the thrall of the Evil One, also use death, as the threat of ultimate punishment, to control, oppress and rule over their people. This is entirely contrary to the direction of Jesus in Luke 20:20-28 where Christ urges His disciples to lead by service to others just as He had done.

So the take-away from this is as follows: your effective proclamation of Easter is rooted in your fear, terror, astonishment and amazement at the Resurrection and at the *life beyond life that follows* from that amazement. A suspension of unbelief in an *uncertain, unprecedented space!* Astounded and silenced by what had become of:

**the bare seed**, the battered, bruised and bloodless corpse  
**sown in dishonor, raised in glory**,  
 sown in corruptible flesh, raised incorruptible,  
**sown in weakness, raised in power**  
*life beyond the life of flesh and blood*—a mystery partially revealed!

*Beholding all this in holy hesitancy, yearning for explanation and comprehension! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, in a moment . . . at the last trumpet.* (1 Cor. 15:42-45)

**A spiritual body and more, a life giving spirit!**. (v.45)

### *Our Hope is anchored in that reality*

I would even dare suggest that Thomas' cry of, **My Lord and My God** may have been birthed in this astonished awe, or amazement at the Risen One who is our Life—incorruptible.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is a greater rupture than even death itself! It is beyond life as we know it, and beyond death as we face it—it is Life beyond life and death, all at once, suddenly upon us in glorious imperishability! *That is the fear shattering power of the resurrection.* That's right. A greater rupture than death itself, our ancient foe and his chief weapon are both overthrown. That is our victory. That is why we preach Christ and Him crucified—we preach the vindication of justice that the resurrection imputed to Jesus. All the criminality of His trial and execution, all the cruelty of evil, all the powers of darkness and Satan—all done in!

Yes, our hope is an answer, a new normal and an end to spiritual chaos!

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All by the fear shattering power of Jesus Christ, the Risen Son of God.

Jesus is the central object of our trust because He is willing and able to save, we have a sure foundation. It is almost as if the real agenda of the world is to keep us in fear, helpless and hopeless. Fear is what lobbyists use to sway public opinion, get governmental attention and change regimes in America. Fear is a powerful political weapon and there are those who intend to stay in power by keeping us in fearful subjugation. Let's be plain, they are oppressors. Their "narrative" is what they use to manipulate and control the people. And the

news media are their accomplices in this power struggle. Those in power wish to stay in power, those who wish to serve the people are fewer, it would seem, in number and they tend to be overlooked (cancelled, ignored, silence or exiled). And these are the chief reasons that you cannot trust the media as your news source. They are profit and ratings driven and to obtain either, or both of these ends they will lie, distort, hide the truth and scrupulously scrub their witnesses to insure only those on their side of social issues are published, heard, or even just plain seen. The game is who can control the narrative, not who can get to the truth. When truth plays second fiddle to profit and ratings, you get what we get from the media *and the media elite who run the business*. We are always being sold “their bill of goods.”

And what do we have to combat this tidal wave of worldly opinion? We have Jesus. We have Easter. We have the One who says, “**Be not afraid, only believe.**” I am referring to Mark 5 now, to the healing of a woman and to the raising from the dead of Jairus’ dying daughter. We are in Capernaum. We have a sick woman, twelve years of hemorrhaging whose health is deteriorating. She has spent all she had on treatment and, it seems as if, the medical profession had washed their hands of her. She was hopeless and dying. Two dying women. **When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind Him in the crowd . . . If only I may touch the hem of His garments, I shall be well.**” There is typified faith confronting fear—fear of bleeding to death. **And immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction.** (vv.25-29) That could have been that, only it wasn’t. But Jesus, who was equally attuned to what was going on in His body knew that **power had gone forth from Him, turned around in the crowd and said, “Who touched My garments?” And He turned around to see her who had done this thing. But the woman, fearing and trembling—the very same emotions that seized the Mary’s at Jesus’ tomb as well as, perhaps, Thomas in his faith renewing encounter with the Risen Lord—knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. . . . And He said to her, Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction.** (vv. 27-34)

This interruption is actually quite central to the narrative because the faithfulness of the woman is contrasted with the general faithlessness of the surround crowds—including those who came from Jairus’ house with the news that his daughter had expired. It is the father’s faith which matters in this story. It is to him, as soon as Jesus heard the news report, that **Be not afraid, only believe** is directed and he does so. Peter, James and John accompany Jesus to the ruler’s home. **Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but sleeping.**” (v. 39) *They laugh Him to scorn.* But Jesus, taking the parents with His three disciples, and **went in to where the child was lying. Then he took the child by the hand and said to her, . . . little girl, I say to you, arise. [I am the resurrection and the life, he who believes in Me though he die, yet he shall live.** John 11:25) The parents had acknowledged God’s power and their own helplessness and their faith was fully rewarded. A foretaste of Easter!

The reason our story is better than media news is that our story is not subject to profit and ratings and it is free to partisan politics. For example on the challenge of homelessness, we note that in 1988 the New York Times ran fifty stories on the homeless—including five on page one! A heartless Republican was president. In 1998, a decade later, the NYT ran ten stories and none on the front page. A compassionate Democrat was president. Did the latter solve the problem of homeless? No, politics in the media had determined that homelessness

was a Republican issue! In 1990 When George Bush(R) was president, ABC,CBS, NBC and CNN evening news had seventy-one; but in 1995 when Clinton(D) was president, the number went down to just nine! One has to wonder if the media elite which votes 90% Democratic was showing any favoritism in coverage, or bias in approach. Philip Terzian wrote in 1999” “The problem with homelessness is that, for too long, it has been an issue of partisan convenience. It is not Republican spending policies that have caused the explosion in homelessness but the progressive vision of closing down state mental institutions, the rise in drug and alcohol abuse, and the loss of any stigma attached to subsisting on the streets.”

In covering the problem of homelessness, especially when it was unfavorable to Republicans, reporters gave way to exaggeration and hyperbole. The US Census estimated in the 1980 and early 1990’s there were 230,000—the General Accounting Office put the number at 300,000 to 600,000. And the Urban Institute estimated between 355,000 and 462,000. These numbers were not state secrets, but the reporters just didn’t care. “The homeless lobby was putting the number in the millions—portraying it as much worse than it actually is. Pump it up to get more sympathy, more support and more money for our cause! While we expect this of advocates, does this justify reporters from just going along? Regardless of the facts? But they do, CNN’s Cabot Crowley opined that the number was 3 million; Nick Nespral ramped that up to five million and the numbers are increasing! And Charles Osgood of CBS new reported, “It is estimated that by the year 2000, nineteen Americans will be homeless unless something is done, and done now.”

And then came “the hidden homeless,” yes, homeless people living in homes! Folks living with Some and Dad because they can’t afford, or won’t buy their own homes. This is unbridled advocacy, not news reporting! Embracing heir cause is no excuse for generating misinformation! But the media capitulates whether in be domestic abuse, HIV epidemic or COVID 19 and its variant successors! rring may be profitable, but it’s fraudulent and wrong. “Drug and alcohol abuse have emerged as major cause of homelessness of men, women and families,” writes Gina Kolata (1989). Homeless advocates don’t tell the truth for fear of losing sympathy—many homeless are criminal, and many are mentally ill. The media is there to get played, or so it would seem and when they get played, we get misled. If journalists are so busy becoming social workers (who afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted), honesty might suggest a career change—or at least transparency about when they are advocating and not reporting. To do otherwise is to smack of presuming to be society’s designated saviors. We already have the only One we need! Besides, when only one source in twenty-five attributed homelessness on the personal problems of the homeless themselves—it is no wonder that our city streets are like unto a zoo!

Reaganomics was the scare goat for liberal and progressive ire—regardless of the real and compelling reason for homelessness. The solution was neither money, nor government housing per se; but intervention and therapy both of which are too messy for “the compassionate left” to deal with. But, miracle of miracles, a Democrat was elected president and homelessness disappeared. Who would have guessed? At least according to TV news, their political savior had arrived and they would not allow anything to besmirch, or reflect poorly on the favored one.

So I will continue to get my news from books and magazines and not the evening news and not the *NYT* or the *Washington Post* which set the narrative for the media. They sound

so much the same because they are drawing on the same sources. How simple . . . and occasionally, how diabolical,

Amen