

## Mark 16:1-8

## “Don’t Worry About the Stone”

Life is filled with stone. It is full of hard places. Injustice, inequality, prejudice, immorality, violence, dividing walls of hostility, poverty, unbelief, death, etc.! Everywhere we look there seems to be stone, something blocking our way. Something for us to worry about. I hope to encourage us this Easter morning by reminding us that God is in the excavation business. There is no stone too large for God’s excavation team. The resurrection of Jesus the Christ is concrete proof of that. In our text of focus this Easter morning we encounter three women who faced an insurmountable task. They faced a mountain of a stone. These women who had determined that they would make their way to the tomb to properly anoint the body of Jesus start out early Sunday morning, most likely prior to the rising of the sun. As they near the tomb a very peculiar question is raised at the most inopportune time, **V3 “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?”** They realized as they are nearing the tomb, there was an obstacle in their way that was beyond their ability to remove. With this said, I want to share three observations drawn from their stone experience this Resurrection Sunday that will hopefully set fire in us.

**First observation, despite the stone they kept moving towards the tomb. V2-3** <sup>2</sup>Very early on Sunday morning, just at sunrise, they went to the tomb. <sup>3</sup>On the way they were asking each other, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?” I am challenged here because their response to their obstacle compels me to contemplate, to consider, how often we

allow the perceived stone or stones in our paths to keep us from moving towards our goal. Towards accomplishing that which God has set before us. Too often we determine that the stone will be too hard to overcome and so we give up. Why didn't they just simply turn around and go home given the fact that they knew they could not remove this stone? I choose to believe that they had determined, even in the face of their other stones; disappointment, sorrow, having their hopes and dreams destroyed at the death of Jesus, that somehow, someday they would gain entrance into the tomb. In their response I hear them saying to us this Easter morning, don't worry about the stone. Where there is a will there is a way. Don't let the stones you may face in this life keep you from moving towards the goal.

**Isaiah 50:7** "But the Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame."

**Psalms 62:11-12** "Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God, <sup>12</sup>and that to you, O Lord, belongs steadfast love. For you will render to a man according to his work."

**Phil 4:13** "I can do all things through him who strengthens me."

**Second observation, the stone was necessary. V4** "4 But as they arrived, they looked up and saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled aside." The stone represents the enormity of the situation. The impossibility of one conquering the grave. Many have question why the women went to the tomb and not the men. Let me be clear, neither were expecting an empty tomb. Maybe it was a matter of practicality. A group of men may have never considered the stone, believing they

could simply combine their strength and roll it away. Thus, missing the enormity of the situation. But for these women this stone created a dynamic beyond their capability and would require an act of God as its remedy. See, the stone provides the opportunity for God to put His power on display. The stones, whatever they may be, literal or metaphorical, should never be the determining factor on whether we move forward in carrying out the task at hand. Don't worry about the stone. Imagine how different the story would be if these women had been deterred by the fact that there was a stone blocking their way? Now imagine how different things would be for you if you had not thrown in the towel because of a stone blocking your way? Just like the cross, the stone was necessary.

**John 12:31-33** <sup>31</sup> Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. <sup>32</sup> And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." <sup>33</sup> He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die."

**Romans 5:3-8** <sup>3</sup> We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. <sup>4</sup> And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. <sup>5</sup> And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love. <sup>6</sup> When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. <sup>7</sup> Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. <sup>8</sup> But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners." **NLT**

**Our third and final observation. God sends them to roll away the stones of others. V6-8a** “<sup>6</sup>but the angel said, “Don’t be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He isn’t here! He is risen from the dead! Look, this is where they laid his body. <sup>7</sup>Now go and tell his disciples, including Peter, that Jesus is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there, just as he told you before he died.” <sup>8</sup>The women fled from the tomb”. We must be careful to notice the response of the women when they discover upon their arrival that the stone had been rolled away and that the tomb was empty. The text states they were alarmed. **Isn’t it odd how surprised we are when God shows up? We say all the time God will make a way out of no way and yet when God does exactly that we are perplexed.** Nonetheless, the angel instructs them to go tell the others. Listen, when God sets us free through faith in Jesus Christ, that is removing the stone that was blocking our way, God expects us to run in effort to set others free. This is how we are to respond to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, go tell somebody the stone has been rolled away for Christ has risen!

**Acts 1:8** “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Church, the message for us remains the same to today. Go tell others, Christ is risen. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. **Amen**