**Responding to the Resurrection**

*But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared.****2****And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb,****3****but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.****4****While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel.****5****And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead?****6****He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee,****7****that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.”****8****And they remembered his words,****9****and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest.****10****Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles,****11****but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.****12****But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened. (Luke 24:1-12, ESV)*

Christ is risen from the dead! Blessed is the Resurrection of Christ!

It is not possible to find Jesus among the dead, neither in the past, because He has risen and is alive forever! Greetings dear brothers and sisters in Christ, as we talk today about the meaning of the Resurrection and especially our stances regarding the very event.

Jesus, after much torture and suffering, gave up His spirit on the Cross. The whole world was shaken, the veil of the Temple torn, and many dead souls were resurrected and appeared to many believers. Jesus, however, genuinely died, which is what makes His resurrection the greatest miracle that would take place as part of His mission on earth. The most important thing Jesus would do was to simply get up – to rise from the grave. It is at the moment of the meeting of the women and the empty grave when their (and by extension) our faith needs to kick in. Today we’re going to talk about our reaction or answer to the Resurrection. What is our response to this reality? Again, it is not possible to find Jesus among the dead or in the past, since He has risen from the dead and is alive forever. Let’s go into more detail…

Life’s most important response is ours when facing the Resurrection of Jesus. He had already passed through the darkest of places – the valley of the shadow of death, even. The souls of those imprisoned in Hades were waiting for His triumphant exit from there. They were waiting for the third day, because God had declared that He would rise then. From the vantage point of humanity, however, no one seemed to have believed what they had seen with their eyes. Even though the apostles and other disciples were still gathered in one place, and the fact that the Lord had told them that it was going to be this way before His resurrection, they had forgotten Jesus’ words. Oh, that forgetfulness which speaks volumes to us!

The women had the honor of seeing the empty grave first. It was the women who had the honor of spreading the good news first, and yet they also had the “honor” of being rejected first. Who were the rejectors? Why, Jesus’ own closest friends and disciples! The women, on the other hand, had to have believed to spread the news to the apostles. We know, also, that they believed because the Gospel writer says that “they remembered” Jesus’ words.

Let’s review the three responses to the Good News of Jesus’ Resurrection. The women remembered Jesus’ words; the apostles thought the whole thing was a hoax and rejected it; while Peter, not being satisfied with simple rejection, went and investigated the claims for himself.

People refuse to believe that which they don't want to believe, despite evidence. When explorers first went to Australia, they found a mammal which laid eggs; spent some time in water, some on land; had a broad, flat tail, webbed feet, and a bill like a duck. Upon their return to England, they told the populace of this, and all felt it was a hoax. They returned to Australia and found a pelt from this animal and took it back to England, but the people still felt it was a hoax. Despite the evidence, they disbelieved because they didn't want to believe.

Today, we can be part of one of the three groups noted above when it comes to faith in Christ’s Resurrection. We either remember Jesus’ words and believe, going on to sharing that joy with others, or we think the whole thing a hoax despite the innumerable pieces of evidence both within and without the Scriptures about the Resurrection. The third option is that we become the investigator, like Peter, and we examine, we investigate, we dig and uncover, going after the truth, until we have all the evidence, and then we make a decision. Believe me that whoever has decided to be part of the third category (of investigator of the Resurrection claims) has become a believer in the Resurrection instead of staying in a state of unbelief – they’ve joined the first group, that of believers.

Therefore, let us be like the women who remembered Jesus’ words and rejoice in His victory over death, spreading the hope of eternal life to others which He’s given to us. If there are doubts, however, I wish that we could be like Peter and search it out, investigate the Resurrection and study it, until our minds are at rest and our faith is (left no choice but to be) awakened.

The Lord Jesus rose from the dead, but it is up to us to remember His words and to spread them, while seeking the Lord in the case of doubts until we experience His Resurrection power personally. May the Lord meet each one of us, to solidify our faith in Him and His Resurrection.

Christ is Risen from the dead. Blessed is the Resurrection of Christ. Amen.