

SOUTH GROVE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Lord's Day Morning

Easter Sunday

Date 31st March 2024

Preacher Pastor Philip Knowles Hymn

Read: Mark 16:1-8 Text: Mark 16:1-8

Title The Stone Was Rolled Away.

Mark 15:43 records, that after the death of Jesus Christ, one of His disciples named *Joseph of Arimathaea*, *...went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.*"

The word **craved** means *to desire, to beg and to ask*. Relating to the same event this word **craved** is translated as **begged** in **Matthew 27:58**. He begged for Christ's body to prepare for burial.

Having received permission for Christ's body by the Roman centurion, **John 19:41** teaches *in the place where He was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid*.

This sepulchre or tomb **was hewn out of a rock** by Joseph and then Jesus was laid in that very same tomb, and then Joseph **rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre**.

Mark 16:4 states that this stone **was very great**, meaning **it was extremely large**.

The original word is **megas** where we get our word **mega**. This stone is a mega stone, its massive in its size and weight. Its large to cover the tomb.

When all this was taking place, the last verse of **Mark 15** reads *Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses beheld where he was laid*, and that was all they seen.

From this point onwards, everyone present knew that Joseph had rolled a stone over the door of the tomb with Jesus body inside.

That is the last impression and sight the woman had of the tomb.

Because after this, Matthew 27 records the tomb was sealed.

The seal was an attempt to stop anyone stealing Christ's body and to claim He arose from the dead.

Also, guards watched the tomb, to try and stop Christ's words about His resurrection being verified.

The Lord's disciples didn't know the tomb was sealed, that's why the opening words of **Mark 16:1-3** shows, that,*very early in the morning the first day of the week....Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?*

They are discussing the matter, and clearly, they know they are unable to roll the stone away.

They felt their **limitations, and weakness.** It is very clear that the women were concerned about this stone, and from the human perspective we can understand why, it ...**was very great.** It was obviously too large for these women to remove.

But when they reached the tomb, notice, the marvellous words of **verse 4** ...*they saw that the stone was rolled away*... once again something had taken place concerning the tomb unknown and unseen by them.

Not only the sealing of the tomb by the soldiers, and earthquake, but now the stone was rolled away from the door.

It testified to a risen and living Christ.

That's why we rejoice, Christ the Lord is Risen today, Hallelujah.
As we think of the Stone that was rolled away, please notice:

I FIRST THE EXAMINATION THAT THE STONE WAS ROLLED AWAY.

Verse 4 *And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.*

There are two key words to consider, they are **looked** and **saw**.

When the women arrived at the tomb, ***they looked... that the stone was rolled away.***

The word **looked** is **ana-blepo**, which means ***to look up***, to notice, to behold.

They noticed, they looked up and seen ***that the stone was rolled away.*** The very fact, this large stone has been rolled away, its catches them by surprise.

This is a look of wonder, astonishment, they didn't expected to see the stone rolled away.

Then after they look up, ***they saw that the stone was rolled away....*** the word **saw** is **theoreo** meaning **to scrutinise, examine, inspect**, go into more detail about what has just been noticed and looked upon.

This word **saw** is the same word used in **John 20**, when Peter and John come to the tomb.

once Peter looks into the tomb, **John 20:6 records, he.... *seeth the linen clothes lie....***

In **John 20:6** the word **seeth** is the same word **saw** used in **Mark 16:4**, **Theoreo**, meaning ***to scrutinise, to look with examination, to see every detail, to miss nothing, but to pay attention to detail.***

Peter is investigating closely and that is what the women are doing at the tomb, they are examining every detail.

Why because they were coming to the tomb with the view Jesus was dead, and in His body was still in the tomb.

Verse 1 makes that clear, ...*that they might come and anoint Him*.... as does **verse 6** ...*Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified*...

They believed His body was still in the Tomb, and now that *they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away*, they begin to examine what it all means.

However, they had forgotten the Lord's teachings that He would rise from the dead on the third day,

and so they are examining the scene from a mind that is bound by limitations, having forgotten the word of Christ, they said among themselves, who shall roll away the stone?

You see, all our problems or doubts, regarding the gospel arise from forgetting or not believing Christ's words, on taught He would rise on the third day.

Their concern that morning *among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?* But they reached the tomb, their concerns had already been answered.

The stone had been rolled away, death's prison has been opened.

Death could not hold him, the grave could not keep Him, and He arose victorious over death and sin.

He arose to confirm He had conquered all His and His people's enemies, sin and satan.

Let me tell you Christ did not escape from the tomb, Christ was not let out of the tomb, Christ was not brought out of the tomb, rather Christ arose from the tomb. Hallelujah.

That should thrill our hearts, maybe believer you discuss the tomb, or death or the grave, and you have concerns about your

own death, but every thought is answered when examined according to scripture.

How do I know I'm saved? are my sins fully forgiven? can I lose salvation? will I go heaven?

These are all stones, that have been rolled away, questions that are answered already by the word of God.

He will keep those in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Him because they trust in Him.

The stone has been rolled away.

II SECOND, THE ENTRANCE SINCE THE STONE WAS ROLLED AWAY.

In **verse 4** *when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away*, it meant the tomb was now empty and open.

There is no stone over the door. And **verse 5** shows *and entering into the sepulchre*....

These words are important than you think, they are foundational to the gospel, and the exposure of false religion.

These words are amazing, because it bears witness they entered into an empty tomb. **Luke 24:3** says *And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus*.

They had access to enter in, the barrier of the tomb, the stone was rolled away.

You may go travel and visit many tombs, and there are many here in London, and all over the world, but such tombs, graves and coffins are sealed and secured, that you can not enter in, you cannot see into it, why because the remains of that person are there.

But when it comes the gospel of Jesus Christ, and His tomb, His burial site, the stone was rolled away, and it still is, and His tomb was empty and it still is, and there is entrance into His tomb and there still is.

Even today, there is entrance into the tomb because the tomb is still empty and the stone is rolled away, up from the grave He arose.

When it comes to other people who have died, we have to say **here lies so and so**, here are the remains, of so and so, but when it comes to Jesus Christ, all we can say is, ***behold the place where they laid him***, because He is not here He is risen.

you see the stone was rolled away not to let Jesus out, but to welcome sinners in, to see an empty tomb meaning a living Christ.

The stone rolled away from the door was an object lesson to teach spiritual truth that Christ had already risen from the dead.

always remember, the stone was rolled away to show that Christ was already raised.

Never think that when Christ arose from the dead, He had to wait until the stone was rolled away.

that was the case with Lazarus, when his tomb was opened only then could he come forth. He didn't the tomb opened first. But not so with Christ.

The stone was not rolled away for Christ's benefit but for our benefit to testify He had risen and because He lives all who trust in Him shall live also.

Christ arose up from the grave, out of the tomb and then the stone was rolled away, to assure His people, that when they enter

the grave it too no longer holds as us captives in death, and darkness, and despair.

Rather, our sins are now forever rolled away, and death is no longer a dungeon dark and drear.

Just as Jesus Christ arose so will all His people in Him, and because of Him.

Nothing can prevent the resurrection of believers. Nothing shall separate believers from Christ, not even death.

III THIRD, THE ENCOURAGEMENT THAT THE STONE WAS ROLLED AWAY.

Verses 5-6 *And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. And He saith unto them, Be not affrighted...*

The word affrighted, means **amazed, astonished, alarmed**. They came seeking Jesus body, the great stone is rolled away, they have examined the situation and scene, and they have entered into the tomb, but there is no body, they are amazed.

What has happened? In fact, **John 20:2**, records Mary Magdalene's words, ***They have taken away the LORD out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.***

Then the messenger gives the word of encouragement, ***Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: He is risen; He is not here...***

What an encouragement for troubled hearts and over worked minds.

Let not your heart be troubled, the stone was rolled away confirming that Jesus Christ is alive, He is risen from the dead.

There is hope in sorrow, death is no longer a punishment but now a path to reach heaven.

The angelic messenger, sat on the stone to make sure the right message was proclaimed. Christ who died is now risen.

Had the religious leaders been there, they would have given a message of no hope, and false message, full of lies and deceit.

But the angelic messenger is from heaven, and would make sure at the tomb for all who would enter into see, that Christ was not there, giving the encouragement, redemption accomplished on the cross was accepted by the Father and the Spirit having raised Him from the dead, as **Galatians 1:1, and Romans 8:11** teaches.

It's amazing to think, on the Lord's day, the disciples discouraged, down cast, yet there is a messenger to encourage them by death & resurrection of Christ.

Praise the Lord each time we gather in this place on the Lord's day, there is a messenger to encourage you by the message Christ died for us, but is Risen for us.

You have a messenger to give you the truth of Gospel.

Are you resting your everlasting hope upon the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead?

Do you trust in Him, believing that He both died and rose again for you? if so, your faith is not in vain, and you are alive in Christ, and will be forever with Christ.

What an encouragement the stone rolled away,

IV FOURTH, THE EXHORTATION SINCE THE STONE WAS ROLLED AWAY.

Verses 7-8 *But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. ⁸ And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid*

They were exhorted to tell the message of a risen Saviour, Jesus is alive. Pass on the same word of encouragement they had received. Tells other believers, the stone was rolled away and Christ is risen.

They were not to delay but to go quickly. Here was there command and commission to share the gospel Christ is live.

Therefore, the stone rolled away from the door, was actually an opportunity to serve the risen Saviour, to comfort, and strengthen other believers in sharing the gospel.

Refreshing and Revival by water of God's word, Christ is alive.

We have two illustrations of this in the book of Genesis. In **Genesis 29**, when the cattle and sheep needed to be fed and watered, however, over the well was a great stone, **verse 10** shows that ***Jacob went near and rolled the stone from the wells mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother.***

Also in Genesis 37, when Jacob came to the conclusion that his son Joseph was dead based on the evidence given by his sons, he refused to be comforted, and he lived the next 22 years with a heavy heart and reminder that Joseph was dead, but then in Genesis 45 Joseph is alive, and reveals himself to his brothers, and they return home and tell their father, in **Genesis 45:26** ... ***Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not.*** **verse 47**, ***the spirit of Jacob their father revived:*** **verse 28** ***And Israel said, It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive...***

Remember the disciples were downcast, they had failed the Lord, some conclude their ministry was over. But message Christ is alive, brought refreshed and revived them, and renewed their zeal for the furtherance of the gospel.

When the risen Saviour met with His disciples, in **John 20:20** ***Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the LORD.*** The word literally mean ***they were glad having seen the Lord.***

Having a view of the risen Christ in their midst restored, refreshed and revived them, they rejoiced.

Believer, are you weak and heavy laden cumbered with a load of care. The stone is rolled away, Christ is alive.

Are you discouraged, down cast, here's the message that will restore, refresh and revive your soul, the stone was rolled away, Christ is alive.

When the risen Christ meets with His people as they are assembled together, He makes the difference, His presence causes them to rejoice and go on.

That's why you need to assemble together on the Lord's day, because He has chosen to meet His people in such a manner.

Unbeliever, like the soldiers you till try to seal the tomb shut in your mind, rejecting the words of Christ in your heart that He would rise from the dead.

You believe the people's lie in **Matthew 28:15** as ***reported among the Jews until this day, verse 13 say ye His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we slept.*** Christ's resurrection is a terror to all who reject Him, but to the Lord's people it is our delight, ad comfort.

The message of Christ's resurrection has been proclaimed once again, Christ live triumphant from the grave, He lives eternally to save.

Receive Christ to receive eternal life.