

# The Empty Tomb

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[ 0 : 00 ] Let's turn again for a little to the second reading, Luke chapter 24, and looking at this section, verses 1 to 12.

It'll be very interesting looking at this account of the resurrection of Jesus by looking at bringing it all together from the different gospel writers, but that's not what we're doing just now, we're just going through the gospel of Luke.

Last week, we noticed very simply towards the end the burial of the Lord Jesus, and one of the things that has struck us is how matter-of-fact everything is, and they crucified him, and where he was buried, everything is given in a very kind of matter-of-fact detail.

Now, you remember last week we were looking at the different groups of people or different individuals. There were the people who were below the cross. I was the religious leaders and the soldiers who were mocking Jesus.

Of course, below the cross there were others who were followers of Jesus who were at a distance. Then we were looking at somebody who was straight across from the cross, a centurion, who had been watching everything, watching all the proceedings.

[ 1 : 18 ] He was the one who was over the execution, and he was the one who made the great declaration about Jesus when he saw all that had happened. Then we saw the people who were on the cross with Jesus, and we saw how one was mocking Jesus, the other who had already initially been mocking Jesus, turned to worship him and seek salvation.

And then we saw emerging from the shadows this man, Joseph of Arimathea, to take charge of the burial of the Lord Jesus, and we saw him as a secret disciple.

But he didn't remain a secret disciple. He became an incredibly courageous disciple because he came out of the shadows at probably the most dangerous time possible.

It was so dangerous that Jesus' own disciples, those who had followed him closely, were hiding behind locked doors. That's how afraid Peter was and James was at this particular time.

And yet here's this man, Joseph of Arimathea, who we're told this in John's Gospel, who was a secret follower, and he wasn't able, in a sense, to publicly proclaim his allegiance and love for Jesus.

[ 2 : 37 ] There comes this point where he has to. And you know, the Lord will work it in people's lives in such a way that his people have to come forward and make that declaration, make that stance, make that commitment, declare where their allegiance lies.

He will not allow them just to remain forever in the shadows. And so we find this, and it was the same with Nicodemus. We're told that in John's Gospel that Nicodemus came with Joseph as well. Now we see at the end of chapter 23 that the women, there were women watching everything. They were taking note of where the tomb was, and they were taking note of the burial.

It tells us that in verse 55, the women who had come with him from Galilee followed, and they saw the tomb and how his body was laid.

So they were watching all that. Now, of course, the tomb that Jesus was put into was very different to the kind of grave that we're familiar with.

[ 3 : 42 ] It was, it would be like a cave. It was, there would be a rock face, and the rock, the like of a cave would be dug out from the rock face.

And there would be an entrance which would be under a meter high, about three foot high, or just under three foot high. And just a small little place that somebody could crawl in and take the body into.

So that this is, this is where Jesus would be into this cave-like. That was the kind of tomb. And that is why the women would be able to come later and crawl into the tomb and be able to put these

spices upon Jesus.

These spices would be used there to try and slow down the decomposition and such like. So that's why they were preparing these spices. And they were going to come, and they would be able to get in there.

But of course, what was put then at the mouth of the tomb was this huge rock, a big, big stone. And there would be a tunnel, like as if you were going to let water run.

[ 4 : 50 ] You know how you would make this kind of tunnel thing. And the rock, this huge rock, would be placed in there into this tunnel against the thing. And over the period of time, it would sort of take and it would become almost like a sealed tomb.

Now, of course, we read that these women went, they went home to prepare spices because it was now Friday evening. And this was the preparation. This time was the preparation of the Sabbath. And of course, from sunset on Friday, when Friday night came in and sunset came in, that was the beginning of the Sabbath. So there was a rush.

We believe that even Joseph of Arimathea, though everything would be done with great dignity, he was very conscious that it was coming to the evening. That's what it tells us.

It was the day of preparation and the Sabbath was beginning. So that when Joseph was burying Jesus, it would be around sunset on Friday.

[ 5 : 52 ] And so he would be also in a hurry to get everything finished before the Sabbath began. Now, it's very obvious that nobody was expecting a resurrection.

Joseph wasn't because he was putting Jesus in this grave. The women weren't because they were preparing spices to anoint the body of Jesus.

The disciples weren't because they were hidden away in this house, in the room, behind locked doors. Nobody was expecting the resurrection.

The resurrection of Jesus took everybody by surprise. And in a sense, that's strange, isn't it?

Because Jesus, throughout his ministry, kept telling his disciples he was going to be put to death and he was going to rise again on the third day.

It wasn't that he told them that once. He told it to them repeatedly on various occasions. So this wasn't some obscure teaching that Jesus just mentioned in the passing.

[ 7 : 02 ] It was something that he repeatedly told them. And yet, they didn't lay hold upon it. They didn't accept it. They didn't understand it.

They didn't really believe it. And you know, one of the things that as you read this, it makes you realize, is that God is at work often and we don't see it.

God was working in the most awesome, marvelous, spectacular way on that resurrection morning. Nobody was anticipating it.

Nobody was expecting it. Nobody was appreciating what was happening. Everybody was despondent. And God was at work in the most glorious way. And he had told them he was going to do that.

And nobody saw it. Nobody expected it. And you know, you can't help but look at that and say to yourself, well, is that not a lesson to us?

[ 8 : 02 ] To ask the Lord that our eyes would be open to see him working. Because it's all too possible for us just to be like the disciples, hidden away in a group of negativity, thinking that everything is finished, that there's no future.

They're all despondent and filled with fear. And God is at work, demonstrating his power. It is, in a sense, the dawn of the most wonderful day in the kingdom.

And they're missing it. They're not ready to see it, to understand it, to believe it. And you know, that can happen to us as well. And we can be saying, ah, there's nothing happening.

I believe we can grieve the Lord by saying, there's nothing happening. The Lord is saving souls. People being converted.

People being brought from darkness into light, from death to life. And people saying, ah, there's nothing happening. There are spectacular things happening. Awesome things happening.

[ 9 : 11 ] Wonderful. That is the most marvelous thing. There is rejoicing in heaven over every sinner that is saved. And sometimes God's people on earth are saying, ah, there's nothing happening.

I wonder what the Lord is saying. No wonder the angels are looking into this. It must baffle them. You see, we can miss so much. The psalmist said, open mine eyes, that I might behold wonderful

things out of your law.

Do we pray that? You see, we can come to God's word, and we can read it, close it, and go away. We haven't seen anything wonderful in it. You can get somebody else coming to it, and their heart is thrilled.

Because the Lord has opened their eye, opened their mind to see some. They've seen it often enough before. But it's new to them again on this particular day.

And that's how we should be living. Daily receiving. Daily having our eyes opened. To appreciate. You know, the disciples were at that time, and again they thought there was nothing happening.

[10:25] Jesus said to them, look, it's full of potential. There are things happening. Open your eyes and see. Remember how he said to them, look, I tell you.

That's what Jesus said to them. Look, I tell you. Lift up your eyes. And see that the fields are white for harvest.

Disciples couldn't see it. All around them. There was a huge spiritual harvest. Ready. And they couldn't see it.

Is it possible that we're like that? You see, our own agendas. Our own prejudices. Our own dullness.

Can cloud our vision. So that we're not seeing. We need to be. We need to have the Lord filling our vision. As we come to him through the word. And ask that every day.

[11:22] That we may be seeing his hand at work. That we may be seeing what might not be obvious. Because the Lord is constantly answering prayer. He's constantly doing things.

And it's because we've worked out everything in our own wee world as it is. I'm guilty of that. We're all guilty of that. Sometimes when we pray to the Lord.

We have already worked out in our prayer. How the Lord is going to answer. So often the Lord will answer us. In a way completely differently. To anything that we expected.

And often it's because his answer is so different. To what we anticipated and expected. That we think. Oh the Lord hasn't answered at all. He has. But not the way we thought.

And that's why we need to have this discernment. We need to be spiritually alive. To be seeing the Lord at work. And my friend he is. So that our eyes will be open to see.

[12:22] And so that's part of what we see here. That the disciples. These immediate disciples. They were missing out. On one of the greatest days ever. In the kingdom of God.

It's not extraordinary. Behind locked doors. Jesus had told them. What was going to happen. Were they there. Watching. Waiting. No. They didn't even believe.

It was going to happen. And then we find these women. Very early in the morning. And you know. These women are an inspiration to us. They are an inspiration. And an encouragement.

Because of their zeal. Their love. Their commitment. Their allegiance. Nothing was going to put them off. The big stone. Wasn't going to put them off.

The guard. That was set there. Because the Jewish leaders. Had asked that a guard. Would be set over it. Nothing was going to put them off. Because of their love. To and for the Lord Jesus.

[13:19] Now of course. When they got there. We find that the. The stone. Which of course. Was going to be a difficulty for them. We find. That the stone. Had already been rolled away. There was a great earthquake.

There was angelic presence. And the soldiers. Of course. Ultimately. Initially. They. They fainted. They were. Just. Filled with such fear.

And eventually. Run away. But what has so often. Been highlighted. When people look at this. Particular episode. In the resurrection of Jesus. And the faith of the women. As they make. And their love.

The love of the women. As they make their way. To the tomb. Is the fact. That the Lord. Has gone before them. And dealt with the difficulties. That they feared. And you know.

That's so often. True in our experience. As well. So often. We're filled with crippling fears. And we say. Well I can't. How often. We've said that. I can't do this. My friend.

[14:16] The Lord. Will never ask you. To do something. You can't do. He will equip you. He will give you the grace. He will give you the strength. He will give you the ability.

The Lord. Equips us. For everything. That he asks us to do. And that's one of the things. We've got to lay hold upon. In the Christian life. And so we find. That these women.

As they make their way. That the. That the stone. Has been rolled away. But. When they arrive there. Of course. They become really perplexed. Because. It's not what they expected. The stone's been rolled away.

But when they go into the tomb. The body. Of Jesus. Has gone. And there. There are two men. And we read there. That they're. They're there. In this. Dazzling.

Dazzling apparel. Dazzling clothing. And of course. The. The women are frightened. And they bow their faces. To the ground. Now it's quite obvious.

[15:12] That. Both. The soldiers. And the women. Saw. The angels. Angels. Angels are there.

I believe. There are angels. Here today. We can't see them. But if the Lord. Were to open our eyes. It would be quite remarkable. What we would see. They are there.

The angels. Remember. Are ministering spirits. They are constantly. Doing. The bidding. The bidding. The bidding. Of the Lord. And these same. Two angels. On the one hand.

Struck. Fear. And terror. Into. The soldiers. They had no message. For the soldiers. These were the enemy. They had no message. The soldiers. Run away. In utter fear.

Fear. But they had a message. For the women. And although the women. Were filled with fear.

Also. There was a sense of awe. And. The angels ask. Why are you seeking the living.

[16:08] With the dead. He's not here. But has risen. These are. Some of the most wonderful words. In the Christian faith. He's not here.

He's risen. And today. How thankful we are. That our salvation. Is a complete. Salvation. Jesus. Had to rise again.

Jesus. Roles. From the dead. Triumphant. Over it. Jesus. Didn't just. As it were. Come back. From the dead. He overcame it. And in overcoming it.

Yes. Destroyed. It's horrors. It's terrors. It's everlasting death. Death. He has won victory. And Jesus. Is the first fruits. Of the resurrection. Jesus.

Is the proof. He's a guarantee. That what has happened to him. Will happen to us as well. Because we are linked. To him. He died for us.

[17:07] And his death. Has been made over to us. He rose for us. And his rising. Is such that we will rise too. You see.

Jesus' work. Wasn't simply. To deal with. The sin. In the sense of. Forgiving it. Thankfully. He's done that. The salvation.

Is complete. It governs. Our sin. And all that we are. And all that we have done. But it also governs. Our body. It governs.

When we talk of. A complete salvation. That means. That it refers to. All that happens. In the grave. All that happens.

To our soul. As it departs. His life. What happens. Afterwards. In the resurrection. When the graves. Will open. And what a day.

[18:01] That will be. And when the dust. Will rise. Will rise. As a body. And the God. Who commanded. By his word. Who made man. From the dust.

To the ground. And who made woman. From the rib of man. Who formed. And fashioned. And shaped. That same God. The God. The only God. Of this whole universe.

And world. The everlasting God. Will again. By his word. Bring. To life. The dead bones. And the dust. And make a spiritual.

Glorious body. A body that will be fitted. Exactly. For our soul. And reunited. And Jesus. Is a proof of that. He is a guarantee. And today.

That's why we rejoice. That the tomb. Is empty. And so we find. The women. After they've got this. Message. From the angels. Because.

[19:00] We find. That they return. To the. Tell the disciples. To tell the eleven. That's what we're told here. That. When they told these things.

To the apostles. Verse nine. Returning from the tomb. They told all these. Things. To the eleven. And to the rest. A lot of people wonder. Why did Jesus. Reveal.

Himself. Why was the message. Given. First and foremost. To the women. Before the disciples.

Why did Jesus. Because we read. In Matthew's account. That Jesus.

Actually revealed. Himself. To the women. Before they. Before they even. Got back to the disciples. Well a lot of people. Believe it is. Because. Of this very thing.

Because of the. Love. Devotion. And commitment. Of the women. They were out in the. They were out in the open. They were engaged. In the work of the kingdom. Even although.

[ 19 : 54 ] Their. Their thinking. Was distorted. And even although. They hadn't grasped things. They were still searching. They were involved. And I believe. The Lord.

Is rewarding. The industry. Of these women. The love of these women. Because. As we said. His disciples have. They've run away. They're hidden away.

And here are these women. And they're involved. They're out in the open. The Lord. Reveals himself. Now I know. There's exceptions. To the rules. But very often.

That is when the Lord. Will reveal himself. To his people. Is when they are. Searching. And seeking. And when they are involved. And when they're working. Not when they've taken their hand.

Off the plow. I know there are exceptions. But. The more. The Lord. Has revealed himself. To you. And the more. You are involved.

[ 20 : 53 ] In the work. Of the kingdom. And the more. You are seeking. The good of the kingdom. The more likely. The Lord. Is to continue. To reveal himself. To you. Through the word. That's.

That's the way it operates. That's the way it works. And so. We find that. The reaction of the women. Is. Is. I mean. They completely. They believed.

Fully the words. Even before Jesus met them. They believed the words. Of the angels. But it's quite remarkable. The reaction of the. The disciples. Because for them.

It was. An. It was. Idle. Tale. An idle talk. Literally. Nonsense. You know. That's quite extraordinary. That was the reaction. Of the disciples. That the women.

Were talking. Nonsense. That's kind of what the. The Greek word means. That they were talking. That they were just talking rubbish. I. It's. Quite extraordinary.

[ 21 : 50 ] And. This shows us just. How real. The Bible is. Because. You know. People say. Oh. This was all made up. Well. I'll tell you this. If you were trying to make this story up.

This is not how you would make it. You wouldn't be having the evidence. Of Christ's resurrection. The revelation of Christ's resurrection. First of all. Revealed to women. Because women didn't have that much of a place.

In the first century. You most certainly would. This is not the way it would be coming. A group of women. Being the ones who were coming. To tell the men. What had happened.

That story. In first century. Palestine. Would have been a definite. No no. And you know. You will often find people saying. Oh. It's just a story. And it's really annoying.

When you hear people saying that. Because. It goes completely against. How a story would actually be made. This is truth. This is reality. And this is part of what makes a Bible. So wonderful.

[ 22 : 47 ] Is it's. Real honesty. And dealing with it. Sometimes dealing with difficult issues. And dealing with it. Just as it is. But you know. There's another thing that strikes you here.

Our Christian faith. Is rooted. In the death. And in the resurrection. Of the Lord Jesus Christ. And we all. Thankfully. We all. Rejoice in the resurrection. We believe it. We don't have a problem with it.

It's not just. We don't have a problem. With the resurrection. We embrace it. We are thankful for it. But there are people. Who do have a problem. I have tried to speak sometimes. It's happened on a few occasions.

To people. And you're trying to. People who have no background. Or understanding. And you're trying to explain. The Christian faith. And. It's like Paul. On one occasion.

Remember when he was. Debating and arguing. And. They were seeming. They were. They were fine. Until it came to the resurrection. And then they struggled. And there are people. To this day.

[ 23 : 44 ] Who struggle with it. And sometimes. You can get really despondent. When you're trying to share. The Christian faith. With people. Who just say. Oh. Sorry. I just. I can't accept that part.

Well. Let this be an encouragement. Here are the disciples. And they struggled. With the resurrection. They knew. They believed.

That Jesus. Would come back again. One day. But. This. Immediate resurrection. They just. Hadn't. Grasped it. And that's why. I say.

This is an encouragement. Because. Just because. Somebody. Doesn't. Straight away. Get something. Or understand it. Or lay hold upon it. Don't give up. It means that.

You've got to keep going. And. Use the opportunities. And pray over it. Because. Eventually. Very soon. The disciples. Came to embrace it. Wholeheartedly. But initially.

[ 24 : 38 ] They just. Couldn't. Get it. But again. Typically. We find the reaction. Of one disciple. Excuse me. And when we read. In John's gospel. John.

Went as well. But we're not looking at. The other gospels. As such. Just now. Peter rose. And ran. To the tomb. Typical Peter. The other side. They.

They. They. They dismissed it. But Peter. Away he went. He ran. To the tomb. And it tells us. That stooping. And looking in. He saw the linen cloths.

By themselves. And he went home. Marvelling. At what had happened. That word. Marvelling. Literally. Means. Just. Short.

Of full faith. Almost. Full faith. He's really. Thinking over it. But he hasn't. Quite. Just. Totally. Got it.

[ 25 : 32 ] He's believing. But it's just that. As you would say. Just this degree. Short. Of full faith. Of course. It. It then comes. To full faith. The empty tomb.

The empty clothes. You know. What it's speaking to us. About today. Yes. That Jesus Christ. Has risen. But it speaks to us. About our afterlife. As well. We're all going to have to.

Deal with. With. Our afterlife. In this life. You see. There aren't. In a sense. There aren't. Two lives. It isn't like. We have this life. And then it stops.

And then it. There's like. A new life. Starts all over again. It's a continuation. It's a continuation. We don't get. A rerun. We don't get. When we reach.

Then say. Well. I'd like to start. All over again. Because I've made. So many mistakes. And I've got. So many things wrong. It's just. The one. It's a continuation. Of one. How are we.

[ 26 : 30 ] In relation. To God. Very important. Question. How are we. In relation. To God. Well. Remember. God loves us. So much. That he sent. His son. Into the world.

To deal. With. What he knew. We were. Incapable. Of dealing with. Or sorting out. Our selves. Sent a son. Jesus. And he sent.

A son. To die. He couldn't. Give more. God. The father. Couldn't. Do more. And that. When we read. The bible. We have.

We have to take. This seriously. And say. Well. If God. Is. Is. Prepared. To send. His son. To die. Then.

Obviously. He means. Me. To. Lay hold. Upon this. So seriously. Because. You think.

[ 27 : 25 ] About it. If we just. Dismiss this. And say. Well. It doesn't. Really affect me. One day. We're going to have to. Meet with God. And give an account. To God. Of what we've done. Here. And that's why.

The rejection. Of Jesus. Is such a serious thing. I. Pray. That. All of you. If you haven't. Already. Done so. That you will.

Accept. God's. Great gift. The Jesus. Who died. Who rose. Again. And who rose. Triumphant. And is now. In heaven. Governing. And ruling.

Over his people. And today. The invitation. Is saying. Look. I'm a risen savior. I will give you. Life. Will you come to him. And ask him. For it.

Let us pray. Lord. Our gracious God. We give thanks today. For the. For the empty tomb. For our risen savior.

[ 28 : 20 ] We give thanks today. For our salvation. That is complete. And we give thanks today. Oh Lord. That our future. In Christ. Is a glorious one. We give thanks.

For the hope. Of the gospel. And we pray. That that hope. May be the hope. That lies. In each heart. Today. Do us good. We pray. Have mercy upon us.

May the word of God. Go out in power. Everywhere it is preached. Today. And forgive us. Our sin. In Jesus name. We ask it. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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