Text: Matthew 28:1-10
Title: "Moved by the Resurrection of Jesus"

INTRODUCTION

ILLUSTRATION – When you open your copy of the Fort Worth Star-Telegram, you'll find on the second page a section called "News2Use."

Well this morning I want you to open your Bibles for some really Good News that you can use to make your life different. Open your Bibles with me to Matthew 28:1 where we have one of the accounts of the events that happened on Easter morning 2000 years ago. Let's read Matthew 28:1-10.

ILLUSTRATION – You know you pick up the newspaper, or log on to your favorite news service on the internet, or you hear some news on the radio on the way to work … and most of it sort of goes in one ear and out the other. But occasionally you read or hear something that really moves you. It's not just "news2use;" it's news that moves you. You can't shake it. It makes you think. It causes you to feel something. And it moves you to do something.

Well that's what should happen with this incredible news … Good News … that Jesus Christ is alive. It's news to use … but more importantly, it's news that should move us.

Just think about the account of the resurrection we just read.

1. THE <u>EARTH</u> WAS MOVED BY WHAT HAPPENED.

Matthew 28:2a (NIV) - There was a violent earthquake…

It was a physically moving experience. Can you imagine what it was like?

There's more.

2. THE <u>ANGELS</u> WERE MOVED BY WHAT HAPPENED.

Now the angels are God's agents who are dispatched … moved around … to do the work of God. Now the earthquake apparently was associated with the arrival of an angel, dispatched to the tomb to roll away the stone from the opening of the cave.

Matthew 28:2b-3 (NIV) - 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.

Get this: the angel didn't roll the stone away to let Jesus out. The stone was rolled away to let others see in … to see that the tomb was empty.

3. THE <u>GUARDS</u> WERE MOVED BY WHAT HAPPENED.

We're told earlier in Matthew's account that the soldiers charged with securing the scene of the crucifixion were moved by the death of Jesus. When Jesus died, the earth shook then, as it did when the angel arrived to roll the stone away. It says they were terrified and shouted, "Surely this is the Son of God." Well it happened again when the angel appeared at the empty tomb of Jesus.

Matthew 28:4 (NIV) - The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

When it says they "shook," it's the same word that is used earthquake in v.2. They were moved. The guards must have thought, "We are toast. How will we explain this to our commander? We're Rome's elite soldiers and we couldn't even keep a dead man in a grave!"

4. THE <u>DISCIPLES</u> WERE MOVED BY WHAT HAPPENED.

Now on that Sunday morning, the two Mary's went to the tomb expecting to find a dead man in need of embalming; instead they found an empty tomb. Jesus was alive! I'm sure it was still soaking in, but they were instantly moved to fear, that later gave way to joy.

Matthew 28:5 (NIV) - The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified.

Easter is an earthquake that shook the whole world. It got everyone's attention. The power of Jesus' resurrection … why should it move you and me? Well, it should move us…

1. BECAUSE OF WHAT IT <u>REVEALS</u>.

What does the resurrection of Jesus reveal? It reveals that Jesus is God. Now just think about the words of the angel…

Matthew 28:6 (NIV) - He is not here; he has risen, <u>just as he said</u> …

ILLUSTRATION – You see, what happens here is that Jesus called His shot. Ever been with someone playing the game HORSE in basketball? I used to play with buddies and someone would attempt this outrageous shot … falling away, behind the back, blind-folded with one leg tied behind their back, off the glass. And SWOOSH! it goes in. And the dude would strut around like he was something really hot. But we all knew it was luck. But if he called his shot first … falling away, behind the back, blind-folded, one leg tied behind the back, off the glass … and it goes in … Well that's a different thing altogether.

> Well Jesus called His shot. He prophesied He would be crucified and that He would be raised from the dead after three days … and it happened. And the fact that it happened testifies to the fact that Jesus is God.

Many so-called scholars have tried to refute the truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In spite of the fact that the resurrection didn't happen in secret, people still try to refute it.

ILLUSTRATION – Did any of you watch or hear about the recent Discovery Channel presentation called *The Lost Tomb of Jesus*? This "lost tomb of Jesus" was chronicled as the greatest archaeological find of all time. Some construction workers accidentally uncovered a tomb in suburban Jerusalem. Inside they found 10 ossuaries (limestone boxes that served as first-century coffins). One had "Jesus, son of Joseph." Two others had "Mary" and another had "Judah, son of Jesus." And these "experts" decided that that was sufficient evidence to say that these boxes actually held the bones of Jesus and Mary Magdalene, and a son they were supposed to have had together. What they don't tell you is that as special as the name Jesus is to us today, it was very common in NT times. The same is true with the names Mary and Joseph.

It would be like going downtown Fort Worth and seeing someone has carved the words "Mike was here" on the wall, and thinking Mike Dean must have been here. Well, reputable scholars, Christian and non-Christian, have dismissed the "lost tomb of Jesus" as mere sensationalism.

This is just one of many efforts through the years to refute the claims of the Bible that Jesus rose again. But the overwhelming evidence from the Bible and other historical sources is that there were no bones of Jesus to be put in an ossuary. He was only in the grave for three days, then Jesus was gloriously resurrected by the power of God.

And the resurrection of Jesus reveals that He is God. That's what Paul said in

Romans 1:4 (NIV) – (Jesus) was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.

If the resurrection had not happened as Jesus said it would, then we couldn't trust anything else he said to be true. But because He kept His word about something as impossible as being raised from the dead, then you can be sure that every other promise He made is true … promises of peace, promises of forgiveness, promises of eternal life … like the one found in …

John 11:25 (NIV) - "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies;

The resurrection of Jesus Christ should move me because of what it reveals. But it should also move me …

2. BECAUSE OF WHAT IT <u>REVERSES</u>.

What does the resurrection of Jesus reverse? It reverses the effects of sin and death in my life.

That was the point of Jesus dying and being raised from the dead. It was to break the power of sin and death over our lives.

Romans 4:25 (NIV) - He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

Talk about news you can use. This is great news. People everywhere are gripped with guilt. We all have done things we wish we hadn't done, said things we wish we hadn't said, and thought things we wish we hadn't thought. We all have regrets. We all feel bad about things. We all have guilt. And that guilt is a powerful force in our lives. But the Bible also says …

Colossians 2:14 (NIV) – (He has) canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.

That simply means that Jesus paid in full the debt we owed to God because of our sin. And when we put our trust in what He did on the cross, our sin debt is cancelled … erased … reversed.

> **ILLUSTRATION –** Any of you ever have Etch-a-Sketch when you were a kid. Believe it or not, you can still buy these toys in stores. I never was very good at this gadget. I know people who could spell their name in cursive, draw elaborate pictures and more. But me, I get about halfway through something and I mess it up. That's the good thing about the Etch-a-Sketch. What happens if you mess up the picture? You turn it over, shake it, turn it back over, and there's a clean screen. And that's what God's forgiveness does for us. He gives us a clean screen so we can start over.

There's something else the resurrection reverses … It reverses the grip of death. The great human problem is death. We can't avoid it. Everyone dies. I'll die someday; you'll die someday. So we better be prepared. Only a fool would go through life unprepared for something he knows is positively going to happen.

ILLUSTRATION – I read the true story of little 3rd grader named Philip who was born with Downs Syndrome. He was a pleasant, happy child, but he was becoming increasingly aware that he was different than the other children. Philip went to Sunday school at a local church and the teacher had a great heart for this group of 3rd grade boys and girls … about ten of them.

> The teacher was creative, and he helped the group of eight-year-olds to learn, to laugh, and to play together. But the teacher became aware of the fact that Philip was not really a part of the group.
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> Well the teacher had a great idea for his class at Easter. He gathered up 10 big plastic Easter eggs like these, and gave one to each child with an assignment. They were to each go outside on the church yard and find a symbol for new life, put it into the egg, and bring it back to the classroom. So they did.
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> It was wild. They ran all around the church grounds, gathered their symbols, and returned to the classroom. They put all the eggs on a table, and then the teacher began to open them one at a time as the children stood around the table.
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> He opened one, and there was a flower, and they ooh-ed and ah-ed. He opened another, and there was a little butterfly. The little girls said, "Beautiful." Third grade boys don't say

> “beautiful" much. He opened another, and there was a rock. And they all laughed, but they weren’t sure what that had to do with new life.
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> The teacher came to last egg. He opened the egg and there was nothing inside. The kids groaned, "That's not fair; somebody didn't do it right." Then the teacher felt a tug on his shirt, and he looked down. Philip was standing beside him. "It's mine," Philip said. "It's mine."
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> And the children scolded little Phillip, "You never do anything right, Philip. There's nothing in your egg!" "I did so do it right," Philip said. "I did do it. It's empty because Jesus’ tomb is empty. And that’s new life!”
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> There was silence. And a miracle occurred in the hearts of the children. From that time on, it was different. Philip suddenly became a part of that group of eight-year-old children. They took him in.
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> The next summer Philip died. His family had known since his birth that he wouldn't live out a full life span. Many other things had been wrong with his tiny body, and he died.
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> There was a touching scene at Philip’s funeral. At one point, nine little eight-year-old children, along with their SS teacher, marched up and placed on the altar, not flowers, but nine brightly colored plastic Easter eggs … all of them empty.

Those kids were moved by the resurrection of Jesus, and the grip of death that was reversed by the resurrection. We no longer have to fear death, because Jesus, by His resurrection has given us victory over death.

> Paul said, “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.” How can death be gain? Most people think that the opposite is true. Not so for the one who has been born again. We know that when we breathe our last breath on earth, we breathe our first breath of heaven’s air in the glorious presence of God.

Do you know for sure that you’ll go to heaven when you die?

Jesus reversed the downward drag of sin and death. I'm not afraid of dying, because I know that Christ has given me the power to live, even when I die. And that’s the next reason why the resurrection should also move us …

3. BECAUSE OF WHAT IT <u>RELEASES</u>.

What does the resurrection of Christ release? It releases the power of God to change lives.

As a pastor I talk to people all the time who tell me things like: "My life is out of control. I can’t change the situation I’m in. I can’t break this bad habit. I can’t save my marriage. I can’t get out of debt. I can’t … I can’t … I can’t.”

What you need is a power greater than yourself. You were never meant to live this life on your own power. God wants to come to live in you and give you power that He alone can give. The Bible talks about …

Ephesians 1:19-20 (NIV) - His incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, [20] which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,

Again, here is news you can use. This power is available to us today. That's what Paul meant when he said …

Philippians 3:10-11 (NIV) - I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, [11] and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Now, allow me to ask this question. Is this power being lived out in your life today? Is this power of Christ's resurrection being released in your relationships, in your witness, in your service, in your worship?

ILLUSTRATION – I received an email this past week that stunned me. Many of you know that our church has been heavily involved in taking the Good News of Jesus Christ to India, specifically the district of Mandya where about 3 million people live, 99.9 % of whom are Hindus or Muslims. The work has been very difficult because persecution of Christians is very common. A few months ago we were able to place two church planters in the district, and they began gathering people in their homes to witness to and worship Jesus Christ. We received word that people are responding to Gospel and being saved and attending the house churches. Last week, while one of our church planters (I'll just call him Pastor A) was conducting worship services in his home, a radical mob broke into the worship service and attacked the small group of believers who had gathered. Pastor A was assaulted but managed to escape. Several of the believers were stabbed and had to be taken to the hospital where they are recovering.

> You see, it took a long time to find church planters who were willing to go into this area because this kind of thing frequently happens to believers in this part of India. The new Christians and their leaders know that following Christ will cost them dearly.

It was the same way when the first followers of Christ began to bear witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We read in the book of Acts how they suffered for their faith; some were put to death. What is it that caused these people to suffer for the sake of Christ? It was the power of the Risen Christ living in them.

This power is not something that we just read about. It's something we can experience.

CONCLUSION

Let's go back where we started in Matthew 28. Something amazing happened to those disciples that day as they went away as the angel instructed them. Look at v.9

Matthew 28:9 (NIV) - Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him.

Want to know something. Jesus is alive … and He still meets people. And He still gives people the opportunity to come to Him.

They were moved!

IT’S NOT JUST A MATTER OF LETTING EASTER MOVE YOU EMOTIONALLY. YOU HEAR MUSIC AND FEEL GOOD IN CHURCH. IT’S A MATTER OF IT MOVING YOU SPIRITUALLY … AT THE VERY CORE OF YOUR BEING … MOVING YOU FROM ONE PLACE IN LIFE TO ANOTHER … FROM ONE WAY OF LIFE TO ANOTHER … FROM ONE ETERNAL DESTINY TO ANOTHER.

All of us came today for different reasons. Some of you came because it’s a tradition. Others of you came because someone who cared about you invited you to attend with them . Some of you came because you saw an advertisement. But it really doesn't matter why you think you came today. You're not here by accident. God brought you here. He brought you here so he could meet with you, just like He did that morning Jesus was resurrected.

INVITATION

Many years ago someone challenged me to make a decision. It happened in a church service like we’re in today. The pastor challenged me to put my trust in Jesus Christ … to turn away from my old way of life and to put my trust in Jesus Christ. And that’s what I want to do for you today. I want to give you the same challenge.