

Prayers and blessings be upon you, my Brothers and Sisters of D. G. Wesley Allen Council of Deliberation and Annie P. Rogers State Grand Assembly.

Last week, we met in the city of Cary, N.C. to celebrate the 17th Annual Council of Deliberation. We had a great time, as always, and the meeting was a great success. Today, we thank God for all of His blessings, most important, for His Son Jesus, who died for us out on Calvary. They put Him in the grave. But on the third morning, He got up with all power in His hands. The tomb is empty, and Jesus is alive.

What is the basic message of the empty tomb? What does the resurrection of Jesus from the dead have to say to us? Is there anything that the resurrection can tell us that can help us for living in our days? I think I hear some tomb talk. I think I hear a full testimony from an empty tomb. Yes, my brothers and sisters, I think I hear the resurrection making a clear and distinct declaration. Join me now, if you will, not for some graveyard gossip, but to hear the testimony of the tomb.

The resurrection declared some things. The resurrection is the heart of the Christian message. When Jesus was alive His enemies were the Pharisees. The Pharisees hated Jesus because Jesus attacked hypocrisy. But after the death of Jesus, the great enemy of the church was not the Pharisees, but rather the Sadducees. For the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection. The center and heart of what the apostles preached was the very idea and fact that Jesus rose from the dead. One scholar describing the Sadducees said their name defined them, they were sad you see. So, when you don't believe in the resurrection, you are sad-you-see. These Sadducees opposed the early Christians.

The intellect of Greece often scoffed and laughed at early Christians because of the preaching of the resurrection. If you are a student of the scriptures, you will remember when Paul went to Athens. He was invited to Mars Hill, the place where the intelligent folk of Greece gathered to examine philosophy, ideas, and new concepts. Paul went to Mars Hill and preached about Jesus, and they gave him a hearing. They were fascinated by what he had to say, until he said, "God raised Jesus from the dead." The Bible says they laughed at him, and said we will hear the babbling at another time. The notion was that as long as you don't speak about the resurrection, intellectually you are acceptable. As long as you don't speak about the resurrection religiously you are acceptable. But when you speak about the miracle of the resurrection, you become repugnant, and men must reject you.

I am glad to be a member of the repugnant church because we believe and announce the resurrection of Jesus. For without the resurrection, there is no salvation. Thank God for Jesus and His resurrection. It is not a crucified victim that we worship on Easter morning, but a risen, resurrected Lord.

May God bless and keep you and your families,

Samuel J. Cornelius, 33°
ILL. Grand Prior