

February 5, 2017

I Want to Know Jesus

"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, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead."

Philippians 3:10-11

"It was about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temples was torn in two. Jesus called out with a loud voice, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.' When he said this, he breathed his last."

Luke 23:44-46

"On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them...the men said to them, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead. He is not here; he has risen!'"

Luke 24:1-6

After more than three years of ministry the end that was always a part of God's plan comes to Jesus. He met with his disciples for one last meal and not long after they returned to Gethsemane our Lord was arrested. He was subject to several highly illegal trials before the Jewish authorities and before both Pilate and Herod. Finally, surrendering to the demands of the crowd, Pilate condemned Jesus to death on the cross.

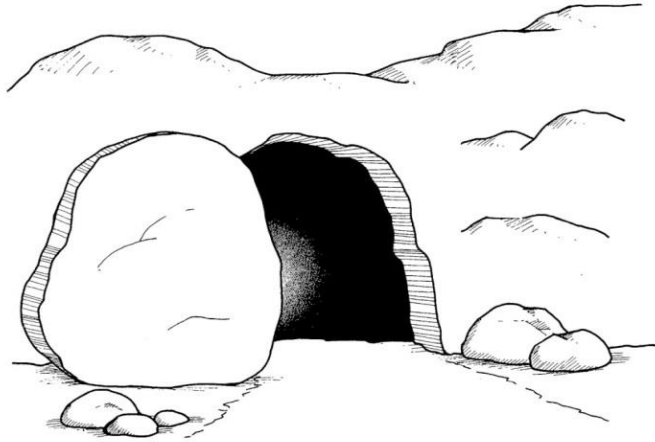
At about nine o'clock on Friday morning Jesus was lead outside of the city wall to a place called "the Skull" and, along with two thieves, was crucified by Roman soldiers. Beginning at noon on that Friday darkness covered the land until about three in the afternoon. At that moment Jesus, having completed all that his Father has sent him to accomplish, cried out in a loud voice and gave up his spirit. John writes of this moment, "*When he had received the drink, Jesus said, 'It is finished.' With that he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.*" (John 19:28-30)

Because the Sabbath Day was about to begin a man from Arimathea named Joseph along with Nicodemus took the body of Jesus from the cross and quickly prepared it for burial and laid it in an unused tomb. The women who had followed Jesus watched all of this and then returned to their homes to prepare the spices and perfumes commonly used for burial. At six o'clock that evening the Sabbath Day begins and the shaken city falls silent.

Early on Sunday morning shortly after six a.m. the women made their way to the tomb. They plan to further prepare Jesus' body for burial as a final act of service. They arrived at the tomb to find the massive stone rolled away from the door and the tomb empty. Two angels tell them the most amazing news this world has ever heard: **"HE IS NOT HERE; HE IS RISEN!"**

With this simple announcement made to those women in that tomb all those years ago, God changed the course of mankind for all time. With this one act God confirms that Jesus was and is exactly who he claimed to be; the Son of God. Paul would tell the Roman believers, **"...and who, through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord."**

In this one, culminating act, God provides the perfect sacrifice for our sins satisfying the requirement of the Law of Sin and Death once and for all. In this ultimate sacrifice God provides hope for all of us. Without the resurrection we have nothing to hope for; nothing to believe in.



Writing to the believers in Corinth the Apostle will say, ***"If there is no resurrection from the dead, then not even Chris has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised our preaching is useless and so is your faith...If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead..."*** (I Corinthians 15:1-20)