

The Message in the Grave Clothes

(John 20:1-10)

Introduction

When a loved one passes, one responsibility of survivors is to choose a suit of clothes for the loved one to be buried in. For some this is a very difficult process. For others, it has a therapeutic affect.

During the time of the Scriptures, there really were no options. For the Hebrews the loved one who passed was wrapped with strips of linen cloth laced with fragrant spices and quality perfumes. During Biblical times a coffin was unheard of. Burial was very quick, usually within a day.

The Bible tells us that following his crucifixion, the preparation of Jesus for burial was accomplished by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. Every aspect of Jewish tradition was followed.

Context of John 20.

There are many aspects of the resurrection that we could consider this morning. All of them are important. However, this morning we will look at the message that is contained in the grave clothes left in the tomb of Jesus. He left them there purposefully. There is a message for you and I found in those remaining grave clothes.

I. It is a Peaceful Message (v. 5-7)

Truth: *The tomb, was a perfect picture of order, testifying to the resurrection of Jesus.*

A. The chaos of Jesus trials.

B) The crises of Jesus crucifixion.

C) The agony of His death.

D) The calm of his tomb.

- After the news of the resurrection became public knowledge, the Jewish leaders concocted a story to try and conceal the fact that Jesus was alive, **Matt. 28:11-15**. However, the condition of the tomb proves their tale to be a lie. Consider:
 1. If it was the Disciples that had removed the body

of Jesus as the Jews claimed, how did they remove the body disturbing the wrappings? Would they have taken the time to be so orderly? Would they have even attempted such a thing, after all, they had all forsook Jesus and fled away the night He was arrested, **Mark 14:50**.

2. If it was grave robbers as others have suggested, how did they remove the body? Would they have taken such pains? Of course not!

3. If it was the Jewish leaders that took His body for fear of what the Disciples might use His corpse for, or the Romans for that matter, they would not have taken the time to remove the body from its wrappings. In fact, they would have simply produced the corpse when the Disciples began to proclaim the resurrection and Christianity would have dissolved like and Alka-Seltzer in water.

THE MESSAGE OF THE GRAVE CLOTHES WAS “STAY CALM, I AM ALIVE!” Only Jesus can give that kind of peace!

II. It is a Powerful Message (v. 5)

Truth: *The grave clothes proclaimed to the world that everything Jesus Christ had claimed, everything He had preached, everything He had promised was true!*

- A) They testified of the power of God.
- B) They testified of the power of Jesus promises.
- C) They testified that the death of Jesus has the power to remove our sin guilt.

III. It is a Promising Message (v. 7)

Truth: *The grave clothes testify that not only is he alive, but is coming again.*

- A. Of a heavenly home.
- B) Of a returning Lord.

IV. It is a Persuasive Message (v. 5-8).

A. A quick glance (v. 5)

The word "**saw**" means "**to take a glance at something.**" It to a brief, fleeting glimpse.

B) A critical look (v. 6-7)

- The word "**seeth**" means "**to scrutinize**" It carries the idea of looking around with a keen eye to catch all the facts.
- When a skeptic looks at the empty tomb, he can come up with dozens of reasons why Jesus resurrection cannot be true.

C) A convincing examination (v. 8)

- The word "**saw**" means "**to look with understanding.**" It carries the idea of grasping what you see.
- When an honest heart takes the time to scrutinize the evidence they will come to the place John came to. The resurrection must be real. There is no other logical explanation. Have you been persuaded?
- Would someone please explain to me why every one of Jesus' disciples, with the exception of John, died for preaching the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Men do not die for something they know to be a lie!

V. It Is A Personal Message (v. 1-29)

Truth: *The message of the resurrection touches our heart in different ways, with different reactions, but the goal is singular – faith in Jesus Christ.*

A) For John, belief was instant (v. 8)

B) For Peter, the truth came more slowly (v. 6-7)

C) For Mary Magdalene, she needed confirmation (v. 11-17).

D) For the other disciples, they needed facts (v. 19-20, 24-28)

- There are really only two ways to respond to the message:
 1. By Accepting It
 2. By Rejecting It.
- Have you believed on the risen Jesus?

Conclusion

- No other suit of funeral clothes has preached such a glorious, timeless message as did the grave clothes of Jesus.
- I am thankful that He lives this morning and that He left perfect, indisputable evidence in His tomb that He lives?
- Is his resurrection real in your heart this morning?
- Have you experienced the power of His resurrection in your life? A risen Savior has the power to radically affect all who come to Him by faith.