

He is Risen!

We are now at the cornerstone of the Christian faith, the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

- Acts 4:33 And with great power the apostles were giving witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all.
- Rom 1:4 who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord,
- 1 Cor 15:3-4 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

Without the Resurrection of Christ, we are hopeless.

- 1 Cor 15:17 and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins.
- 1 Pet 1:21 who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

Let the Resurrection Begin!

Matt 28:1-6 Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first {day} of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave. 2 And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. 3 And his appearance was like lightning, and his garment as white as snow; 4 and the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men. 5 And the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. 6 "He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying.

- If there are only three words that you can remember from the sermon this morning, here they are...HE IS RISEN! These powerful words are what the Christian faith hinges upon. HE IS RISEN! Now let us drive this point home with the emotion it was received with in those early days following the resurrection.

The women and soldiers saw the tomb open early on Sunday morning.

- Just like most of the other times that angels appeared before people, these angels say "Do not be afraid!" (Mt 16:21; Lk 1:13; 1:43-45; 18:31-33). There is nothing to be afraid about when you are right with God.
- By this time it appears that the guards fled out of great fear, for their sole job was to guard the tomb (Mt 28:11-15). They went to Jewish elders to telling them about everything they saw. With a fist full of cash and a promise of protection from chief priests, they change their story.
- When you combine the lists of all four gospels, the identified women were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, Salome, Joanna and others (Mt 28:1; Mk 16:1; Lk 24:10; Jn 20:1-2).

- Mark's account said they were going to the grave to anoint the body of Jesus, something that was a great honor for the dead. John said that they arrived while it was still dark.

The Angels proclaimed that Jesus was risen from the dead.

Luke 24:4-7 And it happened that while they were perplexed about this, behold, two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling apparel; 5 and as {the women} were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, {the men} said to them, "Why do you seek the living One among the dead? 6 "He is not here, but He has risen. Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee, 7 saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again."

- Naturally the women were terrified by the sight of an empty tomb and two men in "bright as lightening" clothing. Matthew identifies them as angels. The women fall with their faces to the ground in reverence as the angels proclaim that Jesus was risen from the dead as predicted. The angels made it clear that Jesus' body was missing because He was resurrected from the dead.

Luke 24:8-11 And they remembered His words, 9 and returned from the tomb and reported all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. 10 Now they were Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the {mother} of James; also the other women with them were telling these things to the apostles. 11 And these words appeared to them as nonsense, and they would not believe them.

- Mark actually says the fled with fear from the tomb. It appears from the harmony of the texts that Mary Magdalene actually fled before the appearing of the angels (John 20:11-14; Mk 16:9) and probably arrived back at the house first with the other women shortly thereafter. They all tried to explain to the apostles that Jesus' body was missing, but the Eleven thought it was nonsense. Surely Jesus was still in the tomb! These women are just upset and emotional. They probably could not see that well in the early morning hours and must be mistaken.

John 20:3-10 Peter therefore went forth, and the other disciple, and they were going to the tomb. 4 And the two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead faster than Peter, and came to the tomb first; 5 and stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings lying {there;} but he did not go in. 6 Simon Peter therefore also came, following him, and entered the tomb; and he beheld the linen wrappings lying {there,} 7 and the face-cloth, which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself. 8 So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb entered then also, and he saw and believed. 9 For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. 10 So the disciples went away again to their own homes.

- Two of the apostles, John and Peter, had heard enough and took off running toward the tomb. It appears that John was the faster of the two. When he arrived at the entrance, he could faintly see the burial wrappings lying there, but waited for Peter to arrive and go in first. With heavy breathing, Peter entered the tomb like a CSI investigator, trying to find out what happened to the body of Jesus.
- The burial wrappings appeared to have been undisturbed like the body had disappeared. This would have been a strange concept for someone to rob a grave but only take the body. Why would someone do this? When John enters into the tomb and observes, he believes that Christ must be raised from the dead. They went back to report it to the other apostles. Can you imagine the conversation they had on the journey back?

John 20:11-18 But Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping; and so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb; 12 and she beheld two angels in white sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying. 13 And they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him." 14 When she had said this, she turned around, and beheld Jesus standing {there,} and did not know that it was Jesus. 15 Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said to Him, "Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away." 16 Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" (which means, Teacher). 17 Jesus said to her, "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren, and say to them, 'I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.'" 18 Mary Magdalene came, announcing to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and {that} He had said these things to her.

- Marks 16:9 states that it was to Mary Magdalene that Jesus first appeared to following the resurrection, making her the first witness of the gospel. Apparently she was running back to the tomb, trying to catch up the John and Peter. When the two apostles leave, she was weeping over the missing body of Jesus.
- About that time, the two angels appear and one asked, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She was crying because she did not know where the body of Jesus was. At that moment, Jesus appeared behind her and asked, "Why are you weeping?" Tears from her lifting head, the darkness of an early morning and the confusion of the moment had her thinking that He was the gardener. Can you imagine the excitement when she hears His voice and as she clung to Him with the attitude of "I will not let you go this time"? Can you imagine the excitement when some of the other women showed up at the tomb and found Jesus? Can you feel the excitement when they explained, "We have seen the Lord"? HE IS RISEN!

The Account of Luke 24:13-35

- Later on that afternoon, two followers of Jesus were leaving Jerusalem for a town called Emmaus. They were talking about all the things that were going on concerning the body of Jesus. As they walked, Jesus approached and began to walk with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him.
- When Jesus listens and then asked about what the story was, they virtually accused Him of being socially illiterate in not knowing the story of Jesus. To their surprise Jesus points out their scriptural ignorance by discussing the OT scriptures (25-27).
- They arrived at Emmaus and the two invite Jesus to lodge there for the night. During the supper, Jesus took the bread, blessed, break it and give it to them. Miraculously their eyes were opened and they recognized that it was Jesus all along!
- Luke 24:3-35 And their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight. 32 And they said to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?" 33 And they arose that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found gathered together the eleven and those who were with them, 34 saying, "The Lord has really risen, and has appeared to Simon." 35 And they {began} to relate their experiences on the road and how He was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread.
- Can you imagine the awesomeness of seeing their friend right before them, not dead, but RISEN? Can you sense the excitement in their hearts to leave the house in Emmaus in the dark and run seven miles into town to let the rest know that HE IS RISEN? Apparently sometime right before that He also appeared to Peter and now He knows HE IS RISEN!

Luke 24:36-40 And while they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst. 37 But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit. 38 And He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." 40 [And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.]

- Sunday night, while the two followers are further explaining the appearance and disappearance of Jesus to the other apostles, Jesus miraculously appears in the locked room with them. They are all shocked, thinking this is some ghost, but He was not. Jesus shows them the wounds from the crucifixion to aid in their unbelief. He also eats some broiled fish for supper with them to prove that He was not a ghost.
- Imagine the emotion of all those followers of Jesus as they find out that the resurrection was not just something that a few women are proclaiming, but is real. HE IS RISEN! They went from terrified to elation to appreciation in just a short time. HE IS RISEN!

John 20:24-29 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 The other disciples therefore were saying to him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I shall see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." 26 And after eight days again His disciples were inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst, and said, "Peace {be} with you." 27 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach here your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand, and put it into My side; and be not unbelieving, but believing." 28 Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed {are} they who did not see, and {yet} believed."

- Thomas was out gathering supplies or something while Jesus was in the room with the apostles; therefore he was not a witness to the resurrection. He was the doubting Thomas, but Jesus would not leave him in that state. Eight days later Jesus appeared in the locked room of the apostles and Thomas could see for himself. Imagine the humility in the heart of Thomas to cause him to say "My Lord and My God!" Thomas now knew that HE IS RISEN!

John 21:1-11

- Not long after that the apostles were back up in Galilee like the Lord had requested. Since most of them were fisherman, it made sense that they would be fishing while they were waiting for the Lord to come.
- This particular night they were out and did not catch a thing in their nets. Now it is morning and time to call it quits. As they are dragging in their nets, they see someone on the shore about 100 yards away. He calls out to them, "Did you catch anything?" They said "NO", but the stranger said cast on the other side of the boat. This does not make any sense, but they did anyway. They had a huge catch too big to pull into the boat. What happened next is one of the most beautiful moments of the gospels.
- John 21:7-8 That disciple therefore whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord." And so when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put his outer garment on (for he was stripped {for work} , and threw himself into the sea. 8 But the other disciples came in the little boat, for they were not far from the land, but about one hundred yards away, dragging the net {full} of fish.
- Peter was so excited that he jumped off the boat and swam the 100 meters like Michael Phelps. He was so excited because his friend and Savior is RISEN!

Matt 28:18-20 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the

Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

- It was a designated mountain on Galilee that the apostles assembled and would hear Jesus give them charge of the great commission. They were to make disciples of every nation through baptism and teaching a way of life to be in obedience to Him. They were given this charge because HE IS RISEN!

There were more than 500 eye-witnesses to the resurrected Jesus.

1 Cor 15:6 After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep;

- Just think about the fact that somewhere, perhaps Galilee, that more than 500 people saw Jesus alive following the resurrection. Just think of the wonderful elation they had in having before them the One that beat death forevermore! HE IS RISEN!

Acts 1:4-9 And gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," {He said,} "you heard of from Me; 5 for John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." 6 And so when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" 7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; 8 but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." 9 And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

- This would be the last time they would see their Lord on this earth. From then on they would rely on divine revelation. Through all the tribulation and sorrow that they would experience on the road of missions, they always treasured the fact that HE IS RISEN from the dead.

In conclusion:

That tomb is just as empty as it was two thousand years ago.