

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

APRIL 8TH-9TH, 2023 // RESURRECTION WEEKEND

## THE EMPTY TOMB (JOHN 20:1-10)

Jesus had been mocked, beaten, and brutally murdered on a Roman cross on Friday (or Thursday by some accounts).

- After He was entombed, the tomb was sealed and guarded by a Roman guard (Mt. 27:62-66).
- We know from the other gospel accounts that Mary Magdalene was not alone on her visit to the tomb, but John chooses to focus primarily on her.

We know from the other gospel writers that women were coming to the tomb to “anoint the body of Jesus”—that is, to finish preparing His corpse for burial.

- These women apparently have no expectations that Jesus will rise from the dead, even though He repeatedly said He would.
- So when Mary sees the heavy stone rolled away, she assumes that someone has come and taken the body (vs. 2).

Even as some of the disciples heard Mary's report and ran to the tomb to investigate, they couldn't quite understand the significance of what had just happened (vs. 10).

- It was simply not in the realm of possibility for them that Jesus had risen.
- Many of us believe in the resurrection and even celebrate it every year—but for some, we don't quite understand its significance.

## THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS MEANS...

1. Jesus is who He said He was—He is fully God (“My Lord and my God!” [John 20:28]).
2. The curse of sin has been defeated (“He Himself bore our sins in his body on the tree” [1 Peter 2:24]).
3. We also can experience resurrection (“The one who believes in me, even if he dies, will live” [John 11:25]).

## THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS MEANS SOMETHING FOR EACH OF US PERSONALLY.

- In John's Gospel, we're not just presented with the cold, hard facts about Jesus' resurrection like a history or science textbook.
- We're told about the risen Jesus' personal interactions with real people like you and me.
- We're invited to meet and experience the reality of Jesus personally.

## MARY THE HEARTBROKEN (JOHN 20:11-18)

Mary Magdalene was a disciple of Jesus from whom Jesus had cast out seven demons (Luke 8:2).

- At this point in the story, Mary is a person who has literally lost everything.
- Having been traumatized by seeing Jesus brutally crucified, she now believes someone has stolen His body.
- Broken-hearted and hopeless, she weeps.

## “WOMAN, WHY ARE YOU CRYING?” (VS. 13,15)

She now believes her Lord, teacher, and friend is completely gone—as well as her hopes and dreams of all that He'd promised.

- Mary sees two angels, but apparently has no idea what has just occurred.
- The angels inhabit a different reality—they know what has really occurred, and their question to Mary is a reasonable one.
- Mary wondered and worried about where Jesus was, but He wasn't far away.
- When she turned and saw Jesus, she didn't immediately recognize Him until He spoke her name.
- Just one word from the risen Jesus changed the entire scene from heartbreak and despair to joy and hope.

## TO ANYONE WHO IS HEARTBROKEN AND HURTING, THE REALITY OF JESUS' RESURRECTION MEANS...

There is hope even in the midst of seemingly hopeless situations.

- To those who have lost everything, there is a coming day of total restoration.
- With just one word from the risen Jesus, your situation can be changed from heartbreak and despair to hope and joy.

## THOMAS THE DOUBTER (JOHN 20:24-29)

Thomas was one of the last disciples to see the risen Lord, but he was quite skeptical when he heard the report.

- Thomas refused to believe the testimony of many who had seen Jesus and made an extreme demand for evidence.
- Unless these conditions were met, Thomas refused to accept this wild and bizarre nonsense about a resurrection.

Amazingly, Jesus, in his mercy and kindness, granted Thomas the evidence he demanded.

- Jesus invited Thomas to conduct a real, empirical investigation.
- Sincere, authentic Christianity always invites sincere, authentic research.
- When Thomas sees the truth of Jesus for himself, his heart explodes with faith—“...my Lord and my God!” (vs. 28).

## TO ANYONE WHO IS CYNICAL AND FULL OF DOUBT, THE REALITY OF JESUS' RESURRECTION MEANS...

Jesus isn't asking you to place blind faith in Him—He's given you proof that He is the Son of God.

- God doesn't condemn you for your skepticism: He's offered to do remarkable things to speak to your doubts and disbelief.
- Are your heart and mind open to investigating the claims of the risen Jesus?

## PETER THE FAILURE (JOHN 21:1-19)

Peter was a disciple of Jesus who was appointed as the de facto leader of the 12.

- Peter had promised Jesus that he would follow him until death (John 13:37).

- Not only does Peter abandon Jesus in fear and run away just like the rest of the disciples, he denies he ever knew Jesus three separate times.

- After Peter's betrayal of Jesus, he saw the empty tomb on resurrection Sunday.

Peter knew Jesus was alive, but at this point, he probably wasn't so sure about Jesus' promise to use him as the “rock” that would be the foundation of the Church.

- So Peter chooses to go back to what he always knew before he met Jesus—he goes fishing.
- Early in the ministry of Jesus, He orchestrated a miraculous catch for Peter—now there's a second miraculous catch.

Peter recognizes the Lord and dives into the water to swim out to Jesus.

- Jesus is on the shore making Peter breakfast and ready to receive him back into a relationship with Himself.
- Think of the shame, despair, remorse, and regret Peter must've felt—and yet, Peter chose by faith to believe the scandalous promise of grace and ran to Jesus instead of away from Him.

## TO ANYONE WHO FEELS LIKE A COMPLETE FAILURE, THE REALITY OF JESUS' RESURRECTION MEANS...

No matter the size of your failure or sin, there is redemption and forgiveness available for you: it's never too late.

- No matter the shame, regret, or despair you feel: Jesus wants a relationship with you.
- God can restore and use you in His Kingdom for powerful things.

## THE DEATH OF JESUS.

- The penalty of our sin required death, and that God is just and holy (Rom. 6:23).
- God proved His love in that Christ stood in our place and took our penalty for sin upon Himself when we were His enemies (Rom. 5:7-8).
- We can be forgiven, cleansed, and have peace with God.

## THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS.

- Jesus has proved the reality of His identity in the broad daylight of human history: see it and believe.
- Death's sting will someday be conquered (1 Cor. 15:55), and every sad thing will someday become untrue.
- A restoration is now possible: what was dead can be brought back to life.

## THERE WAS A SURVEY IN WHICH AMERICANS WERE ASKED WHAT WORDS/PHRASES THEY MOST LIKE TO HEAR.

- Phrase #1: “I love you.”
- Phrase #2: “I forgive you.”
- Phrase #3: “Supper's ready.”

## “I LOVE YOU” (ROMANS 5:6-8).

- Sometimes a heroic person might sacrifice their life to save someone else—but imagine someone having so much love that they laid down their life to save a terrorist on death row.
- Who would do something like that? God. And He's done it for you in Christ.
- Did you know that God's love for you is radical, personal, and intimate?

## “I FORGIVE YOU” (EPHESIANS 1:7).

- Humanity lives under a burden of guilt and often seeks atonement in the oddest places.
- The gospel tells us that Jesus took our punishment, so we don't have to be punished if we trust in Him.
- God stands ready with open arms to offer us forgiveness for any sin we could ever commit.

## “SUPPER'S READY” (JOHN 14:23).

- God's offer to us through Christ is one of intimate, personal relationship and fellowship.
- We're invited into a daily walk with Him as Savior, Lord, and friend.
- God doesn't just tolerate us or put up with us—He loves us and desires an intimate friendship with us (Psalm 25:14; James 2:23).

## TO THE HEARTBROKEN AND HOPELESS...

- The risen Jesus brings hope and healing to broken hearts.

## TO THE CYNICAL AND FULL OF DOUBT...

- The risen Jesus brings clarity, truth, and evidence of the greatest reality of life—the reality of God.

## TO THOSE WHO FEEL LIKE A COMPLETE FAILURE...

- The risen Jesus brings the promise of second chances, restoration, and a new life with a new purpose in Him.

## THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HEARING ABOUT SOMETHING AND EXPERIENCING IT PERSONALLY.

- Have you believed on and received the risen Jesus in your life as Savior and Lord?
- Have you trusted the risen Jesus with your heartache, doubts, failure, and guilt?
- Are you living out a daily walk with Him as your Lord and your friend?
- Through the gospel, God is saying: “I love you, I forgive you, supper's ready!”