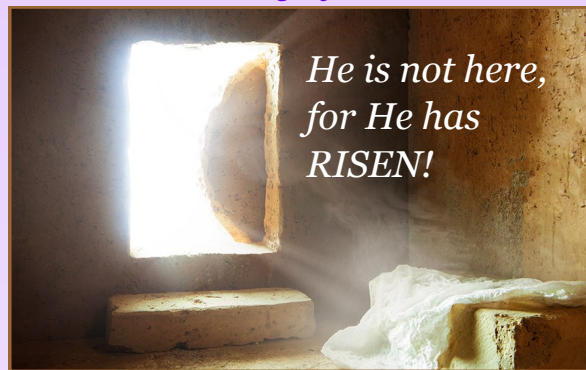


# The Journey Nears End

## "6. The Ministry of Jesus Christ"



*"There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it."*  
Matthew 28:2

When the authorities had taken every step they knew to get rid of someone and then even guarded the grave, the last thing I think they expected was to be told an angel had come to earth and rolled the heavy stone away and Jesus was no longer there. The guards were shaken. The women who had gone to the grave with some spices were told by the angel *"He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay."* They went to tell the disciples as they were told to do and as they were going they met Jesus and fell at his feet and worshipped him. Jesus told them *"Don't be afraid! Go tell my brothers to leave for Galilee, and they will see me there."*

In the meantime the guards had gone to tell the authorities that Jesus was gone

from the tomb. This really troubled them so they devised a plan. They paid to have the guards tell people that the disciples had gone by night and stolen the body while they were asleep and take the blame.

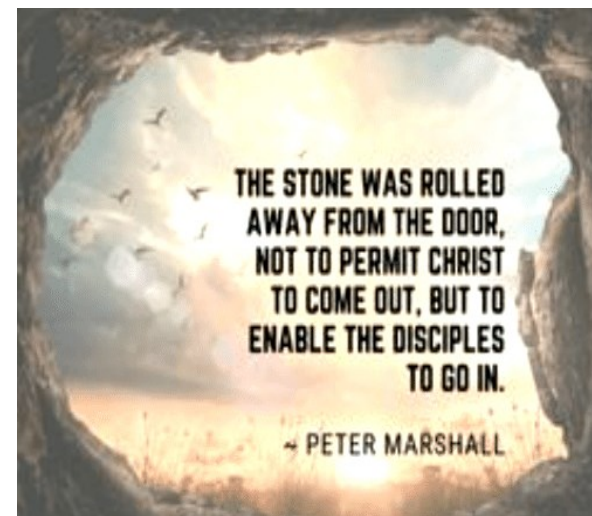
As Jesus was walking to meet the disciples he walked along with two men he met and they told him how Jesus had been crucified. They didn't recognize him. As they approached the end of their talk, they urged Jesus to stay with them. While they were eating, he took the bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then they realized it was Jesus and they got up and ran to tell the disciples. Only ten of the disciples were there at first and even they doubted. The one missing, Thomas, doubted, but then they all accepted that he had risen from the dead as he had said.

*"I will not go to heaven because I am a preacher. I am going to heaven entirely on the merit of the work of Christ."*  
Billy Graham

The time between his resurrection and his ascension in heaven has become known as the Great Forty days and so often we think that Christ didn't stay with the disciples or appear to people after the crucifixion, but he did.

The disciples received the Holy Spirit and Christ told them *"Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."* John 20:22-23 He continued to preach and especially offer encouragement and instruction to the disciples and others. One time during the forty days the disciples had gone out to fish. Early in the morning they

had not caught anything when someone from the shore asked *"Friends, haven't you any fish?"* "No" they answered. Then the man told them to throw the nets to the other side of the boat and they had so many they were hardly able to pull them ashore. Then Jesus identified himself to Peter. So they all jumped into the water and towed the fish in. Jesus had started a fire and they ate.



During the forty days, Jesus continued to teach them and explain why things had happened and how they were to continue. He told them how it had been written that the Messiah would suffer, and die, and rise on the third day. He told them there would be many changes through the forgiveness of sins and that his word would be proclaimed to all nations. He told them he was giving them what the Father had promised to help them and that they would be equipped with power from on high. He told them to stay in Jerusalem for a while before going out to teach the nations. Jesus gave a real job to the eleven disciples. His challenge to them is called "The Great Commission."



*"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*  
Matthew 28:16-20

At the end of the forty days he led them out of the city over to Bethany. Then as he blessed them he rose into heaven and they returned to Jerusalem and went to the temple to praise God. According to Mark 16:19 he was taken up and sits at the right hand of God.

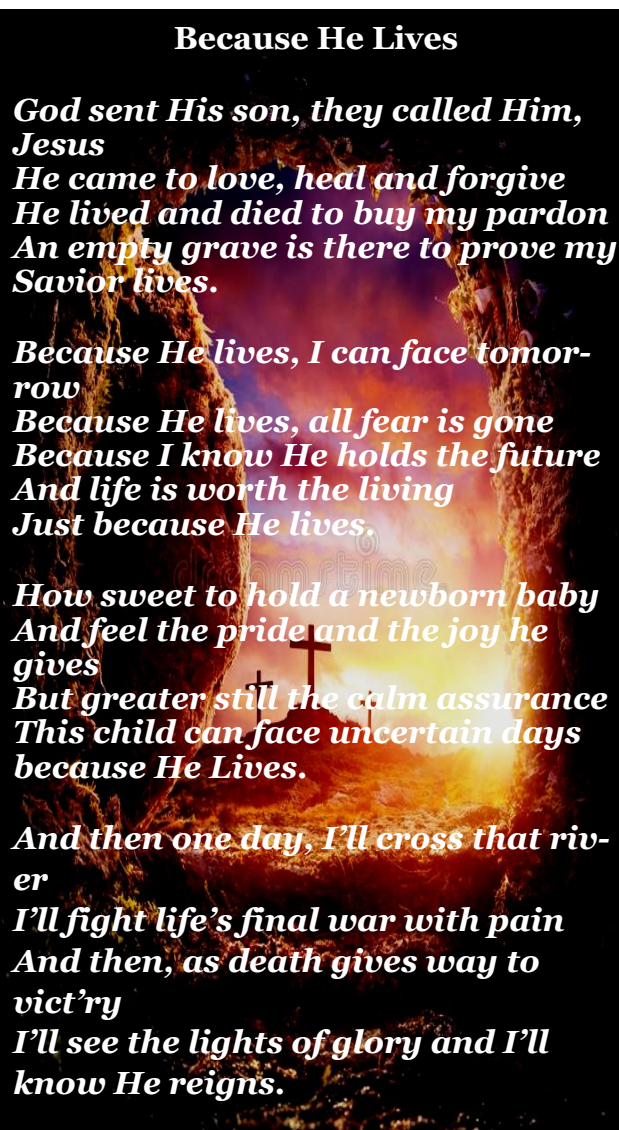


Today, we are charged as the disciples were. We have been given many gifts to help us tell others about the love of God.

While he was on earth he told the people gathered around him about a master who gave a different number of talents to his servants. It wasn't important how many each was given. The importance was if they used the talents they were given. We have all been given talents, just as the disciples were given their talents. How we use them for the glory of God is important. We are so very blessed. Christ left a wonderful kingdom and came down to earth to tell

us that the gift is ours today and always. All we have to do is accept it. It sounds pretty easy! The end of a story is also the beginning. In this oxymoron we see the end of the earthly journey of Christ, but the beginning of our story through the power of the Holy Spirit and the gift we have been given.

One of my favorite songs by Bill and Gloria Gaither tells the story .



Prayer: Lord, You defeated death and You have given us a wonderful gift of eternal life with You. Help us to accept the gift and tell others the Good News that you are waiting for us if we will only follow. Amen.

1. Why were the civil authorities so eager to get rid of Chris?
2. Why were the women going to the grave?
3. What gift did Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea give to Christ? Why?
4. Why did Christ come back from the dead and spend forty days with his followers?
5. Have you been given a gift to share?

© rgscripts  
info@rgscripts.com

