

A Message In the Stone

(adapted from an outline by Charles Spurgeon)

Of all days in the Christian tradition, nothing approaches the excitement, the majesty, the sheer power of the resurrection. No moment in our story is as graphic a portrayal of our faith than the picture of the tomb, with its stone rolled away. In this panorama is everything that unites our faith and gives it purpose. There's a message in the stone. We need to hear its message.

“The angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.”

Matthew 28:2

In Scripture stones speak in many ways, sometimes as memorials, sometimes as markers. God used stones as the marker board to write the Ten Commandments. Jesus said if these hold their peace the very stones will cry out. The stone at the tomb is one of those stones that carries a message. I say, *“let the stone preach.”* In fact let us call it as the first witness to the indisputable fact that Jesus is risen. This stone, now moved from its place, has a message for us.

First it says, *“I am a door removed.”* That doesn't seem too exciting till we realize that death's ancient prison house is without a gate. The saints may pass in, but they cannot be shut in. The door is not merely opened, it is unhinged, flung aside, rolled away, unusable, the lock is broken, the prison is obsolete. This is the visible evidence of the invisible fact that Jesus has broken the 4000 year old curse. That old fortress death, hell and the grave have been ransacked leaving it as a city stormed and taken.

*“Oh death where is thy victory, oh grave where is thy sting,
thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through Jesus
Christ our Lord”*

Let the stone preach! It preaches to friends and scoffers alike. Its message is clear. This old world will never be the same because of this event. Let the stone speak to you.

Second it says, *“I am a trophy set up.”* Of old men sat stones up as memorials to deeds done, victories won, great transactions and great visitations. So the stone of Christ became that day a perpetual memorial that he has won. They thought they had him. They thought they had vanquished him. But at the appointed moment he arose. The stone stands as a trophy that he has won. Great deeds have occurred here, in fact the greatest of all. If the head has conquered, the members shall not be defeated. See the trophy stone standing to verify your faith. Let the stone preach!

Thirdly the stone says, *“I am a foundation laid.”* This is the foundation of the Christian faith. Disprove the resurrection and our faith would turn to fable, our majesty to a myth,

our victory would be a vapor, our joy a cruel joke. Dislodge this keystone and all the great doctrines of our religion fall like the stones of a bridge having lost its centerpiece. Paul said,

“If Christ raised not from the death then is our faith vain... If we have hope of Christ in this life only, we are of all men most miserable.”

But he did rise! Five hundred witnesses saw him at one time. No piece of scientific evidence has ever been brought forward to refute that event. Where is the corpus? Gone! There are no bones on some narrow shelf! The two thousand year old search has turned up nothing. Hear the angel. *He is not here; He is risen.* Let the stone preach!

Fourthly, the stone says, “*I am a rest provided*” Let us consider the case. Without trumpets, noise or fanfare, the stone is rolled. The angel sits. It is the first time since the fall that there is record that an angel has sat. There he is silently, gracefully, contentedly sitting upon the stone. Up to now angels stood. In the Old Testament they were always in a hurry. There was an agitation about heaven’s situation. But now the battle is won, the rest is come, the Sabbath is Jesus, even the angels enter into his rest. What was once an obstacle has become a resting place. There is no hurry, no hasty assignments. All of the first Adam’s fall is dissolved into the last Adam’s victory. The impediment is now a park bench; the trophy now a stopping point. We have time to smell the roses. Let the stone preach!

Fifthly, the stone says. “*I am a boundary provided.*” The ancients used stones for marking points, for corners, for national boundaries and turns in the road. This stone is the boundary between the living and the dead, between seekers and haters, between friends and foes, between belief and unbelief. It is also the boundary point of history for time has turned from endless despair to perpetual glory. Hope, once having retreated to a distant land, has returned to take her rightful seat in the firmament of God’s graces. In this stone is the separation of the ages. Let the stone preach!

Finally, the stone says, “*I am a foreshadowing ruin*” – a stone overturned marks a structure out of place. The overturned stone is a prophecy that he who has begun will “overturn, overturn, overturn it; and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him.” Satan’s castle has been torn from top to bottom. Jesus pulled the cornerstone of death from the castle of Satan and the whole house has begun crumbling till not one stone will be left upon another. His end may not yet have come, but his fate is sure. Let the stone preach!

The great story may not be scratched in stone but it is told there. Listen to that old rock and it will tell you that history’s turning point has come. The earth can never be the same. Let the stone preach!

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