

Title: ALL THINGS NEW, JOHN 20:1-18
(Chatham, NJ; 04/24/11, Easter, AM) [E – Two-Point Topical]

Theme: The particular details of the Resurrection help us to understand the transcendent significance of the event.

Purpose: To present the details of Resurrection morning and to draw out the importance of the moment as it related to eternity and transcendent values.

Introduction:

1. Newness, life, and redemption are all words we associate with the Resurrection.
2. Yet we don't want to detach the event and make it purely symbolic; it was a real event that real people experienced in the real world.
3. A compilation of the events on that first morning demonstrate what the experience meant to those directly involved.
4. By extension we'll determine what it means for us.

I. A Reconstruction of the Resurrection (No single account gives the complete details in the exact order of occurrence.)

A. The women are mentioned first.

1. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome go to the tomb (Mt. & Mk.).
2. Luke includes Joanna and others.
3. John mentions only Mary Magdalene.
4. They brought spices for the body (were they not aware that Nicodemus had already done that?).

B. The Problem of the Stone

1. They knew the stone was going to be a problem for them (Mk.).
2. An earthquake occurred, an angel rolled away the stone, and the guards passed out (Mt.).
3. They found the stone already rolled away but found no body (Lk.).

C. Angels appeared.

1. Matthew – one angel talks to them.
2. Mark – they encounter a young man dressed in white.
3. Luke – they see two men in dazzling apparel.
4. John – Mary sees two angels in the tomb.

D. The angels speak.

1. "He is not here; he is risen."
2. He told you this.
3. Go tell others.
4. Only John does not account for their words.

E. They tell the Apostles (Mary Magdalene becomes the key figure, perhaps the spokesperson.)

1. Mark: the Apostles refused to believe her (by then she had seen him).
2. Luke: the Apostles believed their words to be an "idle tale."
3. John: "They have taken the Lord, and we don't know where he is." (They haven't seen Jesus yet).
4. We surmise that they spoke to the Apostles both before and after they had encountered Jesus.

F. They meet Jesus along the way.

1. Matthew: he makes no mention that they saw the Apostles first.
2. Mark: He appears to Mary, but Mark records no dialogue.
3. Luke: No mention of appearing to Mary.
4. John: Mary M. thinks he is the gardener.

G. Peter and John go to the tomb.

1. Only Luke and John record Peter going to the tomb.
2. John records that he also went.

H. Jesus appears to the Apostles.

1. To Peter
2. To two men on the road to Emmaus
3. To 10 of the Apostles
4. Then when Thomas was present
5. Mark: Jesus chastens them for their hardness of heart in not believing the women.
6. Paul mentions other appearances (1 Corinthians 15).

II. The Something More of the Resurrection

A. Is this all there is? The philosophy of John Dewey.

1. School teacher, philosophy professor, and eventually head of the Teachers' College at Columbia University in 1904.
2. Some good methods of teaching: rich student-teacher interaction and hands-on learning approach aided the assimilation of knowledge that stepped beyond rote memorization.
3. Yet there was a hole in his educational philosophy.
4. We must "get over" any notions that truth exists beyond what is truth for me; we should not concern ourselves whether an idea is true in an absolute sense, what matters about an idea is "its functional or instrumental use."
5. Does it work? Or even does it work for me?
6. He called his philosophy "instrumentalism" or "experimentalism" but it came to be known as *pragmatism*.
7. Although philosophy by definition examines the roots of knowledge, that is, the unchanging, universal truths that underlie the scholarly disciplines, Dewey's philosophy essentially implied that these roots **do not exist**.
8. There was nothing more than "what it means to me."
9. Professor Mike Adams of the Univ. of North Carolina-Wilmington says, "...there is little interest in universal truths or principles in academia today."
10. (Material adapted from *Salvo*, Issue 16, pp. 58-59.)
11. Whether we can blame John Dewey for the state of academia can certainly be debated. Some ideas have a long shelf life, and no doubt Dewey's ideas have influenced a large number of people in the teaching profession.
12. What is clear is that some people prefer to believe that truth is only what is true for me and whether it works for me.

B. Is the Resurrection only true because it is true for me?

1. If the Apostles concocted a masterful lie, they went to a lot of trouble to explain how they at first were in total denial about the event.
2. Why would Jesus' enemies go to great lengths to cover it up, Mt. 28:11-15?
3. Their experience led them to believe that there truly is something more? By Dewey's philosophy this was only true for them.
4. But we know better, don't we?
5. Jesus made statements about knowing the truth and about knowing God.
6. He said he would be with them to the end of the age, Mt. 28:20.

7. He even had the audacity to suggest that he was preparing a place for his disciples for after they died.

Conclusion:

1. There is something more; the Resurrection assures us of that.
2. Though we don't have the opportunity to see the wounds of Christ like Thomas, we can still believe by their witness that life exists after death, that Jesus is with us, and that we can look forward to something better after this life.
3. In Revelation 21:5 we read that God is "making all things new."
4. In 2 Peter 3 we read about a new heavens and a new earth.
5. Life isn't only about what is here and what is within the scope of our limited experience.
6. Life is about a Resurrected Lord, alive and coming back.
7. Let us live beyond our own personal experiences and believe in the life beyond this one.