**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

***Mother of Jesus and Women at The Cross, Resurrection and Empty Tomb***

May 12th, In the Year of Our Lord 2024

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(All Scripture is from the New American Standard Bible, unless otherwise noted.)

Today, we celebrate Mother’s Day and recognize God’s gift to us all. God, our Father, planned from the beginning of the creation to have the men and women He created come together and form families. God is the One to create life and established the rules for sustaining life. It is under God’s life-providences that we have peace with Him and our neighbor. . . there is not any other way to attain peace with God.

**Genesis 1:27-28** 27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

**Genesis 5:2** He created them male and female, and He blessed them and named them Man in the day when they were created.

**Job 33:4** "The Spirit of God has made me, And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

**Genesis 2:7** Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

**Genesis 2:21-24** 21 So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. 22 The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. 23 The man said, "This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man." 24 For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

God’s plan to perpetuate life on earth through His covenant bond of marriage. . . uniting husbands and wives…is the only way to attain the fullest capacities of life’s grace, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. . . in raising children. We recognize these greatest of human attributes to be highlighted by God in Galatians 5:22-23.

Starting with Eve, mothers humbled themselves to God and gave thanks for being able to bring life into the world. Eve recognized that it is God who makes life possible. We read that when Eve came to be with child, in the names of Cain and Seth, she gave recognition to God.

**Genesis 4:1** Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, "I have gotten a manchild with the help of the LORD."

**Genesis 4:25** Adam had relations with his wife again; and she gave birth to a son, and named him Seth, for, she said, "God has appointed me another offspring in place of Abel, for Cain killed him."

Throughout the Old Testament, we see God intervening in that He providentially told Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 16) they would have a son in advanced age. God intervenes with Elkanah and Hannah to bear their son Samuel who would become God’s prophet (1 Samuel 1). God tells Jeremiah, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations." (Jeremiah 1:5). Jeremiah became one of the major prophets in the Old Testament era. His name means “may Jehovah exalt” or “exalted of the Lord”. We learn of Jeremiah’s father’s name to be a priest of Anathoth named Hilkiah (Jeremiah 1:1). Jeremiah 15:10 makes a reference to Jeremiah’s mother giving him life, but not by name. “Alas, my mother, that you gave me birth, a man with whom the whole land strives and contends! I have neither lent nor borrowed, yet everyone curses me.” This reference has many relativity applications. . . meaning that God is the author of life and has intent for life.

Then we see that God intervened again with the married couple Zacharias and Elizabeth (Luke 1:7,13: barren wife) and with the betrothed couple Mary and Joseph. “The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35).

From these few but very important observations about God creating life, and then, at His choosing, intervening in the affairs of men. . . we see the Incarnation came to be through God’s plan of bringing life into this fallen world through the same means He had planned from the beginning, through the sacred life of mothers, who He created in His image.

***Mothers at Jesus’ Resurrection and Tomb***

Biblical scholars accurately report the active role of mothers in Jesus’ life particularly present at the Resurrection and the empty tomb. Being present at the empty tomb also made them eyewitnesses to the Resurrection appearance of Jesus.

**Mary**: Jesus’ mother (John 19:25-27; Matthew 13:57; Mark 3:21, 31; 6:4)

Mary had four other sons: James, Joseph/Joses, Simon, Judas/ Jude.

James and Jude wrote two of the twenty-seven letters that make-up the New Testament.

(Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:2-3; Acts 1:14;

1 Corinthians 9:4-5; Galatians 1:19).

**Mary**: Mother of James the Less, (Matthew 27:55-56, 61; Mark 15:40, 47)

**Mary**: Wife of Clopas (John 19:25)

**Salome**: Mother of apostles James and John, sons of Zebedee.

(Matthew 27:56; Mark 15:40, 16:1)

Additional women at the tomb **Joanna** (wife of Chuza**), Mary Magdalene.**

**Jesus’ Resurrection Appearances**

After the Resurrection, Jesus made several appearances to many people in addition to the disciples. In Mark’s Gospel, Mary Magdalene leads the list of women (Mary the mother of James, Salome) who came to Jesus’ tomb to anoint Him (Mark 16:1) and saw the Resurrected Jesus. Additionally, Joanna is named in Luke 24:10 as one of the women to discover Jesus’ empty tomb.

**Matthew 27:55** tells us that at Jesus’ Cross; “Many women were there looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee while ministering to Him.” Concerning the Resurrection, Luke also records the following . . .

**Luke 24:9-10** 9 and returned from the tomb and reported all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. 10 Now they were Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James; also the other women with them were telling these things to the apostles. (See also Luke 24:22)

All four Gospels have narratives detailing the Resurrection and appearances of Jesus Christ. Mark’s Gospel writes the shortest narrative detailing the Resurrection appearances of Jesus (Mark 16). Mark identifies three women by name: Mary Magdalene, Mary mother of James and Salome (Mark 16:1) as the first eyewitnesses to the empty tomb and the Resurrection of Jesus. Matthew, Luke and John also identify women to be first at Jesus’ tomb (Matthew 28:1; Luke 23:54-56; John 20:1).

This is significant due to women in the 1st c. patriarchal culture being viewed as not credible witnesses and therefore not trustworthy to accurately make a report. So, the women should have been left out of all the Gospel reports of the empty tomb and the Resurrection, if Matthew, Mark, Luke and John wanted to be accepted by a severely patriarchal society. The only response to the women’s report is that it has to be true.

I see God’s orchestration of women in placing them as His first eyewitnesses to the empty tomb, Resurrection and first appearance of the risen Jesus to be His providential intervention in the affairs of fallen humanity. This was prophesied through God’s prophet Joel about 600 years before the Incarnation. Luke records Peter’s sermon in **Acts 2:16-21,** which contains Joel’s prophecy.

**16** but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: (Joel 2:28-32)

**17** 'AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS,' God says, 'THAT I WILL POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT ON ALL MANKIND; AND YOUR **SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS** SHALL PROPHESY, AND YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS, AND YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS; (Joel 2:28)

**18** EVEN ON MY BONDSLAVES, **BOTH MEN AND WOMEN**, I WILL IN THOSE DAYS POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT And they shall prophesy.

**19** 'AND I WILL GRANT WONDERS IN THE SKY ABOVE AND SIGNS ON THE EARTH BELOW, BLOOD, AND FIRE, AND VAPOR OF SMOKE. (Joel 2:30)

**20** 'THE SUN WILL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS AND THE MOON INTO BLOOD, BEFORE THE GREAT AND GLORIOUS DAY OF THE LORD SHALL COME. (Joel 2:31)

**21** **'AND IT SHALL BE THAT EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.'** (Joel 2:32)

**Gospel of Mark**

Mark reports that the women were greeted by a young man [assumed to be an angel] wearing a white robe who advised them that Jesus the Nazarene who had been crucified had risen. The women were also instructed to go and tell the disciples to meet Jesus in Galilee just as He had told them previously (Mark 14:28, Matthew 26:32) before He was crucified.

Regarding this last reference, after the Last Supper, Jesus and the disciples went to the Mount of Olives when He told the disciples that they would all fall away; 'I WILL STRIKE DOWN THE SHEPHERD, AND THE SHEEP SHALL BE SCATTERED.' (Mark 14:25 – 28). With this statement, Jesus demonstrated His divine love in that even though He knew they would all fall away He still instructed them to meet Him in Galilee after He rose from the tomb. It was at this time Peter boldly stated he would not deny Jesus even if he had to die with Jesus. It is in John’s Gospel we read that Jesus restores Peter by asking him three times, “Simon, son of John, do you love Me more that these?” (John 21:15-17).

**Gospel of Matthew**

**Women There When Stone Rolled Against the Tomb**

**Matthew 27:59-61** 59 And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60 and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the entrance of the tomb and went away. 61 And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the grave.

**Women First at Jesus’ Empty Tomb**

**Matthew 28:1** Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave.

**Women first to receive report from angel who had rolled the stone away**

**Matthew 28:5-7** The angel said to the women,

"Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. 6 "He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying. 7 "Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going ahead of you into Galilee, there you will see Him; behold, I have told you."

**Just as the women had reported, Jesus met the disciples at Galilee**

**Matthew 28:16-20** 16 But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated. 17 When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some were doubtful. 18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying,

"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

**Gospel of Luke**

**Women First at Jesus’ Empty Tomb**

**Luke 23:55-56; 24:1-10** Now the women who had come with Him out of Galilee followed, and saw the tomb and how His body was laid. 56 Then they returned and prepared spices and perfumes. And on the Sabbath, they rested according to the commandment

Luke 24:10 Now they were Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James; also the other women with them were telling these things to the apostles.

**The two men on the road to Emmaus also accurately report the eyewitness testimony of the women.**

**Luke 24:22-24** 22 "But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning, 23 and did not find His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive.

24 "Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said; but Him they did not see."

**Gospel of John**

**Jesus’ Mother at the Cross**

**John 19:25-26** Therefore the soldiers did these things. But standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" (John 19:25-26)

**Women First at Jesus’ Empty Tomb**

**John 20:1 -2**  Now on the first *day* of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone *already* taken away from the tomb. 2 So she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him."

**John 20:11- 18 Mary Magdalene, at the tomb, talked to two angels and to Jesus, who she thought at first was a gardener. Mary goes and tell the disciples**

11 But Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping; and so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb; 12 and she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying. 13 And they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him."

14 When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. 15 Jesus said to her,

"Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said to Him, "Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away."

16 Jesus said to her,

"Mary!" She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" (which means, Teacher).

17 Jesus said to her,

"Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.'"

18 Mary Magdalene came, announcing to the disciples,

"I have seen the Lord," and that He had said these things to her. (Jn. 20:11-18 NAU)

**John records that Jesus did meet the disciples again just as the women accurately reported that He would.**

**John 21:1** After these things Jesus manifested Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias,

**Summation**

I refer back to Joel 2 and see that God’s providential plan does not leave anyone out. I mean. . .out of the offering and fulfilling His plan of salvation. In fulfillment of God’s prophesy through Joel, "It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions. "Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days (Joel 2:28-29). This verse means that God will use everyone who surrenders to Him to witness His salvation. God inspired each Gospel writer to chronicle complimentary reports of all the women who ministered with Jesus in the ministry years and to Him at the Cross. They are not all named every time. . . but the cumulative picture is overwhelming in highlighting the women’s contribution.

Therefore, it is obvious that God did not keep His witness to be solely retained by the disciples. With this said… the disciples were not first to the empty tomb of Jesus or the first to receive a report from an angel about Jesus’ resurrection or where to meet Him. The women were not looking to be first but they were there serving the Lord at the Cross, sealing of the tomb and first to witness the Resurrection and first appearances of Jesus.

**Matthew 20:16** "So the last shall be first, and the first last."

**Mark 9:35-37**

35 Sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them,

"If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all."

36 Taking a child, He set him before them, and taking him in His arms, He said to them,

37 "Whoever receives one child like this in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me."

**AMEN**