

Lessons from an Empty Tomb

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[0 : 00] I would encourage you to open up your Bibles, if you would please, to John chapter 20. John chapter 20. If you're using the Pew Bible, it's on page 906 in the Pew Bible, 920.

John chapter 20. Any of you who've been a part of the church for any length of time, probably have those memories, those memories as a child, perhaps especially of Easter, those traditions that maybe your family had.

One of those traditions our family had was Easter baskets on Sunday morning, and the kids were allowed to try to go and find those baskets, and it was just one of the ways that we anticipated the wonder of what Christ did in terms of rising from the dead.

And those early morning experiences of the women who went to the tomb to look for the Messiah in the tomb, but he wasn't there. Those early childhood memories run deep, don't they?

And I think a lot of the experiences that we have as Christians are formed and deepened in our childhood. I think of the time, the things that I was taught in Sunday school, for example.

[1 : 26] The things I was taught at VBS, the things I learned in Awana, those verses that became familiar to me. Those experiences of faithful men and women who taught me as a child, but also into my teenage years.

All the benefits of those formative years of learning the scripture for men and women who love Jesus. And I would just say, we are so blessed here at Maranatha.

All of the men and women at Maranatha who invest in our children, I'm grateful for you. Thank you for this ministry. But those of you who kind of remember back to your time as a child, and you remember those stories that you were taught, the themes that seem to stand out about those stories are those significant events.

Those heroes of faith, those epic moments as it were, of people who are living for God and seeing great things take place. Maybe you remember Noah and the flood.

Or you remember Abraham, he's offering his son Isaac on the altar. Maybe Joseph in his coat of many colors, or rising to a place of second in command in Egypt.

[2 : 41] Perhaps you might remember Moses leading the children of Israel out of bondage and slavery in Egypt. Or you remember David, of course, David in Goliath.

Or Daniel in the fiery furnace. And there Daniel is in the lion's den. His friends were in the fiery furnace. And all of these epic stories of notable faith seem to stand out.

Those characters, those themes, those men and women of the scripture who seem to have it all together. There seem to be a steadiness about their faith.

There seem to be a resilience about them. They never seem to have a moment of failure. At least in these epic stories that we remember. And somewhere along the way, we come to be formed and fashioned by those stories.

And we think that if we ever experience times of brokenness, times of doubt, times of failure, times of sorrow, times of bewilderment, times of hurt, times of pain, that somehow we're failing in some way.

[3 : 56] And those stories that have become so familiar to us now seem so distant. These men and women of the faith never seem to have baggage.

They never seem to fail. They always seem to have it together in some way. And so when we evaluate our lives, we wonder if there's something wrong with our own understanding of the scripture, our own faith that we bring to the table.

As children, what grabs our attention are those mountain peaks. We seem to forget that these are real people who are experiencing real pain. And that's what John, the gospel writer, wants to remind us of this morning.

John does such an amazing job throughout his gospel, drawing attention to people. He draws attention to individuals. He wants you to see that there are people, real people, who have real struggles, who really need to be encouraged, who really need and have gone through hard things and really need to meet with Christ, who really need a Savior.

And so we come this morning to John chapter 20. If you're there with me, I would encourage you to turn there if you're not there already. But what we find throughout the gospel of John, the purpose for his writing is to draw people to a Savior, to draw people to faith.

[5 : 22] He says in John chapter 20, verse 30, he says, Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book, but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in his name.

We saw last week as we were evaluating the triumphal entry that Jesus had come. He had come to Bethany. He had raised Lazarus from the dead.

This amazing sign that demonstrated to a nation that Jesus was in fact the person he claimed to be. They've been looking for signs.

They've been looking for the testimony, the convincing testimony that Jesus was in fact the Messiah. And so when Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead in this public way, so close to Jerusalem, at least in that moment, the nation received him.

They agreed that he was this Messiah figure. The entire nation recognized him as this one.

Whereas John chapter 12, verse 18 says, The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard that he had done this sign, this sign of raising Lazarus from the dead.

[6 : 39] And not only did the nation believe, but the religious leaders, they couldn't deny that something had happened. John 11, 47 says, So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, What are we to do?

For this man performs many signs. This nation celebrates the Messiah. The religious leaders are grumbling because Jesus had done this sign.

And here is Lazarus right in their midst. This undeniable, unmistakable sign that Jesus was in fact the resurrection and the life.

Jesus had power over life and death. But there was one more sign. One more sign that Jesus had promised. This ultimate sign as it were.

This ultimate evidence that Jesus was not just a miracle worker. Not just a resurrection and a life for someone else. But that Jesus was in fact the one sent from God.

[7 : 38] The son of God himself. John chapter 2, verses 18 to 22. This is the very beginning of Jesus' ministry. And he is foreshadowing this future work.

This future sign. When he says, So the Jews said to him, What sign do you show us for doing these things? Jesus answered them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

The Jews then said, It has taken 46 years to build the temple, and you will raise it up in three days. But he was speaking about the temple of his body.

When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scriptures and the word that Jesus had spoken. Again, Jesus' resurrection from the dead proved once and for all that Jesus is the resurrection and the life.

He is the Messiah. This final, epic, ultimate sign is what everyone was waiting for, everyone was looking for. And so John doesn't want to just take us to the empty tomb and expose us to the facts, to the details of the resurrection.

[8 : 47] He wants us to encounter a person. He wants us to encounter a Savior. He wants to welcome us, to evaluate for ourselves the evidence of the empty tomb, and not just be amazed at the details of a resurrection account, but to encounter the Savior himself, the one who has come to seek and to save the lost.

So we find in John's account a focus on people. It's a different perspective that John wants to draw us to, looking at people, not just the events, because the resurrection changes everything.

As we look this morning at the empty tomb, there are some lessons here for all of us, not just in looking and evaluating the account itself, but to be reminded of what the account is meant to do for us.

It's inviting us to respond. How will we respond to the empty tomb? This morning, we're going to look at five ways that we need to respond. First, we need to come and see the empty tomb.

Come and see the empty tomb. John begins with a very simple statement in verse 1 of chapter 20. He says this, Now, on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early while it was still dark and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.

[10:11] One verse. One, a couple of phrases here that we find, and this is the resurrection account that's given to us by John.

This resurrection account, simple to understand, so sparse in detail as you compare it to the other gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Mary came.

It was dark. The stone was rolled away. That's it. And if we know the other gospel accounts, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, we understand how different this is.

And John is doing this for a reason. Like, where are the other women, John? Where are the spices that are prepared? Where are the guards that were standing at the tomb?

Where are the earthquake and the angels and the shining garments? Where is all of that, John? Where's the announcement he's not here? He's risen, just as he said.

[11:11] So Matthew, Mark, and Luke give us those details. Was John just confused? Was John just didn't understand the details of this account and forgot to capture it for us?

No. John understood the details, but he wants to drive us to something. He wants us to see the personal element here. He is spotlighting individuals.

He wants us to recognize that this resurrection account is for you. This resurrection story is for me. It's for us in this room. It's written for individuals so that we can come and believe who Jesus is.

John is driving at this purpose and if we come to understand the rest of John's gospel account, we'll see all of these stories that are so specific to individuals.

John is the only account that tells us about Andrew who brought his brother Peter to Christ. John is the only gospel record that talks about Philip who brings his brother Nathaniel to Christ.

[12:17] It's only in the gospel of John we see Nicodemus, the ruler of the Jews who meets Jesus by night. Where we see the Samaritan woman, the nobleman's son, the lame man who's at the pool of Bethesda, the woman who's caught in adultery, the man who's born blind, this raising of Lazarus from the dead, Thomas who will ask this question the night before Christ's crucifixion, and then this here in John chapter 20.

Mary Magdalene, a single lone individual who's here at the tomb. Jesus cares for individuals.

And of course we understand that Jesus came for the world. We know for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. And yet he came for individuals.

Jesus came for Mary. And each of us are personally responsible for what we do with the news about Jesus. It's important here because in this opening scene, Mary's devotion is obvious, but it's still, her faith is still incomplete.

She shows up early. She comes prepared. She demonstrates her loyalty. We see this overflow of love in this narrative, but for all of her devotion, we find her conclusion in verse 2.

[13:47] So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and she said to them, they have taken the Lord out of the tomb and we do not know where they have laid him.

For all of her devotion, she is still operating under the assumption that Jesus is dead. She's not expecting a resurrection. She's not looking for triumph.

She's not standing in faith. And John is already reminding us of something that's really important, that for all the devotion that we bring to the table, it is insufficient in what Christ is offering, the faith and personal relationship that can only be true when we come to Christ in the right way.

Mary acknowledged the empty tomb. Now she's invited Peter and John to do the same. She's come, she's seen for herself, she's spoken with Peter and John and we're going to find that they also come and they're going to see for themselves.

And for all of us, we need to do the very same thing. We need to come and see. Come and see the empty tomb. Take a look for yourself. See the evidence that's in front of you, the tomb that still remains empty.

[15:06] Tomb that is a symbol and a stature of Christ who has been raised from the dead. This is the first step to the faith that God is inviting us to enjoy.

Come and see. In verses 3 to 10 we see this next step. The next step is to believe the testimony of the empty tomb. It says in verse 3, So Peter went out with the other disciple and they were going towards the tomb.

Both of them were running together but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. In stooping to look, he saw the linen cloths lying there but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came following him and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there and the face cloth which had been on Jesus' head. Not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in its place.

Then the other disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in and he saw and believed for as yet he did not understand the scripture that he must rise from the dead.

[16:12] Then the disciples went back to their homes. Where Mary runs to tell Peter and John Peter and John then in turn make their way in hurry to the tomb.

Now this was something that was very uncharacteristic in first century. Men in that day did not run. It was undignified. But this was not like any other day and this was not like any other news that they've heard.

John we find outruns Peter. He gets to the tomb first but he stays there outside and he takes a look inside. But Peter as one might expect he bursts straight through he runs right in this boldness and he is unhindered.

Here he is running into the tomb he wants to see things for himself. They observe the scene that Mary described. This stone that's rolled away, the linen cloths that are lying there, the face cloth that's been moved and folded and put away in a different place.

Jesus is gone. But this is not the scene of a robbery. The cloths are not torn. They're not scattered. There's no sign of chaos.

[17:26] There's no sign of panic. There seems to be no sign that this body of Christ had been manhandled in any way and wrestled out of these grave clothes. No. There is order in calm.

There's evidence that's here. But notice in verse 8 it says, the other disciple who reached the tomb first also went in and when he saw he believed.

He believed. What did he believe? Well the next verse tells us a little broader picture of what he believed and helps us understand, for as yet they did not understand the scripture that he must rise from the dead.

From these two verses we see that believing a truth or believing in a truth, believing in facts is not the same as believing in a savior. This is foundational to John.

Some 98 to 102 times throughout the gospel of John, John will use the word believing. And yet in almost every case we find this believing is defective, it's deficient, it's devoid of something, of substance.

[18:37] And here is the same for John. He believed in facts. Jesus was not there but he needed to believe more. And his believing needed to be informed by the scripture.

Notice, as yet they did not understand, the scripture that he must rise from the dead. Now that's important. Faith will need to include the most important piece.

Not just that Jesus' body is missing, but that Jesus himself is risen. The empty tomb had confronted Mary and Peter and John and that's important because biblical faith is not irrational, it's rooted in evidence.

But their faith needed to be informed by the word. God's word is true and because God's word is true, it rests in the evidence of the facts that God has assembled.

The truth statements, the prophecies that Christ has given needed to be confirmed in order to know for a fact that Jesus had risen from the dead.

[19:47] On at least three occasions Jesus had prophesied, they're going to crucify me. They're going to scourge me. They're going to take me. They're going to kill me. But on the third day I'm going to rise.

And those statements proved out true to the very end. And so the stone is moved, the body is gone, the grave clothes remain.

And this ultimate piece of evidence, this ultimate sign of Jesus' resurrection is bearing out in front of them. But they need to understand that evidence is not enough.

The evidence is not enough. They needed to understand the scriptures, they need to be exposed to the word of God, they need to be informed by the scriptures in order to be led to true faith.

Faith only becomes complete when Christ allows us to understand the scriptures for itself. So we come and see the empty tomb.

[20 : 49] We believe the testimony of the empty tomb. Next, we bring our sorrow to the empty tomb. Bring your sorrow to the empty tomb. And so the events of Peter and John now shift again and the story turns and focuses again on Mary who becomes the main character of the narrative.

And we see in her, in verse 11, Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. And as she wept, she stooped to look into the tomb. This word for weeping is used eight times throughout the gospel of John.

Three times it's used during the narrative of Lazarus who was raised from the dead. Once it's used to describe the disciples in the upper room as Jesus is describing to them the weeping and the grief that they will experience at the loss of Jesus in his death.

And now four times John focuses his attention on the weeping of Mary here at the tomb. It's a word that describes anguished crying or wailing.

It was something that gripped an individual. It was this external expression of grief. We find it in verse 11, Mary stood weeping and then as she wept she stooped looking into the tomb.

[22 : 15] Then in verse 13 the angels will ask woman why are you weeping? Then in verse 15 Jesus himself will ask woman why are you weeping? See Mary's love for Christ was real.

She had experienced the liberating power of Christ for herself. She had had seven demons cast out of her during Christ's ministry.

She experienced real bondage and real deliverance from him. Her name Magdalene was not a family surname but it identified her with a small village fishing community named Magdala.

It was on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. This region had been particularly gripped by demonic activity in Jesus as he crisscrossed the region of Galilee.

What would often be seen throughout the narrative as casting out demons and liberating those who had been in bondage to demons and Mary was one of those. He had taught there.

[23 : 20] He had healed there. She had heard Jesus teach there. She had heard the preaching of the kingdom of God there. And Mary was not some random face in the crowd.

Mary had an encounter with Christ, a friendship with the Lord Jesus. In Luke chapter 8 we find that she was also a faithful supporter of Christ's ministry.

Luke's account lets us know that she is financially vested. She along with many other women are sponsoring Christ as he is carrying out this public ministry. She's part of the group who also traveled with the disciples.

She's part of the group that was on this pilgrimage as this final trek into Jerusalem during the time of Passover. It was Mary Magdalene and many other women and the disciples who would make their way together up to Jerusalem.

It's Mary Magdalene who's at the cross. It's Mary Magdalene, one of the very few, two ladies who lingered long enough at the cross to see where Christ would be taken and buried.

[24 : 25] Mary Magdalene would see that. And here she is again. In her devotion she's lingering at the tomb. Hanging on to the moments and the memories that she had with this one that she cherished.

There's no wonder why Mary is crying. Jesus was not a distant figure to her. Jesus was one who delivered her from darkness, who had given her dignity, who had received her devotion, who had changed the entire course of her life.

And now in her mind he's gone. Overcome by grief she looks into the tomb one more time. Notice in verse 11, Mary stood weeping outside the tomb and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb and she saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had lain.

One at the head and one at the feet. They said to her woman why are you weeping? She said to them they have taken away my Lord and I do not know where they have laid him.

I don't know if you've ever been struck by these verses but here here's Mary Magdalene she's looking at angels. They're there in the tomb and she seems to be totally unfazed by their presence.

[25 : 42] How is that possible? Not surprised, not startled, not frightened, just has this blindness in her heart. She's overcome by grief.

She cannot see what's right in front of her. The grace of God sending his angels to minister to her to give her hope to let her know about the risen Lord and all she can say is they've taken the Lord out of the tomb and we do not know where they have laid him.

Then John gives us one of the most remarkable details in all of the resurrection narrative. Verse 20 says having said this she turned around and saw Jesus standing but she did not know that it was

Jesus.

Can you imagine? Think of that. She sees him. She speaks to him and she misses him. In spite of all the personal experience that Mary had had, she had observed his ministry, she had heard his teachings, she had enjoyed the benefits of the deliverance that he gave, she had watched his life, she had stood at the cross, she was there at the tomb, she hears him speak and she misses him. See that's how deep human blindness can be. And that's why salvation is never merely the product of nearness.

[27 : 09] It's never merely the product of proximity. It is always a product of God opening blind eyes.

See, pay attention to this now work of Christ in the response of Christ in verse 15. woman, why are you weeping?

Whom are you seeking? I love the tenderness of our Savior. We don't see any harsh rebuke. We don't see the condescending glare. We don't see the disapproval or the disgust in Christ's response to Mary.

But what you see is compassion. You see the same Savior who wept with Mary at the tomb of Lazarus and is now entering into the grief of another disciple, another Mary here at the empty tomb. The Lord is not irritated by weak disciples. Be blessed that God is not irritated by weak vacillating disciples.

[28 : 16] He is not unmoved by your tears. He understands, He cares, His heart is full of compassion for those who are broken, for those who are hurting, for those who bring their sorrow.

Bring your sorrow, your pain to the Lord Jesus. He will meet you there. See, she knew what Christ had done.

She knew the truths that Christ had shared. She even had recounted, probably was able to share the verses that Christ was offering her to understand.

And yet, there's still here in this moment confusion. You see, we might know all of the theology, we might know all the facts, but unless we come to know the person of Christ, we'll never come to enjoy salvation.

We learn from Mary's story that the risen Christ is still full of compassion towards those who carry sorrow, who carry burdens. So come and see this empty tomb.

[29 : 20] Believe in the testimony of the empty tomb. Bring your sorrow to the empty tomb. But this, perhaps most important, meet your Savior at the empty tomb.

We see this in verse 16, but the end of verse 15 says, 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. Jesus said to her, Mary. She turned and said to him in Aramaic, Rabboni, which means teacher.

One word is all it took, Mary.

He says her name, and with this one word, the darkness breaks, the confusion lifts, the blindness turns to sight, and the sorrow gives way to recognition.

What was it about this one word? And I think there are two reasons why this word was so important. first is because we need to hear the word of God to be changed by the word.

[30 : 28] You know what Paul says in Romans chapter 10 verse 17? He says faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ. Mary, like the disciples, needed to be informed by the scriptures.

Sometimes a very simple word, Mary, brought the rest of his words come flooding back to her memory. She needed to hear the word of Christ. And second, she needed to hear a word that was personal to her.

The Lord knew her name. He said it in only the way that the Savior could say it. It reminds me of what Christ says of him being the good shepherd in John chapter 10.

He says this, he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. The sheep hear his voice and he calls his own sheep by name. He goes before them and the sheep follow him for they know his voice.

I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me. This was not just mere recognition of Mary. This is revelation.

[31 : 33] She sees Jesus for who he is and the good shepherd called her by name and she understood his voice. What happened for Mary is what must happen for every one of us at some point because the gospel is meant to be personal.

It's meant to be individual. It's meant to call you as an individual. Not merely the subject of stories. He's not merely the object of admiration. He's not merely the center of arguments but he must be known.

He must be heard. He must be worshipped. This is why the resurrection matters so deeply because it not just proves that his death and resurrection were real but it proves that he offers life.

He offers life to everyone who will believe in his name. He will come to understand what he has come to offer. And Mary here is delivered again. She was delivered first from the bondage of demons.

Then she was delivered from the bondage of sin. She is enjoying the benefits of faith. Faith has become sight and it now leads her one more step. It's one more step we find in verses 17 and 18. [32 : 45] Share the news of the empty tomb. Share the news of the empty tomb. Find in verse 17 Jesus said to her, Do not cling to me for I have not yet ascended to the father but go to my brothers and say to them I am ascending to my father and to your father to my God and to your God.

Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples I have seen the Lord and that he has said these things to her. Mary doesn't want to let Jesus go. She is clinging to him for all she is worth. She doesn't want to lose him. But Jesus wants to redirect Mary's focus. Wants to help her understand the whole purpose of his coming.

He says I am ascending to my father. Mary I'm not staying. I never planned to stick around. I'm departing just like I told the disciples that the whole purpose for me coming and dying and rising again is not so that I would be a permanent fixture here but that you would be able to enjoy the benefits of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

The Spirit's presence will be among you. Look to him. So don't relate to me as though things are simply going back to how they were. My death and resurrection have changed everything Mary. [34 : 04] Understand things are different now. Don't set your hope merely on my physical presence but understand the greater spiritual reality that is possible because of what I've accomplished for you.

A greater presence, an indwelling presence. Mary recognize the wonder of that. And now this relationship that's changed notice how Jesus says go and tell my brothers.

That is striking because before he had called them the twelve. The disciples were the twelve. Or they were little children. Or they were servants. Or they were friends.

But now Jesus is referring to them as brothers because everything has changed. He describes this now profound identity that they can enjoy because of what Christ has accomplished.

I am ascending to my father and to your father to my God and your God. There's now this personal nature. this shared relationship that we get to enjoy.

[35 : 10] This new identity that's possible because of Christ. Of what he's accomplished. He's your God now. He's your father now. The wall has been torn down.

The veil has been ripped in two. Access to the Lord is now possible for those who believe in him. In this new saving faith it will do something.

Well what does it do? Well it sends them. Notice Mary is sent. Jesus commands her go to my brothers and say to them Mary go and tell.

Tell them everything that you've heard. This is the beginning of the promise of what we'll see as now we turn the page to this church. This church age we've been studying over the past couple of weeks.

The death and resurrection of Christ has changed everything for us. Remember this promise in Acts chapter 1 verse 8. You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses.

[36 : 16] This twofold promise of what will be accomplished for those who believe in Jesus. This indwelling power you will receive. This mission now you will be witnesses and Mary now becomes this first witness.

witness. Mary obeys. We find that in verse 18. Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples I have seen the Lord. And what a beautiful thing it is that Jesus now uses Mary as this first mouthpiece of this gospel message that's being shared now to the disciples and will now make its way as we find we turn the page to the book of Acts.

We'll make its way to Jerusalem and to Judea and Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth. We are beneficiaries of this gospel witness that started because of Christ encouraging Mary to be in the

first in line to share this amazing message of the risen savior.

One who had been bound by demons is now freed. Freed by the resurrection and the life. So what lessons do we learn? What lessons do we need to take to heart?

Well first we need to come and see. See the gospel of John has been intensely personal. It requires a personal decision. No one can make a decision of faith for you.

[37 : 45] No one else's faith can be credited to your account. You must believe. You must confess. You must worship the Lord for yourself.

You cannot rest in your devotion. You must hope in the savior. Second believe the testimony. The resurrection has been attested to and the empty tomb remains empty today.

The grave clothes were there. The eyewitnesses testimonies were given. The works of Christ attested to the divinity and identity of who he was.

The signs that Christ promised were given so that you might believe. And that those who were closest to him, Mary, the disciples, and then 500 that would see Jesus in Galilee, we find in 1 Corinthians chapter 15, they all gave and bore witness to the credibility of this message.

The risen Lord had in fact risen from the dead. Believe the testimony. You see, Christianity is not built on wishful thinking.

[38 : 55] it's actually built on grounded, testifiable facts that God has given to us. This historic triumph of Jesus Christ. We learn the lesson of being able to bring our sorrow.

Bring our sorrow to him. We see in Jesus one who sympathizes with sorrow. He has been touched with the feelings of our infirmities. His compassion is real.

And some of you this morning may need to be encouraged by the fact that Jesus cares about your hurt and your pain. Jesus can sympathize with the heartbreak that maybe you are experiencing even now.

Maybe you're weary. Maybe your emotions are raw. Maybe you have felt the injustice of those around you. Maybe life has been very, very hard and Jesus cares.

Bring your sorrow to him. Remember Mary at the tomb. Jesus did not shame her. He met her. He spoke her name. He called her to himself.

[40 : 01] And he invites her to enjoy fellowship with him through Christ. The same kind of fellowship that we can experience as we bring our sorrow to Christ.

Fourth, we need to meet our Savior. Jesus stands ready to save. He stands ready to save. The Son of Man has come to seek and to save those who are lost.

Are you lost this morning? Jesus wants to save you. He wants to be your Savior, your deliverer. He wants to unlock the door of your heart and let you experience the freedom that only comes through knowing and experiencing Christ.

He wants to save. And this, he's the only means of rescue. He's not a backup plan. He's not life insurance as it were.

He's not one of many possibilities. Cast yourself entirely on him. Abandon self-rescue.

[41 : 05] Reject every other promise of deliverance Jesus alone can save. Finally, share the news. Share the news.

I'm struck with Christ's two-fold promise here. You will be filled. You will receive power and you will be witnesses. Those who believe in Christ will be changed.

And one of the greatest ways for us to understand and see the change that Christ has produced in us is that now we can't help but speak about what he's done.

I'm reminded we're those who proclaim the praises of him, who called us out of darkness, into his marvelous light. We can't help it because the spirit indwells us and makes us witnesses.

It's one of the beautiful confirming signs that you belong to him. It's your delight in speaking about him. So what do we do with this?

[42 : 10] Well, we don't stand at the empty tomb nearly as observers today. We're not to admire this story from a distance. We're not to be content with devotion that never becomes real enduring faith.

We're not to settle for religious familiarity without a personal trust in Jesus Christ. We don't celebrate the sign of his resurrection while refusing the Savior himself.

Come to the risen Christ. And like Mary, go and tell. There is a world full of weeping people in empty places.

Be changed. Allow the miracle of Christ's resurrection to activate in your life a message, a witness of change of what Christ has accomplished.

Let's pray. Father, thank you for this amazing work, this final sign that Christ is in fact the one who raised from the dead.

[43 : 22] And Father, I pray that you would not just lead us into faith, but that you would help us to be a mouthpiece of the message so that others can enjoy the faith that you offer. Thank you that you are the seeking Savior.

You've come to seek and to save those who are lost. And Lord, this morning, if there's anybody who does not know you as their Savior, I pray that they would find someone that they know who loves you, who can share with them how to have a relationship with you.

Don't let them go away without knowing the Savior themselves. Pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.