

Bethel

Prayer Meeting Addresses

Number 66 The Stone Rolled Away

Reading: Mark 16. 1-8

1 And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

2 And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

3 And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

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

5 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.

6 And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.

7 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.

Address

There was much grace in these godly women, early in the morning, while it was yet dark, venturing to the sepulchre. They were constrained by love. The most they hoped for was to be enabled to anoint the lifeless body of their Lord and Master. But they found something better: an empty grave. “Come, see the place where the Lord lay.”

But they had one impossibility as they ventured, and that was that great stone, and we are told, “It was very great.” And, “Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?” They did not know how, but they still ventured. And they had a question, and the Lord did not give them an answer to that question, but the answer was what they found, what the Lord had done. Sometimes you have a question, and the Lord will not answer it, but the answer you will receive is what the Lord has done. When they came there, they found

that the stone was rolled away – the power of His resurrection. And beloved friends, the great point is this: that the power of His resurrection is the same this evening as when that great stone was rolled away.

Now it is an attractive subject, the rolling away of great stones, because we have them; you have them – these things that you cannot manage, that trouble you, that are too great for you. Look at it first of all in a spiritual sense. A hard heart – now can you roll that away – that darkness, the cold spirit of awful, God-dishonouring unbelief? “It was very great.” Now can you roll that away? And the great mass of your sin. There is a power that can roll the great stone away.

If you can follow me here, whenever we speak of the resurrection, there is always something implied, and that is a death. If there is going to be a resurrection, there must be a death. So it is a risen Saviour. But when we say a risen Saviour, we are reminded that He died as well as that He rose again. You *cannot* separate the sin-atonement death and the glorious resurrection of the Lord Jesus. It is the same divine, almighty power. O but that power, that power in the precious blood, that power that rolls away the vast stone of your sin and guilt, that which would have sunk you to all eternity. O the value, the power of it! And that hard heart and that unbelief – to see them rolled away.

Then there are things when we think of the church of God, the preaching of the gospel. Why are there so many not affected by it? Well, it is as if there is a great stone that is keeping the Word away, that is countering it. That great stone in their hearts; they are unmoved, untouched, unconcerned. Now, “Who shall roll us away the stone?” This is the Lord’s work alone, that divine power attending the preaching of the Word, breaking down every obstacle, taking these things out of the way, these great stones rolled away.

Then you think of providence. You have things in your home, your life, your family, your business, today, tomorrow, next week, things that are too hard for you, too great for you, things you cannot manage. “Who shall roll us away the stone?” These crooked things you cannot make straight – sickness, ill health, your own and things in the family, the disappointment, the loneliness, trial, grief, trouble, affliction, cross-providences – all these things, and you find these great stones in your pathway. Sometimes they are hedging up your pathway, and you feel you cannot get over them, or through them, or round them, certainly not under them.

“Who shall roll us away the stone?” Well, some people with a word like this see its beauty; but then there are things in their own heart and life and circumstances that they will have to carry right to the end and all the way through. How do they fit in with a word like this: “Who shall roll us away the stone?” There is such a thing – and I know this is high ground and we have to walk tenderly – when a child of God in his deep sorrow finds his circumstance unchanged, exactly the same, but something has happened – the sanctifying work of the Spirit, the Lord’s presence, the Lord’s peace, the Lord’s gracious upholding, and the stone is rolled away within.

Just one other thing. This stone, this great stone was at the door of the sepulchre, and that is it with so many of the Lord’s tried people. It is at the gate of the grave and, How shall I do when I come there? What about that great stone? You feel it in your conscience. You feel it in your concerns. “Who shall roll us away the stone?” It is a lovely word our hymnwriter has:

“.... *when I come there,*
I can’t be confounded, The Lord will appear” –

appear to roll away the stone, the effect of sin-atoning blood, the Saviour’s death and His glorious resurrection.

Well, we meet this evening for prayer and in the light of all these things, the power of the resurrection, and this great stone, there is something to pray about. First of all, *ourselves*. These things as we find them, sorrowing us, plaguing us, weighing us down, these things within – there is something to pray about there. But then also as we think of *our congregation*, those who are unconcerned, our children and little ones, our young people, the Sabbath school, the prodigals who have gone away, the various burdens and cares and troubles and trials that many have. Now how much there is to pray for here. And when we think of prayer, the power of His glorious resurrection to hear and answer prayer, nothing too great, nothing too small, and no stone too great for the Lord to roll away.

This address was given at Bethel Chapel, Luton, by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom, on Monday, 30th April, 2012

