

Who'll Move the Stone?
(Turnpike Wesleyan - March 15, 2020)

Scripture: Mark 16:2-6

Very early on Sunday morning, just at sunrise, they came to the tomb. On the way they were discussing who would roll the stone away from the entrance to the tomb. But when they arrived, they looked up and saw that the stone--a very large one--had already been rolled aside. So, they entered the tomb, and there on the right sat a young man clothed in a white robe. The women were startled, but the angel said, "Do not be so surprised. You are looking for Jesus, the Nazarene, who was crucified. He isn't here! He has been raised from the dead! Look, this is where they laid his body."

Introduction

What giant stone stands in your way? What stops you from becoming what you want to become? You certainly have dreams, hopes, and goals; but something stops you.

Could it be not enough money? Not enough time? Maybe. But I would guess that underneath it all some very large spiritual thing stands in your way.

There is that one huge issue in your life, that one defining moment. You cannot get around it. It seems to shape everything. It stops everything. It looms large. It's a huge, heavy stone, and no one has been able to move it.

The Stone of living with secrets.

Some people live with very painful secrets – the knowledge that back in college you cheated your way through that final examination; the memory of that night, away from home, that you let the passion of the moment rule; the gnawing fear that grips your heart at tax time because in the past you lied on your tax form. Unresolved sin ... eating at the heart while you keep it a secret!

The terror is not only that we feel ashamed of ourselves, but even worse, that we spend so much energy hiding these things from others.

Friends, the cross of Jesus Christ sends a message to every one of us who is living with a secret. The message is that God cares about us. God loves us unconditionally. The message of the cross is that God loves us even with our secrets and our shame and our sin.

Christ knows our faults and instead of condemning us, He loves us to the end! He has already unveiled our secrets, but instead of writing us off, He opens His arms to us! We can let go of our secrets! There is a Christ Who cares.

The Stone of fear and suspicion.

I have seen people with such potential. People who had the talent and the skills to do all kinds of things. But because they did not trust anybody, they clamped down on all that potential and did almost nothing.

I have also seen people who felt that they were the only ones who could do anything right. Nobody else can do it. And because they did not trust others, they blocked their own progress, they put a stone in their own path.

When we create a suspicious environment, when we make a hostile climate, our fear not only tells others they are no good; our fear also holds us back from fulfilling all that God wants for us. Fear puts death in the heart.

We will go to extremes to protect things that don't even need protecting. We will seal the stones of our hearts and squeeze out all the joy. Who will help us? Who will free us? We need fulfillment; we need to hope.

Wrap Up

Listen, when Jesus Christ came forth from the grave, it meant that the old dismal secret called sin was defeated. It does not have to have any power over us. Whatever we've done, whatever secrets our hearts still harbor, it doesn't matter. It can be dealt with. The stone is rolled away! The living Christ has the leverage to move the stone of secrecy. It can be gone, why? Because He is alive!

When Jesus Christ came forth from the grave, it meant that all our suspicious could be conquered. When Jesus Christ came from the grave, it meant that all that stuff we fear about other people can just go in the trash. There are no more enemies!

The worst enemy we have is death, and, guess what? Death, you've lost too! You're cancelled. Not even you have any authority over us. The stone is rolled away. The living Christ has the leverage to move the stone of suspicion. It's gone! He is alive!