Corinthian church, he wrote: “For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of the affliction we experience in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead.“  
 Easter is the celebration of resurrection. When God rolled away the death stone, it was to release life. Believer, please celebrate the fact that God can and will release us from anything contrary to the abundant life promised in Jesus Christ our Lord.

For Small Group Discussion  
 -This week, process how God is at work removing “death stones” that have been overwhelming and discouraging.   
 -How does the resurrection of Christ help you cope with death?   
 -Spend some time in prayer the Lord’s resurrection will give you hope in eternity and hope in this life as well.

Have a great week. Happy Easter. We love you!

Jay and Mona

“Rolling Away the Death Stone” Pastor Jay Cave  
 Text: Mark 16: 1-4 Easter, April 5, 2015  
 Sermon Notes:

For Your Consideration   
 Of all the resurrections narratives, I especially like Mark because of the conversation between the women on the way to the tomb the very first Easter morning. Arising early, several women rushed to the Lord’s burial place in order to minister to his remains when it dawned on them that they hadn’t considered a most important issue: “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?” (16: 3). They were speaking of the 2000 pound circular stone that had been rolled in place after Jesus was put into the private tomb of Joseph of Arimathea (see Matthew 27:57-61). Yes! Who in fact would roll it away?   
 The Romans certainly wouldn’t do it. They were the one’s responsible for putting Jesus to death. They wanted to keep him in the tomb! The Soldiers wouldn’t roll it away. They were charged to guard the tomb and to keep it sealed under penalty of death (Matthew 27:65,66). The Jews wouldn’t roll it away. They were surely embarrassed by the pretend “King of the Jews” who had ridden into Jerusalem a week earlier only to be the source of shame (Deuteronomy 21:23). The disciples certainly wouldn’t roll it away; they were at that moment locked behind closed doors for fear of the Jews (John 20:19). The women themselves couldn’t roll away the stone. The thing weighed over a ton. Who indeed would roll away the tomb?   
 God would. At the end of the day, no one would roll away the “death stone” but God alone.

**Only God can roll away the seal of death and bring life.** Matthew tells us that there was a great earthquake that shook the stone loose (28:2). But we know well that God alone was responsible for releasing Jesus from the tomb. God alone brings resurrection to the dead. I remember very clearly looking at the dead face of my father in ***Palms of Pasadena Hospital*** almost 7 years ago. He was the deadest looking man I’ve ever seen. As I hugged his body for the last time I remember thinking, “Who can roll away this stone of death? How can it be possible that I will ever see this dead man again.” The answer? Only God can.   
 The same God who released Jesus from death will release all believers from the tomb. 1 Corinthians 15:20-22 states: ”But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.“ In In other words, because of Adam’s sin, all of us will be placed in a tomb and buried, but because of Christ’s life, the faithful will be released. The stone will be rolled away.   
 And don’t you think that the same God who raised Jesus (and the same God who will raise us) is also capable of rolling away the “death stones” from our circumstances. The same God who raised Lazarus (John 11:38-44) will roll the death away from our financial lives, our marital lives, our careers, our relationships. God rolls away the “death stones” that seem to seal our fate. As Paul ministered to the   
 (over)