

The Empty Tomb

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[0:00] Another thought really which I wanted to include, especially today, was the thought of the empty tomb. They said, he is not here, he is risen, he is risen, indeed.

! You're getting better at that. In John chapter 20 we read, you might want to turn there. I just wanted to put this different context here.

As we think about that upper room where the disciples gathered, and John 20 tells us of that first day of the week. Mary Magdalene comes, even while it was still dark, to the tomb, and the stone was taken away.

And then we see how Peter and the other disciple, we could take it as John, likewise came. And they saw the tomb was empty.

And we pick it up from verse 14. And then, as Mary was there, Mary Magdalene stood without a sepulchre weeping, and he says to her, Woman, why weepest thou?

[1:15] She says unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And verse 14. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

So the angels, the two angels, she addressed them, she said, they have taken away my Lord, I don't know where they have laid him. And then she saw Jesus. Friends, we want to see Jesus this morning, don't we?

To see Jesus. Mary Magdalene, she lingered at the tomb. Here was a woman who owed Christ so much. At one time in her life, she'd been possessed by seven demons.

The Lord Jesus revolutionised her life and turned her completely around. She was one of the last at the cross, and here we see one of the first to see him after he had risen from the dead.

In fact, the first, Mary Magdalene. She was one that the world would have discounted, disregarded. She was the first to see him after he rose from the dead.

[2:25] They tried to lock him in. It was a lockdown. But he broke through, didn't he? They couldn't hold him. They couldn't lock him out. He broke out.

Now just let's take it up again from verse 18. We see Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples she had seen the Lord, that he had spoken these things unto her.

And that same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst of them and said unto them, Peace be unto you.

So here she is, the first day of the week, here the disciples are, the doors were shut, but Jesus came. Again, he broke through, and he buried, to get there, to be with his people.

And we read then, it tells of doubting Thomas. As we read further, it tells how they appeared. And a second time, our Lord came.

[3:28] And this is reading from verse 27, where Jesus came again. A second time, as the disciples gathered.

This time Thomas was with them. Friends, that's the ultimate response, isn't it?

Why I wanted to kind of touch on this here is tradition has it that this was the very same upper room.

Now we can't mean definitely, exactly confirming that, but tradition tells us this was that upper room. If it wasn't that upper room of the Last Supper, it was one alike to it, and in the same city. And we could think, whatever the case, it was the same gathering of the people of God.

And as they gathered, the Lord appeared to them, the risen Saviour. And some reflect it could be even the same upper room of Panticost.

[4:50] Again, we can't be definite on that point. But to think that that was the gathering place, it's an interesting thought to consider, isn't it?

That Christ, as he shared the bread, the cup, as he watched the disciples think, as he appeared again and again, could have been that same room.

And then at Pantycost, where the power of God filled the church, what a thought that is this morning as we gather around these symbols of his body and blood.

Friends, he's risen, he's risen indeed. And it's because we serve a risen Saviour, we can have faith, we can have victory, we can have hope today. As the world all around commemorate and remember that day that he rose from the dead.

It's the Lord's day, isn't it? What does resurrection mean for us today? Jesus is alive. He's not a dead prophet.

[5:58] He's a living Saviour. And he is the greatest source of hope and real life. He is the one who gives us hope, eternal hope.

He gives us a life-changing message of a heaven that he's preparing and will take us to. And of everyone that personally trusted him, he's a risen Saviour today.

There was a missionary reaching out to some folk in a land, I guess in the Middle East, and he was trying to explain the difference of Christ compared to others.

And he said, I'm travelling and have reached a place where the road branches out in two directions. I reach a fork in the road. And I'm looking for a guide and I find two men.

One who is dead and the other who is alive. Which of the two should I ask for directions? The dead or the living? And the people responded, the living. And the missionary said, why do you follow a leader who is dead?

[7:02] Instead of Christ, who is alive. It's all the difference, isn't it? We serve a risen Saviour. He's in the world today. Because of Christ's resurrection, we can know that our hearts need not be troubled.

Because Christ is alive, we can know he will never leave us nor forsake us. Because he's alive, he's the author and he's the finisher of our faith. Because he's alive, he's able to save to the uttermost men that come unto God by him.

Because he's alive, he's ever able to make intercession for us, to pray for us, to besiege the Father for us, for our needs. Because he's alive, he's able to comfort, he's able to help, he's able to come alongside whatever our circumstance.

Because he's alive, he's coming again for his saints. Because he's alive, we have no cause for sorrow nor mourning.

They will flee away. Because he's alive, because he's alive, he'll cause war to end one day.

Because he is alive, he'll put an end to all tears, all death, all sorrow, all crying, all pain.

[8:16] Because he is alive, he says he will make all things new. He's alive today. He met with his beloved disciples at that upper room, a place of gathering.

And he shared that sweet communion with them, that fellowship. And we reflect on that just now, as we likewise do.

And we're not meeting in an upper room as such, but we could almost contemplate. If we were to close our eyes, we could even be transported back in time.

Transported to that very place. But really, it's not so much about a sacred place as much as a sacred gathering, is it? And that's what this is.

It's a sacred gathering of God's dear people together. So we can have that same heart before him. To believe is to trust him, is to know him.

[9:20] To love him. And you can know that by faith, even now. In a moment of time. We were talking with someone yesterday. I know Peter and I.

Peter, Gregory. And we explained the gospel and they said, That's simple. It's simple. Yes, it is.

It's simple. Trust him. Believe him. It's simple. Man would try to make it complicated, wouldn't we? We'd say we have to do something.

Flagellate ourselves. Or, I don't know. Climb over broken glass and say millions of Hail Marys. Or, who knows what. Enter some religious monastery and fast and pray until we're on the point of death to deserve our salvation.

But none of that. None of it. And simply believe. It's simple. You that will but believe. Believe. Believe the risen saviour today.

[10:27] Don't follow any dead prophet. Follow the risen and living saviour. Trust him. Know him. And tell us how that night that he was betrayed. What a night that was.

Can you imagine? The foreboding. The darkening shadows. Maybe the flickering torches on the hillside. As the arresting party was drawing near to him.

Ultimately. At the garden. Friends. It was on that night. In which he was betrayed. That he took that cup. That bread. And he tells us of his love.

And he still does. Doesn't he? And to think. Possibly it was that very same place. That the risen saviour burst in. To the gathering of the disciples.

As they were. Suffering the loss. Of their saviour. And he came in. Alive. Risen. That same one.

[11:31] We can know today. The risen saviour. He's in the world today. Praise him. God. Says that. We should. Examine ourselves.

And friends. That's the point. Only you can do that. For yourself. I might try to examine you. And miss something. You know. You can hide things from the pastor.

But he can't hide things from God. And only you know. Your state. And standing before him. But honestly. Please. It's between you and God.

To know your state. Before him. And it's simple to trust him. To believe. To know him. And you can know him. Even now. Forever.

Glory to God. Let's go.