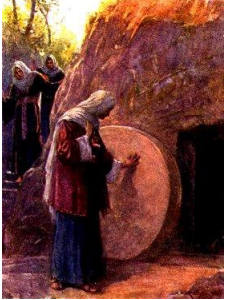


What Never Happens Happened! The Miracle of the Resurrection

Have you ever thought about what it means to be alive? That may seem like a funny question, since you will not be reading or listening to this unless you are



alive. In fact, I can promise you that if you are thinking about what it means to be alive, you definitely *are* alive. Any person who thinks is alive, but that doesn't mean that if you stop thinking for a second, you are not alive. Anything that eats is alive, but it doesn't mean that if you stop eating for a minute, you aren't alive. Anything that breathes is alive, but . . . you've guessed what I'm going to say next, haven't you? Holding your breath for a little while doesn't mean you stop being alive.

When you start thinking carefully about what it means to be alive, it seems very complicated. But I know that *you* know what it means to be alive without really thinking hard about it. And you know what it means when we say that someone is dead, too, right? It means they *used to be* alive, but aren't anymore. If you step on a bug in the garage, for example, and thoroughly squish it, you know it is dead. It is not going to eat or breathe any more, or do any of the creepy things bugs do.

Sadly, sometimes people we know die. And once they die, they won't get up and do things that living people do. The part of that person we can see on the outside (the body) is not connected to the real inside person who thought and loved (the soul) any longer. It's not something that can be fixed by doctors or medicine. Their body-life is over, but we know their soul-life goes on forever. And so we say goodbye with a funeral and bury the body of the person who died.

Did you know that a body-death just like this happened to Jesus?

On the day Jesus would die the men who ruled Israel tied Jesus up and handed Him to the governor, and accused Him of things He didn't do. To please the crowd, the Roman governor ordered Jesus to be flogged (whipped with a horrible leather whip) and then he handed Him over to be killed by Roman soldiers.

The soldiers were so mean to Jesus that it's hard for us to think about it. They put a crown on His head made of pointy thorns. They mocked Him, saying

“Hail King of the Jews!” and they spat on Him, hit him, pulled on His beard and worse yet, they laughed at His pain.

Finally, they led Him to a hill called Golgotha. They nailed His hands and His feet to a wooden cross and gambled for His clothing while they waited for Him to die. His mom and other friends stood by helplessly watching as the One they loved suffered on the cross.

Finally, it was over. Jesus said, “It is finished” and breathed one last time, and then He died. His body-life had ended. Can you imagine how sad His mom and His friends were? They thought that Jesus would never talk to them ever again. They got ready to say goodbye and bury Jesus.

A rich man named Joseph asked Pilate for permission to take care of Jesus' body. He took it to a new tomb that he'd bought for himself and placed the body inside. Mary Magdalene and Jesus' aunt Mary watched as Joseph rolled the stone to block the door of the tomb, and then they all left. I imagine that they cried and prayed all night long. Pilate posted soldiers to guard the tomb to make sure no one could steal Jesus' body.

On Sunday morning, the two Marys came back to look at the place Jesus was buried. The Bible says that there was an earthquake, caused by an Angel of the Lord rolling the stone away from the door of Jesus' tomb. The soldiers standing guard saw the angel, whose appearance was bright like lightning. They shook with fear and fainted—big strong Roman soldiers fell over in fear! But the women didn't faint. The angel told them, “Don't be afraid! Jesus has risen, just as he said He would!”

Risen? When someone dies, do they come back to life again? No. But Jesus did! That's the miracle of resurrection. Something that never happens HAPPENED! Jesus was alive! The two Marys ran to tell the disciples the good news.

The resurrection wasn't just good news for Jesus' friends and family way back then. It's good news for us, too. If you are trusting Jesus, when it's your turn to die, you have nothing to fear. For a little while your spirit will live with Jesus in Heaven, and then later, Jesus will raise your body just like the Holy Spirit raised His. The Bible says that “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye” our old bodies will be alive again and made new—they will become bodies that never die, just like the one Jesus has now. Isn't that good news?