

In the account of the resurrection,
we find examples for leaders today

Responding to Victory

By Gary York

We all like it when a story begins tragically but ends victoriously. Several months ago we were heartsick when the news broke that miners in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, were trapped hundreds of feet below the ground. As a daring rescue attempt was launched, most feared the worst. We'd seen it before. Few ever survive in similar situations.

Excitement prevailed on July 28, 2002, when all of the workers were retrieved with few injuries. Many called that victory a miracle, and I suppose it's OK to say it was. But it pales in comparison to the resurrection of Jesus.

The historicity of Jesus' resurrection is as valid as His birth, and it strongly impacts every person of faith, including those who lead God's redemptive community, the church. Follow the story line with me and note the responses of those who come eyeball to eyeball with the risen Christ.

As resurrection day dawns we find Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James; they had come to the grave with embalming ingredients. They expected to find Jesus in the grave. I am sure they wondered how they would remove the huge stone covering the entrance of the tomb as they made their way toward it. When they arrived an earthquake and the presence of an angel who moved the stone greeted them.

The angel's appearance was striking. The Bible says "His face shone like lightning" (Matthew 28:3*). I have no experiences with earth-



©Chuck Perry

The Garden Tomb in Jerusalem.

quakes, but I relate to lightning. Thunderstorms on the Illinois prairie where I live are not for the faint of heart. A couple years ago lightning struck our house, shooting sparks from the TV cable across the bedroom. I'm not a person who responds to the unexpected with panic or hysteria, but that moment brought me as close to hysteria as I

ever want to be.

The purpose of the angel's countenance wasn't to terrify the women, however, but to confirm the character and holiness of God.

"The angel spoke to the women. 'Don't be afraid!' he said. 'I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He isn't here! He has been raised from the dead, just as he said would happen. Come, see where his body was lying. And now, go quickly and tell his disciples he has been raised from the dead'" (Matthew 28:5-7). The women hurried from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and

raced to inform the disciples.

Submit to Truth

When these women heard the truth they promptly gave themselves to it. Three times they heard the announcement of the resurrection, and their fascination and astonishment

Continued on next page



turned to proclamation. These ladies were highly visible during the Lord's ministry and measurably influential. Once they understood the truth, they quickly submitted to it with enthusiasm.

If you are wearing the vest of leadership, would you describe yourself as one who is quick to comply with biblical truth? Or would you describe yourself as one who lags behind, overly slow to conform, resistant to change?

If it is the latter, may I be candid? You are like a sea anchor to the church you lead. The church desperately needs and wants to follow those who accurately handle the Scripture, demonstrate consistent submission to it, and exude confidence as they do so.

Remember this: the faster you grasp and comply with all that comes from the Lord in Scripture, the more pronounced will be His work in you and the more effectual will be your leadership in the church.

Spontaneous in Worship

As these women hastened from the tomb to find the other disciples and declare the resurrection, they ran directly into Jesus.

"Greetings," He said. His voice was warm, courteous, genuine, and relaxed. He didn't do a victory dance and give "high-fives" to everyone.

Why was He so casual? I want to suggest that it's not because the resurrection was trivial. It's not because Jesus was trying to remain unnoticed. Rather, it was because Jesus was an everyday kind of friend. Though He is royalty in every sense of the word, Jesus also is common. He is user-friendly. He is available. He wants to be a part of our lives, to live with us and interact with us—to do all the things that great friends do

together, and more.

However, when these ladies recognized He was the risen Lord, they knew worship was the proper response, and without hesitation or reservation, they gave it. Their worship was spontaneous!

When you come into the presence of the Lord, how quick are you to express worship? I think that's difficult for the vast majority of us. I don't think we have a strong understanding of worship, what it is and how it is done. Our worship is a struggle, certainly not spontaneous.

Anything leaders do for the church ought to have a spontaneous expression of worship around it.

Very few church leaders would describe an elders' meeting as a worship experience. Average board members come together to handle "the business of the church," and never perceive it to be cradled in worship. I want to strongly suggest it should be diametrically different than that. Leaders should always be looking straight into the eyes of Jesus, allowing every expression of their leadership to be enveloped with worship—hiring, vision-casting, budgeting, shepherding, church discipline, Bible study, prayer, staff evaluation, building construction, or personnel issues. Anything leaders do for the church ought to have a spontaneous expression of worship around it.

Surrender to Obedience

The angel said to these women, "Go quickly and tell his disciples he has been raised from the dead." They obeyed! Jesus said to them, "Go tell my brothers to leave for Galilee, and they will see me there." Again, they

obeyed! The disciples bolted for the mountain where Jesus had instructed them to go.

As they regrouped on the hillside, Jesus laid out the plan for their role in His ministry. "I have been given complete authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:18-20).

Acts 2 gives the record of the disciples' obedience, and their effectiveness as a result. In less than six months the number of disciples grew from a handful to multiple thousands.

Regardless of the organization, leaders always set the standard of behavior. Patterns at the leadership level create patterns for the first-time volunteer. That's certainly true in the church. For the church to be marked by obedience, leaders must model it. Obedience is caught more than taught.

At the resurrection of Jesus, these leaders offered a model to inspire church leaders today. They were diligent about seeking the voice of God and submitting to it. No matter how their leadership voice was expressed, it always was enveloped in worship. And the response of these leaders always epitomized obedience.

**Scripture quotes are from the New Living Translation.*

Gary York serves as senior pastor with Eastview Christian Church, Normal, Illinois.