

“3rd Day is the 1st Day!”

I. **INTRO:**

A. Today has been set aside to commemorate *Freedom Sunday*.

1. Its an international event, churches committed to **Ending Modern-Day Slavery!**
 - a) **Stats:** 27 million slaves in the world (50% are children)
Human Trafficking (\$32 billion yr business. *3rd largest after drugs & weapons*)
Children exploited in sex trade every year? (2 million)
Children soldiers (300,000; 50 countries recruit children under 18; young as age 7).
100,000 lived enslaved in the U.S. presently (17,500 new victims trafficked across our borders each yr) (Another 30,000 pass thru on their way to other International destinations)
27 million slaves in the world (50% are children)
2. Churches are collectively ringing *the Freedom bell* to declare that **“They are Not For Sale; you are Not For Sale; and no one should be For Sale!”**
3. <http://www.notforsalecampaign.org>

B. **Prayer: Pray for those held captive.** Jesus came to set the captives free.

1. Apostles Creed says it so profoundly yet simply, *The 3rd day He rose again from the dead And if Christ is not risen, our faith is futile; we are still in your sins.*

C. **Intro:** In one of his lighter moments, Benjamin Franklin penned his own epitaph. He didn’t profess to be a born-again Christian, but it seems he must have been influenced by Paul’s teaching of the resurrection of the body. *Here’s what he wrote:*

1. *The Body of B. Franklin, Printer - Like the Cover of an old Book
 Its contents torn out, - And stript of its Lettering and Guilding,
 Lies here, Food for Worms, - But the Work shall not be wholly lost:
 For it will, as he believ’d, - Appear once more
 In a new & more perfect Edition, - Corrected and amended by the Author.*

D. The **crowning joy** of the resurrection. The **culmination** of belief.

1. **Why does each gospel writer report on the res? Why does John?** (20:31) **To elicit faith!**

E. Certain features are common to all 4 gospels, including the omission of any description of the actual resurrection. (ever think of that?)

1. *Passion of the Christ* - remember how Mel Gibson depicted it; **Res sequel?**

F. It was in a **garden** ages ago that *paradise was lost*, & **now** it is in a **garden** now that it would be **regained**.

1. But at this moment Mary Mag didn’t know that.

2. Her hope was dashed, her Master missing, her friend gone!
3. Her hope was Jesus. He changed her life. He had cast out 7 demons. He freed her from untold torment. He had given her life, a reason to live, a place in His kingdom, worth, dignity, understanding, compassion, love, & hope
4. Now that hope lies at the bottom of her heart. (Ken Gire; Intimate Moments w/the Savior)
5. But as **love** brought her to **the cross**, **now love** draws her to **the grave**.

II. **3RD DAY IS THE 1ST DAY!**

A. **WHAT MARY SAW & SAID!** (1-2)

- B. (1) Still dark, at a tomb, all alone, & now the tomb had been violated.
 1. Whenever I've seen a tomb opened...it's usually wrong!
 2. It's like getting something from the store & getting it home & realizing it had been opened...eeww!
 3. **Story:** Russia, rt when communism fell. Passed through a town where there was a white mausoleum, a former communist leader. Door was torn open. They had drug body out into the street & burnt it. Then torched the mausoleum
 - a) Haiti graveyard. Some not sealed yet. Some broken open.
 - b) Here Jesus' tomb had been breeched, violated.

C. (2) Mary, jumping to conclusions, has Peter & John on the run.

D. **WHAT PETER & JOHN SAW & DID!** (3-10)

- E. (7) **2 miracles here:** [1] Jesus had risen from the dead [2] A single man folded his clothes.
- F. (5,7) The position of the cloths showed they had not been unwound from Jesus' body.
 1. He had **gone out**, just as He **came in**, where the doors were shut, w/o the doors being opened(19,26).

G. **Peter** must have been thinking, *"Why would a grave robber have left the clothes in this order? Why take the body of Jesus?"*

- H. But **John** perceived that the missing body and the position of the grave clothes was **not** due to a robbery.
 1. His eyes adjusted & notices the burial wrappings made rigid by the resin from the spices. The linen cocoon lays intact on the stone slab. Intact, but hallow.
 2. He realized that Jesus had risen from the dead and had gone through the grave clothes. The butterfly was free!
 3. "The tomb was open, not to let Jesus' body out, **but** to let the disciples and the world see that He rose."

- I. There is 3 main Greek words for “**saw**”.
1. **John saw** (Βλεπο-*blepo*) A mere glance.
 2. **Peter saw** (θεωρεω - *theoreo*) To take careful notice.
 3. **John saw** (εἶδεν *A-don*)(root=*oida*) To get a mental picture, see w/understanding.
- J. Peter had more **sight**, John more **insight**.
1. John was the first to believe that Jesus was risen from the tomb even before he saw him. John was evidently proud to be able to record this great moment when he believed without seeing in contrast to Thomas (vs.29)
- K. (10) Interesting they could **see the evidence** of the resurrection, but it did not change their lives. They **needed a meeting** with the living Christ. (same today!)
- L. **HOW JESUS APPEARED!** (11-18)
- M. (12) The woman who was once possessed with demon finds herself in the presence of & conversing with angels!
1. One stands **at the head** of the stone slab; the other **at the foot**.
 2. Like the ark of the covenant in the Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle - cherubim on either end. *For this, too, is a most holy place!*
- N. (14) Unbelief blinds our eyes to the Lord’s presence.
- O. (15a) **The gardner?** - Well, maybe not far off. He is the keeper of the church.
1. At this moment, He had come into the garden to lift up *one drooping flower*.
- P. (15b) **Mary what a stud!** - Stone roller, body lifter, whatever it took.
- Q. (16) When He calls her by name, He immediately comes into **focus**.
1. **Like when I depress my shutter release ½ way down on my camera in auto-focus mode. Focus is immediate!**
- R. What a tender moment when Jesus said, *Mary!* and her recognition of Him & cry of *Rabbi!* **Is one of the emotional highlights of the entire Gospel.** (Shepherds Notes; pg.89)
- S. What did Jesus convey when He said, “**Mary**”?
1. **And He calls His sheep by name...**(Jn.10:3)
 2. **Think about it:** Jesus could have paraded through the streets of Jerusalem; He could have knocked on Pilate’s door; He could have confronted the high priest (“*I’m back!*”); **But the 1st person our resurrected Lord appears to is a woman w/o hope. And His 1st words, “why are you crying?”**

a) He doesn't shout His res from a housetop, instead quietly to a woman who grieves.
Who desperately needs to hear His voice, see His face, feel His embrace.

b) *What a Savior we serve, or rather, who serves us!* (Ken Gire)

T. (17) *Do not cling to Me* - KJV not good trans *Touch Me not* (why not?) [He asked Thomas to]

1. Is it possible for us to miss the **best** in the Lord while holding on to the **good**?
2. *What Jesus are you clinging to?* **Some** cling to the *cute lil baby Jesus* in the manger; **some** cling to the *passive well groomed surfer S.S. Jesus*; **some**, fearful of him as *Terminator Temple Destroyer*; **others**, cling to the *dead Savior on a cross*; & **some**, cling to the *living/ruling/reigning/victorious/King of Kings & Lord of Lords Jesus*.
3. Mary was not to continue *clinging* to Him, **but** was to bear His message to the apostles.

a) *This is suggestive to us...* We are not simply to **linger** about the shrine of the resurrection, **but** are **to go** declaring the fact of it!

U. (18) Mary was changed from a **mourner** to a **missionary** when she met the living Lord.

1. Jesus interrupts this precious moment by giving her a pressing errand to run. And run she does with the *1st Easter Sermon*, *She had seen the Lord*.

V. The Necessity of the Resurrection?

1. **A Testimony** to the truths of **the OT** (which had foretold it many times).
2. **A Testimony** to the truths of **Jesus' words** (for He had foretold it many times).
3. **A Vindication** of **Christ' character** (for a perfect life could not close in a cruel & shameful death).
4. **A Vindication** of **God** (for all through His life Christ had appealed to God, and, as Paul said afterwards, it would have *proved God to be false* if Christ had not been raised 1 Cor.15:15).

W. The Proofs of the Resurrection?

1. **Empty grave** - and the disappearance of the body.
2. **Disciples radically transformed** - the remarkable transformation in the disciples from gloom to gladness; despair to hope; sorrow to joy.
 - a) And this change took place only **3 days** from the event.
3. **The Church was built on the Res** - the church of Christ came into existence as a result of accepting the resurrection of the Master.
 - a) Usually a sect/cult dies after the death of its leader.
4. **Our own personal Transformations** - the influence of Christ upon **men & communities** from the time of Paul onwards.

- X. *(end)* Have you had a post-resurrection encounter with Jesus? How would I know if I did? Well, it would have had a dramatic life changing effect on your life?
1. Are you clinging to an innocent safe baby Jesus? Are you clinging to a S.S. Jesus; a cool Jesus; a flowery “*why can’t all religions just get along*” Jesus.
 2. Remember, 10 out of 11 of the original 12 apostles, went to their death because of seeing the post-res Jesus!
- Y. **Prayer:** Lord, how hard it is to **see clearly** when devastating circumstances fill our eyes w/tears. Everything gets blurry. Lord, even *You get blurry, & Your voice becomes strangely unfamiliar*. Help me to blink away my tears & unbelief.