

Sunrise Service Sermon
Easter Sunday – April 4, 2010

"AS SAFE AS YOU KNOW HOW"
Matthew 27:62-66

For months the chief priests and Pharisees, who were the rulers of Israel, had been stalking Jesus, and they had at last attained His execution at the hands of Pilate, the Roman governor. Jesus had died on the day before Passover and had been quickly buried. In any other situation that would have been the end of the story. But the leaders remembered that Jesus had foretold his resurrection, and therefore they came to Pilate with the request that he make Jesus' tomb secure.

READ Matthew 27:62-66

What did Pilate have in mind when he told the leaders, "Go and make the tomb as secure as you know How"?

Matthew Henry suggested two things: Either Pilate was laughing at the priests for their folly - - imagine setting a guard to watch a dead man! or, more likely, he was mocking them for their fears.

It was as though he was saying, "Give it your best shot; but if He is God, He will rise in spite of you and all your guards."

* Nothing the Pharisees could do or the Roman authorities did, could stop the resurrection of Jesus. No trial, no crucifixion, no seal, no guard, could stop the power of God as He triumphed over death.

* Saul tried his best as a Pharisee to stop the growth of the church. He led Christians away in chains. But, on the road to Damascus, he encountered a vision of the risen Christ. Jesus said to him, "Saul, why do you persecute me?"

Saul had tried to secure the world against Christianity and the Church, and Christ convicted him of his sin and he became known as Paul, history's greatest missionary. The power of Christ could not be stopped.

*The Roman government under Nero, Diocletian, and other emperors sought to stamp out Christianity, to make the world secure against it. BUT...No beatings, No murders, no humiliating persecution, No instrument of torture, could overcome the growth of the kingdom of God. The power of Christ could not be stopped.

*Nicky Cruz, gang leader in New York City did everything he could to oppose the work of David Wilkerson, a minister who worked in the ghettos of New York. Cruz wanted to make his gang secure against the invasion of Christianity. He intimidated Wilkerson, tried to run him out of town, even attacked him, but he failed. Nicky Cruz eventually gave his life to the Lord. His life story became a movie: "The Cross and the Switchblade" and today He leads his own ministry to the gangs of New York. 50 years of ministry. The power of Christ could not be stopped.

*Communism had a stranglehold over all of Russia for decades. Religion was considered the "opiate of the people", therefore Christianity was forbidden. Communism had to make secure against the infiltration of such indoctrination. But, the church wouldn't die. In homes, in secret meeting places, even in work camps, the church began to thrive. Communism eventually collapsed in Russia, and the church exploded. Today, the most dramatic growth in the church is throughout Russia and the former cold war countries. The power of Christ could not be stopped.

*Today, there will probably be someone in one of our services who is trying to make their life as secure as they can, without Christ. Somehow, they have managed to crowd out Christ in their busy life. He seems to be sealed away.

Sometimes we dedicated Christians seem to put Christ in a seemingly secure place. We don't give Him much time in our lives. We have seemingly more important things to do.

We don't read our Bibles very much. We keep them securely tucked away. We would rather curl up with a book, than be convicted by the

Bible. Many times we would rather find security in watching a TV program, or turn on the computer, rather than turn on our lives through prayer. Maybe we are often guilty of trying to make our lives as secure as we can against the power of Christ.

Go ahead! Make your life as secure as you can outside of the power of Christ and His church.

Attach your seals! Post your guards! Erect your barricades.

But, I am afraid it will not be enough. Jesus has broken seals before. He has scattered countless guards. What will you do when a voice breaks open from heaven and confronts you: "Saul, David.....why do you persecute me?"

What will you do when the tomb springs open and Jesus of Nazareth confronts you in resurrected splendor.

Some of you have that false security today. And against that brick wall you have erected, you can hear the words of Jesus:

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock, and if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me." (Rev. 3:20)

What will you do when His power becomes greater than yours?

What will you do when you realize His power can overcome any barrier you have placed before Him.

I'll tell you what I would do. I would open the door of my heart. I would give up fighting. I would lay down my seals and stones and guards and feverish activity. I would lay aside my sins. I would fall down before Him and say, as Thomas said,

"My Lord and My God".

Then He will make you His, and direct your steps, and replace your false security with His eternal peace. And your life will never be the same! Praise to the Risen Lord who breaks down barriers and sets us free!