

Read

Hebrews 9:11–28

Consider

Resurrection is the most important miraculous act of God in human history as it turns death into life. Without the resurrection of Jesus Christ, what we are doing and what we are believing in is in vain. As Apostle Paul said “And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.” (1Cor. 15:14). However, in our Christian faith, we often talk about the Cradle (The birth of Jesus), the Cross (The substitutionary atonement of Jesus), and the Crown (the triumphant return of Jesus, Second Coming). What about the Resurrection and the Empty Tomb? How does it relate to our faith journey?

In Hebrews Chapter 9, the author spent the first half (vv. 1-10) briefly describing the regulation of the Old Testament worship and the setting of the tabernacle where the place of the worship sacrifice happened. I would like to highlight this which we will revisit later. In v5 (ESV), it says “Above it (The Ark of Covenant) were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat.” The mercy seat was the place where the blood was sprinkled and the also where God met the humanity (Lev. 16:15, Ex. 25:22) Then the second half of Chapter 9, the author once again pointed out that Jesus is the High priest (chapter 8) but this time, the focus is on the better tabernacle. Christ did not enter the man-made sanctuary once a year like the other high priests but entered into heaven once. He suffered and sacrificed Himself once to put away our sin. (Hebrews 9:24-26)

Up to now, you might understand the role of Jesus as the High Priest and He sacrificed once and for all. But still, how does it relate to the resurrection of Jesus? Let us read a portion of the resurrection narrative from the Gospel of John 20.

Then the disciples went back to their homes, but Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" (John 20:10-13)

The disciples heard that Jesus' dead body was taken out from the tomb by someone. The bloody linen which wrapped Jesus' body remained there but Jesus' body was gone, and the tomb was empty. The disciples believed Jesus' body was indeed stolen. Mary Magdalene stood outside of the tomb crying. The scripture said Mary saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. Imagine this picture for a

moment and compare Hebrews 9:5 with a more detailed description from Exodus 25:20 (ESV) “The cherubim shall spread out their wings above, overshadowing the mercy seat with their wings, their faces one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubim be.” The resurrection narrative tells us that Jesus Himself is the **Mercy Seat**. The blood was sprinkled there but He did not meet with people inside the tomb. He had resurrected and went out to meet people. Those who met the resurrected Jesus were transformed: Mary Magdalene, the disciples, the apostle Paul, and many others including all who are walking the faith journey with Christ. The Mercy Seat is gone, no more blood is needed. The Mercy Seat is resurrected alive and dwelling with us. He wants to meet with us at any time and any place. In the Gospel of John 1:14

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

“Dwell” in original Greek is “To Tabernacle” or “To Tent”. Word became flesh and to tabernacle with us. And through the Resurrection narrative, the Mercy Seat became alive and to tabernacle with us.

With all things God has done for us in Jesus, we should all yearn for meeting Jesus and be joyful to be transformed

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:1-2)

Rev. Julian Wong

Pray

Lord Jesus Christ, thank you for your mercy towards us. Thank you for your love and your desire and determination to dwell among us through your incarnation and resurrection. You have indeed risen and are alive. I pray that your Holy Spirit will continue to transform me into your image to reflect your glory. Let my life be a living sacrifice to serve and worship the resurrected King Jesus.

D i v i n g D e e p e r

Go deeper by reading Exodus 25:10-20, Hebrews 9:1-10 on the settings of the Ark of Covenant, then go to John 20:1-18 resurrection narrative.

Meditate on the work of Jesus on the Cross and how significant is the empty tomb.

Imagine yourself is the Mary Magdalene and seeing two angels with the bloody linen cloth. What will be your instant response?

When Jesus said “Mary”, she suddenly recognized Him. You know Jesus remembers all our names and he wants us to have a personal encounter with Him. What stop us to have a personal counter with Jesus?

How can we live closer **WITH GOD** in our lives?

How are we being **TRANSFORMED** to be more like Christ?

How is the Holy Spirit empowering us to imitate Christ in what we **DO** this week?