

## SHAKING THE FOUNDATIONS

**Isaiah 25:6-9**  
**Matthew 28:1-10**

**Faith Community**  
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### Introduction

If you've ever read the resurrection accounts of all four gospels, you've seen how each one has a different emphasis. Mark is brief. Four women see the empty tomb and Mark says, "They fled from the tomb for terror and amazement had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone."

In John, Mary Magdalene sees Jesus and thinks he's a gardener. She only recognizes him when he speaks her name. In Luke the women hear the good news and run to tell the disciples. In Matthew there is a great earthquake.

I think Matthew is saying that Jesus' resurrection has shaken the world to its foundation. This experience of Jesus is like an earthquake – the ground shakes, it shifts beneath our feet, the plates rattle, the end table in the living room tumbles over and the lamp goes flying. Our whole world is shaken up.

I was listening to a reporter who had covered the horrible earthquake in Armenia in the 1980s. When the earthquake stopped, he said, there was nothing but rubble. He said it looked as if a nuclear bomb had gone off. It was so powerful that it leveled everything. Not all earthquakes just shake up the house, some change everything.

Jesus' resurrection is something like that - the whole world is different. Jesus' resurrection opens up a whole new world. It shows us that reality is not what we've assumed it to be. Some of the changes are like this.

### I

What you thought was important, isn't. It seems to be built into our culture that we must get ahead in our career, make a name for ourselves, accumulate wealth, and keep ahead of the neighbors. The common phrase "keeping up with the Joneses" says a lot about us. Do we have a greener lawn? Bigger house? Wider HD TV?

Have you seen the commercial for a car that shows two men standing outside in their driveways? One man is proud of the new car that is sitting in his garage. He talks with his neighbor who explains why his new car is better. Quickly the first neighbor hits the remote to close his garage door before his neighbor sees the car he bought. The obvious lesson is don't be embarrassed like that with a lesser car than your neighbor has.

The radical change of the resurrection turns this world upside down. Rather than stockpiling wealth we realize that money won't buy what we really need. Rather than making a name for ourselves, we understand the strength in humility. Rather than getting more to move ourselves ahead, we see that Christ was right – we sacrifice for the things that are most important in life.

We just returned from a mission trip to Guatemala. I wonder if anyone on that trip has had a more rewarding, life-changing experience in business or their career. Real satisfaction is in giving, not in taking.

## II

The earth-shaking resurrection also reminds us that our lives are not our own. How many times have we heard, “It’s my life, I’ll do what I want”? We think that we own ourselves, and we should decide by what we want.

But resurrected life says, “Christ is my Lord, and I want to be faithful to him.” That single statement stands our whole “ME generation” on its head. Now it’s not what I want, what works for me, not what I get out of it, but what will be true to the God I serve?

As you know Princess Diana and Mother Teresa died at almost the same time. The huge contrast between them struck me at the time. I remember reading when Diana was going through the divorce with Prince Charles she listed the amount of money she “needed” to live on each month. The amount for beauty care alone was more than \$10,000 per month. It included facials, manicures, pedicures, massage, beauty wraps, and lots of things I never even heard of! Literally, she spent enough on beauty to feed a village in a third world country.

Mother Teresa, on the other hand, was an old woman with a weathered face, who lived in extreme simplicity, and who spent her days picking up dying people from the streets of Calcutta. A well-known event in her life was when a reporter was watching her working with the dying. He turned away in disgust and said, “You couldn’t pay me to do that!” Mother Teresa looked up into the reporter’s eyes and said, “Me neither.”

I don’t mean to demean Princess Diana; she certainly used her position and status to bring attention to many serious needs in the world. Nor do I think everybody is called to be a Mother Teresa. The point is that because of the resurrection our lives aren’t our own. We don’t do whatever we want. We don’t just do what works for us, or what will benefit us. We try to do what Christ wants us to do.

## III

One of the most dramatic ways that the earth has been shaken is that death has lost its sting. You know the attitude of lots of people – you live, you die, that’s it; you become a worm farm. Get what you can from this life because this is all there is. “Eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow you die.”

But Jesus taught us, and then demonstrated for us, that death is not the end. Beyond this life we have a better life with God. Nobody knows exactly what that life is like - and most of the people who try to spell it out lack the imagination to picture how good it really is.

Not only do we have life beyond the grave with God, but that life begins here and now. When we commit ourselves to God our resurrected life begins. We live with God now, that relationship grows, we develop, and then the whole thing gets better beyond the grave.

There was a teacher in our area who contracted a rare brain cancer. During the time that this teacher dealt with her disease, she made regular stops to see the students in her class. On her last visit, just before she died, she talked with her students about how she was ready to be done with this failing body, and to be raised up with God. As much as she hated to leave her family and

friends, she was looking forward to being close to God. She made a profound impression on those students about what a different approach resurrected life is.

### **Conclusion**

In the 1950s there was an enormous earthquake in China. As a result of that earthquake a huge boulder was dislodged and tumbled down to the valley below. After the earthquake was over, workers came to assess the damage and they discovered that the earthquake had uncovered a large open space where beautiful treasures and artifacts from thousands of years ago had been stored. Because of the earthquake that great treasure was opened up and found.

A different kind of earthquake has opened a treasure to you and me.

Amen.