

Low in the Grave He Lay; Matthew 28:1-7

I. Proclaim

a. We often sing this song as we prepare to take the Lord's Supper

- i. 1 Corinthians 11:23–26 (ESV) ²³ For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." ²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.
- ii. Eating the bread and drinking the cup is a proclamation of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection

b. This hymn is also a proclamation of Jesus' victory over death

- i. 1 Corinthians 15:54–57 (ESV) ⁵⁴ When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." ⁵⁵ "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
- ii. All four Gospels relay the account of Jesus' resurrection
- iii. Matthew gives us some additional information the others don't, the guards, the seal, and that the tomb belonged to Joseph of Arimathea
 1. Mark tells us that Pilate was surprised that Jesus was already dead
 2. Luke tells us that Joseph of Arimathea (who was on the council) did not consent to 'their decision and action'
 3. John tells us that Nicodemus helped Joseph with the body and that there was a garden at Golgotha where Joseph's (now Jesus') tomb was

c. He arose!

II. Coming Day

a. Matthew records Jesus speaking about the 'coming day'

- i. Matthew 12:38–40 (ESV) ³⁸ Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." ³⁹ But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. ⁴⁰ For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.
- ii. Jonah was a prophet from Gath-Hepher (5 km north of Nazareth and 1 km south of Cana)
 1. An Israelite who ran away from God because of God's grace and mercy
 2. Jonah knew that God would repent of His wrath toward Nineveh, but Jonah did not want that, so he ran to Tarshish

3. God prepared a great fish that swallowed Jonah and he spent 3 days in the belly of a great fish
 - b. Jesus tells his disciples about His death, burial, and resurrection (the coming day) many times
 - i. Matthew 16:21 (ESV) ²¹ From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.
 - ii. Luke records that the disciples did not understand what Jesus was saying about His death, burial, and resurrection
 - c. We know that 'up from the grave, He arose'
- III. Seal the Dead
- a. Jesus' death and burial was both a Jewish and Roman affair
 - i. The Jews did not have any laws that could put a man to death under the Roman government
 - ii. They needed Rome to condemn Jesus
 - iii. They needed Rome to 'seal the dead'
 - b. A guard of soldiers
 - i. Matthew 27:62–66 (ESV) ⁶² The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate ⁶³ and said, "Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise.' ⁶⁴ Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last fraud will be worse than the first." ⁶⁵ Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can." ⁶⁶ So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.
 - ii. Pilate grants them a group of soldiers and the authority to seal the tomb ("go, make it as secure as you can")
 - iii. Guard: we get the English word 'custodian' from this Greek word
 - c. Now, we have the surety of His death and the guarantee of His burial
 - d. Yet, He arose!
- IV. Tore the Bars Away
- a. Matthew 28:1–7 (ESV) ¹ Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ² And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. ⁴ And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. ⁵ But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷ Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you."
 - b. "Death cannot keep his prey... He tore the bars away"
 - c. The opening of the tomb must have been quite the spectacle

- i. An earthquake, the angel sitting on the stone looking like lightning, dressed in complete white
 - ii. The guards were in a catatonic state
 - iii. “Shock and awe:” the use of overwhelming power and spectacular displays of force to paralyze the enemy’s perception of the battlefield and destroy their will to fight
 - iv. The grand accompaniment of the earthquake, angel-like lightening, and catatonic guards was so we would notice
 - v. We know that Jesus did not need the tomb to be open for His resurrection
 - vi. The tomb was opened so that we could see it was empty
 - vii. Just like the sound of the rushing wind on the day of Pentecost was to get the attention of the Jews living and visiting Jerusalem
 - d. Then, Jesus appears to many to prove His resurrection
 - e. 1 Corinthians 15:3–8 (ESV) ³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶ Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸ Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.
 - f. “Death cannot keep his prey... He tore the bars away”
- V. He Arose!
- a. What a proclamation of the Gospel, He arose!
 - b. “Up from the grave He arose with a mighty triumph o’re His foes”
 - c. Every time we sing this hymn, we proclaim Jesus’ resurrection, His victory over death!
 - d. Hallelujah! Christ arose!