



## “THE WATCHERS”

Mary Mayko 2001

Matthew 26:41 LB “Keep alert and pray. Otherwise temptation will overpower you. For the spirit is willing, but how weak the body is!”

Matthew 27:55 LB “And many women who had come down from Galilee with Jesus to care for Him, were watching from a distance.”

**Watchers!** Most of us would say we *are watchers* most every day! Moms watch after their children, we watch for bargains, we watch TV, or watch others as they play in some big Sports Event. Some watch for an opportunity to take advantage of others, while still others watch for an opening to minister to someone in a special way! People with guard duty type jobs must be *on alert* at all times!

In the Vines Dictionary I found some interesting aspects of the word *watch*. Angels are sometimes called *watchers* as well as messengers, ministers and deputies. They are sent to guard, protect, observe and preserve, as well as many other functions as the Lord’s servants. People in general are to be watchers also, to take responsibility to guard over and defend others. To watch is to behold, which means to look at with purpose and interest. The Bible exhorts us to *watch and pray!*

With these thoughts in mind, take a look at some of the *watchers at the Cross*. There must have been multitudes of angels watching what was occurring that day! They were always near Jesus at His most vulnerable times. They watched over Joseph and Mary while Jesus was still in the womb, guarding and instructing them whenever needed.

Angels ministered to Him after He finished His days of temptation, and again in the Garden of Gethsemane, especially after He prayed for the Father’s Will to be done! At one point, those who came to arrest Him fell backwards in His Presence, proving He had the power to resist if He so chose. In Matt.26:53 He said very clearly, He could have asked the Father to send more than 12 legions of angels! That would have been more than enough to destroy the entire Roman Army!

So, to think angels would not have been *watchers at the Cross* would be a little strange! This is a reminder for us, that if Jesus in His humanity graciously accepted angelic help when needed, we too, can expect God to provide whatever help He desires to send us in our times of need!

Well, of course, the people who were the *watchers at the Cross* included are a variety of folks. There was *the crowd*, many who had probably cheered Jesus as “*The Son of David*” only a few days before! You know how crowds often are! Like sports fans who cheer you when you are winning, and jeer you when it looks like you are losing! Now they stared with scorn, influenced by the opinions of those around them. They failed to check out facts for

themselves. Now, they became a *mob scene crying out "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"* All it takes are a few instigators, and others come running to join the violence!

Another group of *watchers* were the religious Leaders. Many had felt that Jesus was a threat to their positions and were angry because He claimed to be the King of the Jews! They were also upset with those who followed Jesus, although some of them had been present when Jesus did miracles! Even miracles won't change the hearts of those who choose not to believe. It seems they thought by killing Jesus they could retain their power over the people, and their status with Rome. Ironically, the Romans destroyed their city and their temple forty years later, the only place where they could offer the blood sacrifices! They rejected the one perfect sacrifice that was able to save them, when they scorned and rejected Jesus!

Two *watchers at the Cross* were criminals hanging on either side of Jesus. Both heard the Word, the same message, had the same opportunity, yet one rejected Him and the other cried out for mercy! He somehow knew Jesus was innocent, yet dying to save others! He realized something that most did not understand until after His resurrection!

Roman soldiers believed in many gods yet taunted Jesus too! They must have thought He was a fool, as they unknowingly fulfilled Scriptures by gambling for His robe! Yet the Centurion was stunned as he watched Jesus die and the events that followed! The earthquake, the temple veil torn from top to bottom, and dead saints walking about the city! As Jesus let out a loud cry when He died, this fearless Commander shook in his boots! He then cried "*Truly this was the Son of God!*"

Ah, the women! They had a sense of compassion that is easily stirred and the courage to stand in the midst of troubles to see if they could help in some way. These *watchers at the Cross* had followed Him faithfully after He ministered to them and others in so many ways! Some stood back from the cross. Were they the disciples? Luke 23:49 LB Meanwhile, Jesus' friends, including the women who had followed Him down from Galilee, stood in the distance watching." So much for the pledge of loyalty! It would take the resurrection to wipe away their personal fears!

Angels were present at the tomb when the women came with spices for the Body of Jesus. What a joy it was when they heard Jesus was alive! But who would believe them? When Jesus appeared to them, they no longer stood afar off! *Watchers at the Cross!* Their lives were changed forever!

When we are challenged by the Cross, how will our lives be affected? Will we be like some of the crowd when

Jesus was crucified? Would we mock or scorn the Holy One? Some were indifferent, gawking, but unmoved by the Passion of Christ! Or would we, like the thief on the cross beside Jesus, cry out for mercy and allow His Spirit to enter our hearts and change our lives? Will we honor Him by our words and actions?

What kind of a *watcher* are you? *Check it out! Your life and your future depend on it!*

[www.momentswithmary.com](http://www.momentswithmary.com) email: [mmako1968@msn.com](mailto:mmako1968@msn.com)



**“SUDDEN JOY”**  
**Mary Mayko 2010**

**Matt.28:5-6, 8 KJV “And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.” “And they departed quickly from the sepulcher with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.”**

**Sudden joy! Can you imagine in some small measure how these women must have felt? After all, they witnessed the death of Jesus, eye witnesses we call them. As they watched the cruel progresses of death on a cross, saw the wounds He had suffered from the beatings, His blood pouring from every where the skin had been pierced, they felt helpless and hopeless! No doubt, He was really dead!**

**As they walked wearily to the grave, it never crossed their mind that this day was to change their lives forever! He who was dead, yet now He lives! Amazement fills their hearts and minds as slowly the truth starts to flow over their spirits! Then! Sudden joy! It takes a while to sort it all out, but in the meanwhile, He is alive! No one can take away that excitement, that knowledge that He truly was / is the Messiah! Sudden joy!**

**What experiences have you had in life that brought you sudden joy? Something wonderful that was never expected, yet when it occurred, that moment of sudden joy caught your heart and filled it to overflowing! For me, it was quite a humbling day, it happened when suddenly I knew in my heart that God really did love me, and fully accepted me, just as I was, and that sudden joy was a rapture that enveloped my spirit immediately! All that was around had faded away as I basked in this new found love!**

**There has been several times in my walk with the Lord, when suddenly His Presence took away a fear I had, or calmed an anger that arose within me, or suddenly peace covered me**

like a blanket. Unexpectedly, as I sat in my sorrows, sudden joy filled my soul! That sudden joy begins to strengthen us and renews our hope, lifting our spirits. Listen to the message or teaching presented by Ezra, Nehemiah and the Levites as they shared the Word of the Lord!

**Nehemiah 8:9b-12 NKJV** “This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn nor weep.” For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law. Then he said unto them, “Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy unto our LORD. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.” So the Levites quieted the people saying, “Be still, for the day is holy, do not be grieved.” And all the people went their way to eat and drink, to send portions and rejoice greatly, because they understood the words that were declared unto them.”

How many times has someone tried to comfort you without using the wisdom found in God’s Word, or worse yet, used the Word and seemingly tried to shame you out of your fear, sadness or anger! Lord! Help us! As we read and then reread Nehemiah’s words, we see the Word of God was given with understanding! What a difference! What a sudden joy!

As we celebrate Easter Sunday this year, allow the joy of your salvation and the knowledge that Christ is truly alive and well and able to help us in any situation we find ourselves in to bring that peace to your heart! That Resurrection power abides in us through the precious Holy Spirit. That Spirit that raised Christ from the dead abides within us! Think of the wonder of that!

Peter was certainly an eye witness to the trial, crucifixion and Risen Christ! He instructs us that we are truly blessed for we have a living hope through the resurrection of Christ, that we have an inheritance in Heaven reserved for us. That knowledge is to help us go through the trials of life with the joy of the LORD as our strength! Our faith will go through purifications by the testing by fire! Does not sound too pleasant! Why rejoice then?

[1Peter 1:3-9 NKJV] v.7-8 “That the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls.”

The fact that Christ arose and lives within us should be the source of comforting joy! When we realize that the moment we die, we will instantly be in His Presence forever, bought by the precious Blood of the perfect Lamb, Christ Jesus, we can experience that sudden joy for ourselves!

Rejoice! He is Risen! Let the joy of Easter morning flood your soul, even as it did those first disciples so long ago!

Matthew 28:6a “He is not here, for He is risen!”  
Mary Mayko April 2010

[www.momentwithmary.org](http://www.momentwithmary.org)

email: [mmako1968@msn.com](mailto:mmako1968@msn.com)

## **“HE IS WITH ME!”**

**By Rev. J. Kehl Golding**



**“The tomb is empty!!**

**He is gone!!**

**He has risen!! Glory Hallelujah!!”**

What astonishing news! Amazing! Unbelievable! They were overcome with surprise, wonder, and joy! Does Easter morning cause *us* to be overcome with joy? Does this news have the same impact on us? Probably not, because we have not seen *HIM DEAD!* Felt the lifeless body.

Some folks haven't given it enough thought to realize He was dead [His body] and *now He really does live!* They see Him as a baby at Christmas, dead on a cross, risen at Easter, forgetting *He's God and alive in all His fullness every day all year long!*

Again this month I want to talk to confessing Christians. Are you a *practicing* Believer, or a “*go to meetin*” Believer? Are you in church every Sunday morning with a pious face, talking “*up a storm*”? So all think you are a “*great Christian power house*”? Then all is forgotten 'til next meeting. The next day you are “*at home with the gang*” in talk, jokes, and the places they frequent. This is *Hypocrisy*, behavior that is showy, and an empty display of religion.

Behavior like this is a false profession of faith, untrue statements with the intent to deceive, it is given with the intent of giving misleading impressions, it is down right lying! Titus describes it perfectly in his book, 1:16 “They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.”

In their religious life there is a real inconsistency of living. This gives unbelievers a great reason to talk about “*so called Christians.*” When we don't live in the knowledge of God's Word we give great material for the Devil to work with. Paul addressed this with the Romans in 2:23-24 “Thou that maketh thy boast of the law, through breaking the law thou dishonoreth thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you.”

Paul reminded the Corinthians in his second letter to them. [II Cor.3:2] that they are like an epistle, an open letter that all men read. In fact, they might be the only part of God's word ever read by unbelievers. Look at what he says; “Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, **KNOWN** and **READ** of **ALL** men.”

He goes on in verse 3 to say: “For as much as ye are manifestly [obviously] declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered [produced] by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the Living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables in the heart,”

In Luke, Jesus encountered these people, and asks a very important question “Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and *DO NOT* the things which I say?” Luke 6:46. Jesus addressed hypocrisy many times with the Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees. All “religious” folks, self-righteous, bound with tradition, interested in external showy manifestations. These folks were fond of “Titles and Positions.”

Jesus fully describes them, and denounces them in Luke 23:1-7. Notice what He says, they lay heavy burdens on people, things to be done- observances, rituals and rules. They love important seats at feasts and in the synagogues where they can be seen. They love to be greeted as they walk about, and be called Rabbis.

They were inwardly unregenerate, they were not “Born Again” by the Spirit of God.” Notice Luke 11:39 “And the Lord said unto him, [Pharisee] now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening [violence] and wickedness. When Jesus addressed the Pharisee Nicodemus, He said to him; “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, “*YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN.*” *John 3:5-7*

Is He your personal Savior? Have you confessed your sin, acknowledged Him as Savior? Thanked Him for taking your sins upon Himself on the cross, and shedding His blood to cover them, thus becoming your atonement.

When He is your personal Savior, there is a daily relationship with Him. It is no longer a “showy Sunday performance.” If you are born again, and He is your **LORD**, the Easter morning news is wonderful! For you, He lives! He’s your best friend, your confidant, the One you can entrust with anything and everything. Not just your Advocate, but your Protector and your “*Papa Dearest!*” All day long, all night long, every place you go and every thing you do.

*Yes, He is risen!*  
*Yes, He is alive!*

Yes, He is with me, every second of the day 24/7! Spread the Good News of Easter Morning!!

**Have a blessed Easter Season walking with Him!**  
*Rev. J. Kehl Golding*

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