

## HEARTBEATS Staying Connected 4/18/2022

Dear Friends in Christ,

***ONE AT ONE*** – *Every day this week beginning on Tuesday, April 19 you are encouraged to pray for one minute at one o'clock. This week, pray for those who do not yet believe the good news of Jesus' resurrection. Ask God to send the Holy Spirit and open the hearts and minds of those who doubt. Pray that God will give you opportunity to witness to your own belief in the resurrection.*

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How do we know Jesus really rose from the dead? Certainly, we confess it and say we believe it. But how do we know? Well, there are some logical arguments to support the claim that might be of help to consider. And they have to do with Jesus' body.

Matthew's gospel tells us that there were soldiers assigned to guard the tomb after Jesus' body was placed inside. A seal—melted wax with the governor's stamp—was placed over the stone that closed the tomb. The assignment of these guards was to make sure that Jesus' followers did not steal His body and claim that He had been resurrected. But when the women came to the tomb, it was opened, and the body was gone. What happened?

One possibility is that the Romans took the body. After all, they were guarding the tomb. Might they have taken the body to prevent it being taken by others? Yet, if the tomb was sealed and guards placed, that would have been enough to prevent theft. Additionally, when the claims of resurrection started to be made, why didn't they just produce His body to show that Jesus was indeed dead. The answer? They didn't have His body.

Another option is that the Jewish leaders took the body of Jesus. They feared that the followers of Jesus would secure His body and then assert that He had been resurrected just as He claimed would happen. That's why they went to Pilate and asked for guards to be placed on the tomb. But maybe, just to be sure, they took the body themselves to protect it from the disciples. Why then, however, didn't they show His dead body when people began to alleged that He had been seen? They didn't have His body either.

There is one more possibility. Could Jesus' followers have taken His body, hidden it, and then claimed that He had risen. After all, this is what the Pharisees and priests feared would happen. And they would not have shown the body because that would have ended their claim to the resurrection. But if they took His body, if they knew He was dead, why were so many of them be willing to die to protect this claim. One or even a few might have gone to their death rather than reveal that Jesus truly was dead. Yet, it seems impossible that so many would die for what they knew to be a lie. The conclusion? They didn't have the body of Jesus because He was risen and alive.

According to biblical testimony, more than 550 people claimed to have seen Jesus alive during the forty days following His burial. Scholars say this is far too many to support an allegation of mass hallucination. So many people witnessed to the resurrection of Jesus that it seems highly improbable that this could not be true. There is one best, most logical conclusion that we can make from all of this: Jesus was resurrected and indeed was alive. Hallelujah!

In Christ's love,  
Pastor Jeffrey