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# **An Empty Tomb**

## **MARK 16:1-8**

### **Introduction**

1. There is nothing greater this morning than to be a Christian, a child of God.
2. Every spiritual blessing with which our heavenly Father seeks to bless us is found in Christ (Ephesians 1:3).

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,” (Ephesians 1:3, NASB95)

3. God’s free gift of eternal life is found in Him (Romans 6:23).
4. Every single one of us here this morning need Him because in Him we have hope and hope is a much needed commodity in today’s world.
5. But such hope escapes us if the body of Jesus of Nazareth still remains hidden away somewhere in the vicinity of Jerusalem.
6. There is no such thing as eternal life if He never rose from the dead.
7. Not only that, but God has no power to provide us with any spiritual blessing if He could not release His Son from death’s grip.
8. With all that being said, I would like for us to look at one historical event which occurred almost 2,000 years ago on the Sunday morning immediately following the Jewish Passover remembrance.
9. It was the bodily resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, who we know to be “the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16).
10. There are two things I would like for us to consider:
  - a. First, there are facts concerning His resurrection which we cannot ignore.
  - b. Second, all of this has an important impact upon our lives.

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# I. Facts We Cannot Ignore

## A. JESUS' FOLLOWERS EXPECTED HIS BODY TO STILL BE IN THE TOMB THAT SUNDAY MORNING

1. The women who went to the tomb:
  - a. Expected to finish their anointing of Jesus' body (Mark 16:1; Luke 24:1).
  - b. Were wondering who would roll the stone away from the tomb so that they might gain entrance (Mark 16:3).

“They were saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?”” (Mark 16:3, NASB95)

- c. Seeing the stone rolled away, Mary Magdalene immediately ran back to tell Peter and John, but she, at that point, believed someone had stolen the body.

“They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him” (John 20:2).

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2. The eleven disciples:
  - a. “Were mourning and weeping” (Mark 16:10).
  - b. Refused to believe the *circumstantial evidence*.
    - 1) Circumstantial evidence is indirect evidence which does not on its face prove a fact, but leads one to logically conclude that the fact exists.
    - 2) The fact was that the tomb was empty.
    - 3) Witnesses had seen Jesus die on the cross — it had been confirmed by the Roman soldiers attending the crucifixion.

“But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.” (John 19:34, NASB95)

- 4) Either the body had been stolen or He rose up from the dead as He had promised His disciples.

“For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, “The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise three days later.”” (Mark 9:31, cf. Mark 10:34; Luke 18:33)

c. Refused to believe *eyewitness testimony*:

- 1) The women told them of the two men they had seen dressed in “dazzling clothing” (Luke 24:4).
- 2) They related how these men had said, “Why do you seek the living One among the dead? He is not here, but He has risen.” (Luke 24:5-6a).
- 3) To the eleven disciples all this “appeared to them as nonsense” (Luke 24:11).
- 4) Even when Mary Magdalene later told them that she had seen Him alive, they refused to believe her (Mark 16:11).

“When they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they refused to believe it.” (Mark 16:11, NASB95)

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**B. WHAT THEY FOUND CONVINCED THEM OTHERWISE**

1. The women:

“Looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away, although it was extremely large. Entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting at the right, wearing a white robe; and they were amazed. And he said to them, “Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; He is not here; behold, here is the place where they laid Him.” (Mark 16:4–6, NASB95)

- a. **The stone was rolled away** (Matthew 28:2; Mark 16:4; Luke 24:2; John 20:1).
- b. **Strange men were inside the tomb:**
  - 1) “a young man sitting at the right, wearing a white robe” (Mark 16:5).
  - 2) “two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling clothing” (Luke 24:4).
  - 3) “and she [Mary Magdalene] saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying.” (John 20:12, NASB95)
- c. **Apart from these men, the tomb was empty:**
  - 1) “Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; He is not here; behold, here is the place where they laid Him” (Mark 16:6).
  - 2) “Why do you seek the living One among the dead? He is not here, but He has risen” (Luke 24:5b, 6a).
- d. **Mary Magdalene returned to the tomb with Peter and John.**
- e. **After they left, she saw Jesus — He even called her by name — “Mary!”** (John 20:16).

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- 2. **Peter and John** (John 20:2-8)
  - a. **A tomb with no body.**
  - b. **The linen wrappings and the face-cloth lying separate from one another** (vv. 6,7).

“And so Simon Peter also came, following him, and entered the tomb; and he saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself.” (John 20:6–7, NASB95)

- c. The fact that the linen wrappings, used to wrap the body, were still there and that the face cloth had been “folded up in a place by itself” (John 20:7) confirmed that the body had not been stolen.
- d. When John saw all this, even though he still did not understand that this is what the Scriptures foretold, he believed, he knew that Jesus was alive (John 20:8).

**Slide 6****C. EVEN TODAY, WE CANNOT IGNORE THE FACT OF THE EMPTY TOMB**

1. The remains of Jesus have never been found.
2. The soldiers assigned to guard the tomb reported to the chief priests what they had witnessed (Matthew 28:11; cf. Matthew 28:2-3).

“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. And his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow.” (Matthew 28:2-3, NASB95)

“Now while they were on their way, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all that had happened.” (Matthew 28:11, NASB95)

3. The chief priests and elders “gave them a large sum of money” and told them to say “His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep” (Matthew 28:13).
4. However, no one was ever able to produce a body and the apostles died proclaiming that Jesus was alive (Acts 2:32; 1 Corinthians 15:8).

“This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses.” (Acts 2:32, NASB95)

“and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.” (1 Corinthians 15:8, NASB95)

5. Consider these men for a moment:

- a. They had fled from His side following His arrest in the garden (Matthew 26:56; Mark 14:50).
  - b. The one who declared he would never deny His Lord, did so within a few short hours of Jesus' arrest, not once but three times (Matthew 26:69-74; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:54-60; John 18:17-18, 25-27).
  - c. In fear for their own lives they locked themselves away (John 20:19).
6. These eleven men plus Matthias who took Judas' place went about telling everyone that they had seen Him alive.
  7. They, along with the apostle Paul either maintained a lie all the way to their graves or they told the truth — He lives!
  8. Why is all of this so important for us this morning?

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## II. His Resurrection Makes All The Difference

### A. OUR FUTURE IS BRIGHT

1. Because He arose from the dead, death no longer has the final say in our lives.
2. Those of us who have been “buried with Him through baptism into death” and are now walking in what the apostle Paul called “newness of life” (Romans 6:4) will one day walk the streets of heaven.
3. As He promised His disciples, He has gone to prepare a place for us (John 14:3a).
4. One day, He will come back and take us to be with Him where He is (John 14:3b).
5. Even while we live here, we are citizens of heaven (Philippians 3:20).

“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;” (Philippians 3:20, NASB95)

6. On the day of His return He “will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body, by the power that enables Him even to subject all things to Himself” (Philippians 3:21, ESV).
7. What a day that will be!

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8. Paul describes it for us in his first letter to the saints in Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).

“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.” (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17, NASB95)

**Slide 9****B. NOTHING WILL SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE WHICH GOD HAS FOR US**

1. That Sunday evening, following our Lord’s resurrection, John tells us that the disciples had locked themselves in a room out of “fear of the Jews” (John 20:19).
  - a. Having killed Jesus, the disciples believed the Jews would now come after them in order to put an end to this once and for all.
  - b. Out of fear for their own lives, they hid and locked the doors.
2. Jesus, however, passed through those locked doors and stood in their midst.
3. The first words to them since His resurrection were, “Peace be with you” (John 20:19).
4. Many things in life tend to make us afraid:
  - a. The uncertainties of the future:
    - 1). Death (our own or that of someone we love)
    - 2) Loss of our physical health.

- 3) Loss of employment.
- b. Fear of what others may do to us:
  - 1) Emotional harm (Verbal abuse, public humiliation)
  - 2) Physical harm
5. Because Jesus lives, you and I can know that the same God who raised Him from death will either protect us from or see us through those things which cause us fear.
6. Even death holds no fear for those of us who are Christians because God has given us victory over death through His Son (1 Corinthians 15:55-57).

“O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” (1 Corinthians 15:55, NASB95)

“The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 15:56-57, NASB95)
7. In his letter to the church in Rome, the apostle Paul assures us that nothing will separate us from the love which God has for us (Romans 8:35-39).

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“Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Just as it is written, “For Your sake we are being put to death all day long; We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:35–39, NASB95)

## Conclusion

1. I believe that Jesus lives and that He is presently seated on His throne beside His Father in Heaven (Mark 16:19; Hebrews 1:3; 10:12; 12:2; Revelation 3:21).
2. I believe that one day He is coming back “in His glory, and all the angels with Him” (Matthew 25:31).

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3. As the apostle Paul told the philosophers in Athens, God “has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead” (Acts 17:31).
4. That Man is Jesus and every one of us in this room will one day stand before Him.
5. Are you ready for that day?
6. If not, why not begin making preparations today?
  - a. Do you believe in Jesus — that He is God’s Son, that He died for your sins, that He is alive today and seated on His throne beside His Father in heaven? Are you willing to confess these facts?
  - b. Have you repented of the sin in your life?
  - c. Have you been baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of those sins?
7. If not, why not today?