

"I have seen the Lord!"

John 19:38-20:18

The early Christians – who were Jews – changed their worship from Saturdays to Sundays. Strict monotheists, they began worshipping a man, Jesus, as God. Something must have happened 2000 years ago to explain these changes.

An Unexpected Event

One of the most convincing arguments for the truthfulness of the gospels is the picture they paint of the disciples. It is very honest, including in their reactions to the empty tomb. They responded with disbelief. None of them were expecting this. After all, everyone knows the dead don't rise. And Jesus was dead.

From their actions and words neither Joseph, Nicodemus, Mary or the other disciples, were expecting anything like a resurrection. The surrounding Greek culture did not believe the dead could rise and the Jews thought resurrection would only happen at the end of time.

And yet Mary's words when she came back from the garden a second time - "I have seen the Lord" (John 20:18) - became the central message of the disciples: we have seen the empty tomb and we have seen Jesus alive. The message of the resurrection became their message. They preached it everywhere. Why? Because they had seen the Lord alive! And if Jesus has been raised from the dead it changes everything.

It Changes Everything About How You View Jesus

The resurrection decisively answers the question as to whether Jesus is a fraud or the King. The resurrection declares Him the Son of God. It is God's seal of approval on Him. It tells us that He has conquered death. While Adam left us a legacy of sin and death, Jesus has left us a legacy of life. He is the Resurrection and the Life (John 11:25).

But the resurrection doesn't just transform how we view Jesus, it transforms how we view ourselves.

It Changes Everything About How We View Ourselves

In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul tells us that if the resurrection did not happen we are wasting our time as Christians. But then he says, 'But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead' (1 Cor 15:20) And that changes everything about our lives.

It tells us that we too can know newness of life, and be born again. It tells us that the debt for our sins and failures has been paid – we are justified, declared not guilty through the resurrection: God the Father has accepted Jesus' sacrifice. The power of God that raised Jesus is also at work in our lives, making us more like Jesus. It's the power to say 'no' to sin and 'yes' to Jesus. It's the power to live a life of fruitfulness. It's the power to set our minds on things above, not on things below: to think and live with a Christ-centered mindset. And finally Jesus' resurrection is the promise of our future resurrection: He is the first fruits of the harvest.

So whether you are doubting, or feeling guilty, or fighting with God over the life He calls you to, take a look again inside the tomb. It's empty! And that changes everything.