

2009#17 GOSPEL OF JOHN – THE EMPTY TOMB

JOHN 20:1-31

Today we celebrate Easter Sunday.
The culmination and celebration of Jesus' life work.
All that he said,
Or demonstrated through miracles, or
Prophesied through words
Came true.

A couple of months ago I was visiting my daughter in Rochester
And I was shopping at one of those super stores.
After paying at the check out,
I walked out the door only to have the electronic sensor go off.
Anti theft devises
That tells everybody that you have shoplifted.
Everybody was looking to see who the fool was.

Ever notice you can't find a clerk in the store when you need one.
But walk out through those electronic sensor.
You get a flock of em.
Came over and went thru my bags and
Discovered that one of the items didn't clear their check out eraser
That removes the "you are caught signal" from the goods.

SLIDE --But I had my receipt.
So I was passed on through.

SLIDE-----The empty Cross is our receipt, to pass through the doors of sin and death.
The resurrection of Christ is our receipt to pass through the doors of hell and damnation.
Because Jesus claimed us as his own.
And the debt has been paid.
He is not only the savior
He is the sanctifier.
He erased all the sin that so easily clings to us.
So that we can pass through the door of death into eternal life
And isn't that the word of hope we need today?
In our world of joblessness, flooding homes, lack of medical insurance,
fires, disease, the anxiety of terrorism, lost savings,
Secular humanism and the loss of faith?

SLIDE----So Mary came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!" John 20:2

That first Easter *Sunday* morning,
The women came early with spices to embalm Jesus
Mary of Magdala found an empty tomb and came running to Peter and John,

SLIDE-----I. PETER AND JOHN VISIT THE EMPTY TOMB

SLIDE----So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. ⁴Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. John 20:3-5

**The only reason John beat Peter to the tomb,
Not because he had more zeal,
But because he was younger.**

**Those of you here over 60 know what I'm saying.
We just don't have the lungs anymore the endurance.
Brain says go--- and body says no.
What interesting here is why John did not go in. Vs 5
John did not go in: Vs. 5**

He did not go in because he believed that the body was not there.
He didn't think they had gone to the wrong tomb.
He didn't think that Jesus had just swooned on the cross.
And wandered from the tomb.
He believed this was the tomb and the body was missing.
Just like Mary who said:

SLIDE----¹⁴**"They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know
where they have put him." John 20:14
Both of these disciples seem to be as confused as the Pharisees
When a dead body is missing it causes confusion.**

When the body of Abraham Lincoln was stolen some years after his death and held for ransom, our entire nation was shocked and dismayed.
After the ransom was paid, the body was recovered,
and buried again under tons of cement in Springfield, Illinois.

Then Simon Peter arrived and went into the tomb.

SLIDE----**Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb.
He saw the strips of linen lying there,⁷ as well as the burial cloth that had been
around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen. John
20:6-7**

If the body had been stolen why would the thief
have taken the time to unwrapped the 20, 30 feet of linen cloth?
Why would a thief have taken the time to fold the face cloth
And lay it in a separate place?

I have been called to a robbery scene as a Police Reserve officer.
I have yet to find the place neat and clean.
Robbers and burglaries are usually scenes of chaos, and disorder.
The place is all pulled apart.
Things strewn about.
Drawers open.
But here at the tomb.
Things are orderly and folded. Finally John

SLIDE----**Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went
inside. He saw and believed. John 20:8**

But what did John believe?

John confesses in this next verse, he didn't believe in the resurrection.

SLIDE----**(They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from
the dead.) John 20:9**

The scripture John was talking about was from Psalms 16: verses 9-10

SLIDE----Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell. For thou wilt not abandon my life to the grave, nor suffer thy Holy One to see corruption. Psalms 16:9,10

What makes the scripture authentic is John self reproaching confession,
That he, the beloved disciple, missed the prophecy,
He missed the resurrection.

But friends John disbelief gives us hope.

Do you know of someone who has a hard time believing?

Do you know of someone who is questioning the resurrection?

Don't give up on them. God is still at work.

He has some unfinished business.

SLIDE----II. MARY VISIT THE EMPTY TOMB AND BELIEVED.

Believed what?

SLIDE----Then the disciples went back to their homes, ¹¹but Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb ¹²and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. ¹³They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" John 20:10-13

God upped the anti for Mary to believe.

She looked into the tomb and saw two angels.

God has them placed like the cherubim angels in heaven.

One on each end of the mercy seat. Exodus 25:18-19

SLIDE----They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" John 20:13

Mary was so absorbed in her grief that she paid little attention.

She was so unprepared for death,

That she missed life.

SLIDE----"They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." John 20:14

That is what grief does to us.

Every person here who has lost a loved one

Knows death is an enemy to life.

It blinds our eyes,

It distort our minds,

Confuses our decision-making.

It can cause us to act and think irrationally.

Grief caused Mary to miss seeing Jesus.

Thinks it's the gardener.

What gave her that idea?

What was it the way he was dressed? No

Was it because he was all dirty and sweaty. No

Grief distorts what we see.

Grief distorts what we can do.

SLIDE----Jesus said: "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?"

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." John 20:15-16

Can you imagine what she just said:

There is an old proverb that says: "Love feels no load!"

We saw it in the famous picture "He ain't heavy he's my brother."

SLIDE----"Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." **John 20:15-16**

Jesus had been in the prime of his life
 He would weigh probably 165 pounds or more.
 But he had also been weighed down with another 100 pounds of burial spices.
 This little 120 pound Mary was planning
 to carry 265 pounds of dead Jesus?
 Grief confuses and distorts our thinking.

SLIDE---Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). **John 20:16**

What joy must have filled her grief stricken heart.
 Jesus was alive.
 God had rewarded Mary Magdalene for her faithfulness.

SLIDE----And she ran to embrace, **John 20:16**

She clung to him.
 This was her Jesus, Her savior.
 But Jesus moved her to mission.
 There is an urgency here.

SLIDE----Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' " **John 20:17**

Jesus appointed Mary as the first herald of the Gospel of a risen Savior.
Go instead and tell them.

Jesus ordained a woman to become the first preacher
 bearing the good news.
 A woman, the first to truly believe
 the first to tell the disciples
 The words are translated "**Mary came telling**"

Now when the disciples didn't get it when they visited the empty tomb.

SLIDE-----III. JESUS VISITS THE DISCIPLES

The disciples were all LOCKED UP IN THEIR HOMES

SLIDE----On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" **John 20:19**

The word for locked is translated --barricaded
 The doors were not just locked but barricaded.
 That was why Jesus couldn't get in the usual way,
 And instead, entered in a miraculous way.
Jesus came and stood among them.

Jesus not only showed himself to the disciples
 But in coming through the walls,
 He shows us that the resurrected body has no obstacle to what it can do.
 What a freedom there will be,
 When Christ Jesus sets us free.

I am talking about being set free from the bondage of this world.

I am talking bout being set free from the sinful past,
 How many people do you know that
 have their hearts barricaded with
 Past emotions, feelings, prejudices, sins, and religious superstitions

One prayer, One leaning toward Jesus,
 One mustard seed of faith,
 And the barricades come down,
 And Jesus comes through your
 wall of darkness,
 Wall of despair and
 fills your fear heart with joy.
 And saves the soul from hell.

And Jesus stood in front of them.
 Just as he stands in front of us today.
 And not one can say:
 "I didn't know, I didn't have a chance."
 Because Jesus was alive.

SLIDE----After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were
overjoyed when they saw the Lord. John 20:20
 The disciple believed

That is the same promise for you and me.
 The joy comes, and
 The peace begins,
 When we accept Jesus into our hearts

SLIDE----Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am
sending you." ²²And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy
Spirit. John 20:21-22

What would it take to open your heart to the Risen Christ?

We will not like Thomas get to touch the wounds in this hands
 Or the hole in his side.
 That time is over.
 That is why Jesus said to Thomas.

SLIDE----"Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not
seen and yet have believed." John 20:29

Jesus is talking about us.
 We who have not seen, but yet believe.
 We who have not touched but have yet experienced the power of God.

He talking about you here today in this moment of decision,
 Who will say Yes to the living Christ.
 Who will allow God to move you
 like the disciples from disbelief to faith.
 Like Mary from tears to joy.
 Like Thomas from doubt to assurance
 That he lives and is the resurrected Savior.
 That is what Easter is all about.
 That is why John closes this chapter by saying.

**SLIDE----Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples,
which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe
that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in
his name. John 20:30-31**

Jesus' promise is that the resurrection
Can still happen today in your heart,
If you will believe.

Just this past month
I had the privilege of visiting with a young man
Who had lived on the opposite side of joy.
He was involved in all the destructive things of life.
Smoking Mariana, doing coke, alcohol
Stealing from his family and employee to supply his habit,
And living in the dishonest dark side of life.
He didn't like himself, or the way he felt.
He didn't like what he had become,
Emotionally stressed and depressed.
He said I feel like I'm dead inside.
I told him God loved him,
And that God had a plan for his life.
If he would let Jesus take over
become the master planner.
He could find a new life.
And in the small little office
He bow his head and prayed asking Jesus to be his savor,
And it was Easter all over again.

Friends, It can be Easter all over again for you today,
When you stand before an empty tomb,
And believe that Jesus died and rose again for you.
Hell could not keep its prey
Jesus my savior
He rolled the stone away,
Jesus my lord.

Will you believe and affirm with me:

**SLIDE----Christ is risen.
HE IS RISEN INDEED.**