

Imagine you are a gambler, and have placed everything that you own on a particular sporting event. The deed to your house, the keys to your car, your inheritance from your parents, you have put it all on the outcome of this one sporting contest.

You make your bet, place everything you have and everything you ever will be on this football team, or this boxer, or this greyhound, or this horse.

How would you feel as you sit ringside, or courtside etc? You know that in a sense your destiny is tied up with the athlete or the animal that you have bet on. "all I am and have and ever hope to be"

How would you feel when they lost. They lost, but they took your hopes, your dreams down with them.

This is how these women felt all evening Friday and all day Saturday and how they woke up Sunday morning.

How would you feel? Would you curse the team that lost you your savings, your home, your car, your dignity? Lets see how they react -

1. When The Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint Him.

2. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb.

3. And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll the stone away for us from the entrance of the tomb?"

4. And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back-it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed.

5. And he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; He is not here. See the place where they laid Him.

6. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that He is going before you to Galilee. There you will see Him, just as He told you.

7. And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

-Mark's passion narrative began with a woman lavishly anointing Jesus to express her deep devotion (which Jesus interprets as preparing Him for burial [ ch 14] ) and it ends with more women, who are just as devoted and loving seeking to anoint Jesus after His burial.

-How many women? Mary the mother of Jesus was also there. (john 19) Luke says that Joanna and other women were there.

There are no less than four of the women share the name Mary: (1) Mary Magdalene; (2) Mary the mother of Jesus; (3) Mary the mother of James and Joses/Joseph; and (4) Mary the wife of Clopas (who may have been the brother of Joseph of Nazareth). In addition, there is Joanna (whose husband, Chuza, was the household manager for Herod Antipas) and Salome (probably the mother of the apostles James and John).

-The Sabbath started as the sun set on Good Friday. It ended as the sun rose on Easter Sunday. Travel, work etc was forbidden on that day, so they had to wait and plan all Saturday.

- I've been on a walk at a time that I thought was very similar to "early dawn". The sun wasn't up, and it wouldn't be up for some time, but its light was visible. Behind me was the black sky, in front of me was a blue glow. Beautiful and wonderful time for me. *But not so for the women....*

The women come to the tomb with no hope. They are not coming expecting a great miracle, but out of their love and devotion to their fallen leader they are gloomily approaching what is sure to be a painful and grief filled process of anointing Jesus' abused corpse.

A man from Britain, called Ashley Revell sold everything that he owned, emptied his bank account and put everything he had \$135,000—on red. One spin of the wheel later and he'd doubled his money. He gave a \$600 tip to a dealer and walked out of the casino a rich man. But not everybody who “bets it all” comes away such a winner. I read of an anonymous gambler who bet €500,000 that Germany would win last year’s world cup, and when they were defeated by Spain in a semi-final it meant that he became the biggest loser in the history of world cup betting. Imagine the feeling....

Generally - Israelites would anoint the living, it was a highly symbolic act of pouring oil over the head of a prophet, priest or king to symbolise that they were set apart for a mission or ministry from God. [ we've seen this many times thus far in our usual Sunday morning series through the book of 1 Samuel ]

- But in addition to recognising a calling upon the life of the living, they would also use similar oils to honour the dead.

Unlike the Egyptians Jewish people did not embalm their dead [ which was basically injecting preserving agents INTO a body ]

Anointing was an act of love, to (to put it bluntly) offset the stench of a rotting body.

We have the characters (this group of women) we have the time (very early on Sunday morning) we have their destination (the tomb of Jesus) and we have their motive (to anoint His body)

But there is a problem that they are discussing amongst themselves - [read v3]

Who will move the stone?

Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb. - Matthew 27:59-61

But when they arrive they see that it is a moot point, because the stone was rolled away! [read v4]

They would have had to bend down as they entered (*stooping* as they entered John 20:5)

What would they have seen? Dark room to begin with but especially so at “early dawn”  
Shocked to see an angel there sitting patiently waiting for them!

It gave them quite a fright so...

The young man gives the typical angelic greeting “Do not be alarmed” or “fear not”.

- Angels are always scaring people!
- Their appearance is sometimes frightening (Ezekiel 1, etc)
- But here, the appearance is ordinary, but *the fact that he is there at all* is alarming to the women. They certainly didn't expect to see him!
- He goes on to assure them that they are in the right tomb “see where they laid Him”.
- Some skeptics have supposed that the women went to the wrong tomb. This is one of the ancient Jewish explanations , and was revived by British scholar Kirsopp Lake in 1907. The women were in an emotional state, it was dark, they got lost and arrived at a different tomb, found that it was empty, went and told the disciples, and things spiraled out of control and now, today, there are 1 Billion people in the world that worship Jesus as the risen Lord.
  - That's very unlikely.
    - It was the property of a very famous man,
    - the Romans posted guards outside it.
    - The women followed Joseph of Arimathea to see where they laid Him. (15:47)

They were **not** mistaken regarding the location of it.

- Skeptical questions are welcome here. I'd **love** to talk with any skeptics present afterwards about this or any other objection that you have to the resurrection!
- He describes the resurrection in succinct terms. [v6]
  - Uses past, present and future terms.
- Jesus, Who was Crucified. He is Risen.
  - **He was crucified.**
    - Not for His sins, but upon the cross Jesus was Reckoned guilty so that we could be reckoned innocent. (double imputation)
      - For our sake He made Him who knew no sin to become sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God - 2 Cor 5:21
    - He has paid for our sins.
  - **He is Risen.**
    - Just as Pilate was surprised to hear that Jesus was dead, now the women are surprised to hear that He is alive.
- "He who had been a **Lamb** in His passion became a **Lion** in His resurrection" - Bernard of Clairvaux (11th century)
  - His payment for our sins was accepted. The resurrection vindicates Him. *Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of Holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. Romans 1:4*
- They come to anoint the body of Jesus, but they leave having learned that He has received an even higher anointing from God Himself.
  - The cross was the payment, the resurrection was the receipt.
    - Next time you purchase something at a till and are given a receipt it should be a reminder of the resurrection. A purchase has been made, and evidence that it was an acceptable price that you paid is given.
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- The Angel now speaks about the FUTURE
  - Go tell the disciples this news, this demands a response. Not just a belief, but a change in attitude action and lifestyle. (the rest of the NT unpacks more of this truth, about what life in light of the resurrection ought to look like)
- This is the first time in the gospels when they are commissioned. Usually we have Jesus telling people not to tell everyone about Him. They didn't have the whole story, they would have been telling an incomplete account, a fragment rather than the whole wonderful tale. Now, on Easter morning, everything is complete. Now they have good news to tell! There is no need for silence or secrets now.
  - Jesus doesn't want to be known as a teacher, a prophet, a healer. To preach that He is any (or all) of those things would be **true** but incomplete.
    - He didn't come to be a teacher, prophet or healer. He came to be the sin bearing substitute on the cross, and to rise victorious over sin and death.
    - NOW the disciples have good news to tell!
  - "Whereas before those events Jesus commanded secrecy and open proclamation was disobedience, now Jesus commands open proclamation and secrecy is disobedience." - Joel Marcus.
- The mention of Peter hints at his full restoration despite his extraordinary breach of faith. Jesus does not give up on His disciples, no matter how great their failure or how many their faults.
  - Last we saw him he was crying by himself in the dark.
  - The most broken among us are sometimes singled out to hear the good news afresh.