

# The Tomb Really is Empty

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 20 April 2025

Preacher: Henry Dyck

- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     He is risen. The tomb is empty. I'd like to welcome each and every one here this morning.
- ! I'd like to welcome each and every one here this morning. We have some visitors among us as well. A special greeting to you as well. Our Lord and Savior is risen.
- The cross could not keep Him. The grave could not keep Him. Death could not keep Him. He is the Lord and He reigns with the Father on high.
- We've been blessed this morning already. We had the sunrise service earlier this morning. And as well, the special number this morning.
- Thank you guys for that. Some good singing voices there and giftings with instruments and so on. And we've recently had the young ladies class as well doing a couple special numbers.
- [ 1 : 0 9 ]     It's good to see, you know, from the congregation. We see these giftings coming out and then being exercised. So I just want to encourage you guys to keep up with that.
- It is good to see. And even with the video clip that we played the first thing here, many of the names given to God and to our Lord Jesus throughout Scripture, as well as various words and phrases describing Him, just brings out the magnitude of our God, how great He is.
- And just thinking of that, you know, if someone would describe me, how long would that video be? It would be a couple of seconds maybe. But here to have a video of this length, you know, describing our Lord and our God, how great He is.
- It is Easter Sunday this morning, and the church celebrates this day, this time of year.
- It was nearly 2,000 years ago now that the man Jesus fulfilled what He came to this earth to do. On Palm Sunday, He sat astride a donkey's colt, and He rode into Jerusalem.
- [ 2 : 5 3 ]     The time had come for the world to recognize Him as the Messiah. But the world chose to reject Him.
- And by the end of the day Thursday, Jesus had been betrayed and arrested. After an eventful night of hurried court proceedings before various different officials, the Savior had been condemned to die.
- Early the next morning, on Friday morning, He was mocked, He was beaten, and He was spit upon. And at about roughly 9 a.m., our Redeemer was nailed to a Roman cross to die.
- It was about six hours of agony for Him on that cross, and He gave up the ghost. And finally, towards the end of the day, He was laid in a cold tomb of stone as His final resting place.
- It's sad to think about what the Lord endured that week. And it's hard even to imagine the depth of the pain and suffering that He went through.
- [ 4 : 2 8 ]     We are so far removed from violence like that. But all of that changed on Easter Sunday morning.
- The church rejoices at the events of that day. What seemed so final a few days before was a new beginning.

That sealed tomb that was to rid the world of a blasphemer was empty. The stone was rolled back from the entrance, and there was no body inside.

What a shock that news must have been to the world in those days. And of course, Jesus' resurrection had been prophesied.

Even after all the miracles proving who He was, including raising people from the dead, the events of Good Friday seemed final even to those closest to Him.

[ 5 : 56 ] But that Sunday, the empty tomb had them in disbelief. The women that followed Jesus were in disbelief.

The apostles, who as well for three years had followed Christ and been taught by Him, were in disbelief. All around, there was disbelief.

And the Gospels record this, and that's what I was wanting to look at this morning. And so, for those of you at the sunrise service, the repetition of what we heard there this morning.

So, bear with me. The question comes back to us as well. Do we really believe the tomb is empty?

And so, the title of the message this morning, The Tomb Really Is Empty. First off, I'd like to just begin, we'll look at the women that came to the tomb and their disbelief.

[ 7 : 20 ] Starting in verse 1. Now, on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they and certain other women with them came to the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared.

But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. So, the morning of Easter Sunday begins with some of the women who followed Jesus coming to the tomb where He had been laid.

And if we look ahead to verse 10 in our text, it gives us the names of a few of the women. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and it says other women.

The account in Mark chapter 16 adds the name Salome as well. And so, you know, at first glance, it seems perfectly normal for these women to show up at the site of the tomb.

The last verses in chapter 23 of Luke, verses 55 and 56. I'll just read those for us. And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how He was laid.

[ 8 : 48 ] Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils, and they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment. So it reveals them observing Jesus' body being laid to rest in that tomb.

And so they knew where He had been laid. It also tells us that they prepared spices and oils before resting on the Sabbath.

And so these spices and oils, they were used to anoint the body of a deceased loved one. And so to them, for them to do this, it was a final act of honoring Christ.

And it speaks of the devastation that all of Christ's followers must have felt in those days. A week earlier, Palm Sunday, they all had been shouting Hosanna to the King, believing that their Redeemer would free Israel from oppression.

now they had just witnessed His death and His burial. The whole weekend was filled with sadness and grief for them.

[ 10 : 16 ] The one whom their hopes had rested upon was dead in a grave. What they had believed would happen had gone so horribly wrong.

And so now, early on Sunday morning, about sunrise, these women are on the way to the tomb with spices and oils to anoint Jesus' body.

And so that reveals, you know, there's an act of unbelief. They'd seen the body placed in the tomb, the great stone rolled in front of the entrance.

The Gospel of Mark also records the women as they're on their way, they're talking among themselves, wondering, who will roll away the stone from the door, from the tomb for us?

In their minds, Jesus is gone. He wasn't coming back. And so what a surprise it must have been as they draw near to the tomb and they're looking ahead to the tomb and they see that stone rolled away, not in front of the entrance of the tomb any longer.

[ 11 : 43 ] Still, these women are in disbelief. They enter the tomb, you know, the stone is rolled out of the way so they have access now and they're still focused on what they had come to do except there was no body there.

There was no body to anoint. And continuing on in verse 4, verse 4, and it happened as they were greatly perplexed about this that behold two men stood by them in shining garments.

Then as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here but is risen. Remember how he spoke to you when he was still in Galilee saying, The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and the third day rise again.

And they remembered his words. Now at this development as they enter into the tomb and they see that the body is missing, it says that they were greatly perplexed.

Another word for perplexed is puzzled. They were greatly puzzled. They didn't understand what was going on. And then the appearance of angels sent them to the ground in fear.

[ 13 : 24 ] But hear the message of the angels. Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here but is risen.

God sent the angels to make these women aware of their unbelief.

As the angels repeat the words of Jesus regarding his death and resurrection, the women remember what he had taught them.

Matthew and Mark record the angels telling the women to go tell the disciples quickly that Jesus was risen from the dead.

So you wonder where were the disciples? First thing in the morning and the first day of the week after the Sabbath the women are there at the tomb.

[ 14 : 32 ] Where are the disciples? Continuing on in verse 9 then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest.

It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles and their words seemed to them like idle tales and they did not believe them.

But Peter arose and ran to the tomb and stooping down he saw the linen cloths lying by themselves and he departed marveling to himself at what had happened.

Where were the disciples? They were hiding in fear. They had scattered when Jesus was arrested on Thursday night.

Peter and another unnamed disciple possibly John are the only two who are mentioned as being at Jesus' trial.

[ 15 : 43 ] And only John is mentioned witnessing the crucifixion. And so these disciples too must have felt that everything they had hoped for in Christ was gone.

As they had spent those three years walking with Jesus they had been of the mindset that he would set up an earthly kingdom. And now these women are racing to tell them the tomb is empty.

And there had been angels there saying that Jesus was risen from the dead. This news disciples took that as nonsense.

It was all a crazy story. But who should have believed it more than the disciples?

miracles. They had seen Jesus performing so many miracles. Jesus had even raised people from the dead right in front of them.

[ 17 : 04 ] Jairus' daughter, the widow's son, the son that was in a coffin being carried to the burial place. And Jesus stops them and he raises the widow's son to life up out of that coffin.

And Lazarus, a very familiar one. So these disciples, they had seen Jesus bringing these people back to life. Would it have been too much a stretch of the imagination for Jesus himself to come out of the grave?

And obviously they must have thought so. They would not believe the women. And the tale that these women were telling them.

But something was bothering Peter's mind. Was it because, maybe because he had denied Christ those three times and he dearly wanted the opportunity to make it right with him?

I don't know. something was bothering him. He didn't believe the woman's report, yet he needed to make sure of it himself.

[ 18 : 30 ] So, just to further expound on that, I'd like to turn to the account in John 20. John chapter 20 verses 1 to 10.

That's a bit more of an account on Peter finding out for himself that the tomb is empty. John chapter 20, starting in verse 1.

Now, the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. Then she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, they have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.

Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter, and came to the tomb first.

And he, stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there, yet he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb.

[ 19 : 40 ] And he saw the linen cloths lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself.

Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also, and he saw and believed. For as yet they did not know the scripture that he must rise again from the dead.

Then the disciples went away again to their own homes. So here we have Peter and John running to the tomb.

John got there first, and he just simply looked down into the tomb, but he wouldn't go in. And Peter, when he arrives, he is a bit bolder, and he goes right down into the tomb, and John later follows him.

both of them see the linen strips of cloth that Jesus had been wrapped in laying there, just as if he should still have been wrapped up in them, but there was no body there.

[ 20 : 55 ] You know, what Mary Magdalene had reported had caused them at first to think that somebody had moved the body. That is what Mary told them, and so that is what their thought was.

The body had been moved, but now seeing those strips of cloth laying as they did, and the handkerchief neatly folded apart from the strips of linen, it says they believed.

Jesus' body hadn't been taken by others. Something else had happened here. We call Thomas, the disciple Thomas, the doubter, because he needed to see Jesus before he would believe him to be alive.

But Peter and John too had been in disbelief, and they needed to see the evidence of the empty tomb before they would believe. The angel's message to the woman would have sparked memory in the disciples as well, for Jesus had taught them as well.

Now, I already mentioned it earlier. Let's turn to the account in Mark, Mark chapter 8. Mark chapter 8, verse 31, and the first part of verse 32.

[ 22 : 30 ] And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.

He spoke this word openly. Jesus taught them openly about his coming death and resurrection.

And so, they should have known, but their understanding was clouded. It was too hard to comprehend. And so, as we had in the last part of the account in Luke that we're looking at this morning, it says that Peter left the tomb marveling or wondering what had happened.

what does the empty tomb mean to us today?

We're almost 2,000 years removed from the events of Good Friday and Easter Sunday. We didn't witness these events firsthand.

[ 24 : 00 ] We have the four gospels accounts of what took place. The tomb itself isn't what's significant or even the cross.

They are objects that tell us about something that happened. They point to what Christ accomplished. Take the cross.

The cross was an instrument of death. There's nothing wonderful in that except that Jesus was nailed to one that fateful Friday morning.

All because of me and because of you. We were intended to have a relationship with our Creator, but the sin nature that we were born with had ruined that.

We were born separated from God. and that divide needed to be bridged. And there was only one who could do that.

[ 25 : 23 ] He was Jesus Christ, God's only Son. The only man who knew no sin, whose blood was the only atonement the Father would accept to cover my sins and your sins.

Jesus came to this sin-cursed earth knowing he was going to die in our stead.

He never held back. He never resisted. He yielded his life to the hands of his enemies and they nailed him to that cross to die unknowingly fulfilling Christ's purpose here on this earth.

earth. We heard on Friday already how Christ bore a burden on that cross for the sin of the world weighed on his shoulders.

His blood was shed for all mankind once for all on that day. And everyone who comes under that precious blood is cleansed from all unrighteousness forevermore.

[ 26 : 54 ] Sins past, present, and future are blotted out by that crimson flow. our God, our Father in heaven, can look on us once more because we are pure in his sight again, because of his son's finished work on the cross.

The tomb was a place to bury a body. we're more familiar with graves dug in the earth, and so it too wasn't that special of itself.

And it was an interesting turn of events that brought Jesus' body to be laid in that tomb. Now, if it hadn't been the Passover that weekend when Jesus was crucified, his body most likely would have been left hanging on that cross for days and just left there for the birds to pick away at.

At best, he would have been buried in a common grave and probably together with the other two thieves who were hanging by his side. Joseph of Arimathea, who owned the tomb that Jesus' body was laid in, he was a member of the Sanhedrin, the governing body of the Jews who were instrumental in having Jesus put to death.

Joseph was not consenting to having Jesus killed. He was sympathetic toward Christ. Christ. And together with Nicodemus, who is a Pharisee, he asked for the body of Jesus and he laid him in his own tomb where no one had been laid before.

[ 29 : 11 ] What made the tomb special is when the women arrived there that Sunday morning and found the stone rolled away and Jesus' body no longer inside the tomb.

The empty tomb declared, he is not here but is risen. Christ Jesus had conquered the final enemy, death.

death. The tomb could not hold the Savior of the world. Death could not hold the Savior of the world and it will not hold those who are found in him.

Let's turn to 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. 1 Thessalonians 4 verses 16 and 17.

For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with him in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord.

[ 30 : 51 ] Death is not final for those in Christ. We will live with him for all eternity. Do we believe the tomb is really empty?

God is as I pondered this question, I wondered, do we have an advantage over the disciples who disbelieved?

They walked together with the Lord, and they were taught by him. They were looking forward forward to the Savior's coming, and with Jesus coming to this earth and proving that he was the Son of God, and they acknowledged this, they believed he would establish an earthly kingdom.

God will come. But with Jesus' death, they lost all hope in him as their Savior. He was dead.

He was gone. It was a moment in time where they despaired. today, we look back, recognizing the Savior has come, that Jesus was the Son of God, just as he said he was.

[ 32 : 31 ] Being in the faith, we understand that he came to die. It was his purpose on this earth. And we have the full book of God's word, the Bible, and we can read the accounts of his death and resurrection.

And we know he lives, and that he has ascended back to the Father in heaven, and he is preparing a place for us to be with him forever.

to believe someone rose from the dead, it would take quite an imagination. To read in God's holy word that he sent his son to die for us, and on the third day, he rose again from the dead, we accept that by faith, that it is as he says.

The evidence, the proof, is recorded in the pages of the scriptures. By faith, we accept it, and we believe.

because we have faith, we glory in the cross of Christ, and we rejoice that the tomb is empty.

[ 34 : 13 ] Our Savior lives. Let's pray. Our heavenly Father, we bow before you this morning, Easter Sunday, where we come together in remembrance of that empty tomb.

Lord, we know that you accepted his sacrifice, that you brought him up out of that grave, alive and well, and that he is there with you today, and he is preparing a place for us, that where he is, we may be also.

Lord, we just thank you for the restoration of that relationship with you, that we can confidently come before your throne of grace, and that we can talk with you and share our cares with you.

It is all because of the finished work on the cross and that empty tomb. Thank you, Lord Jesus. Amen. Amen.