

The Testimony at the Tomb

John 20: 1-18

Joh 20:1 The first *day* of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

Joh 20:2 Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

Joh 20:3 Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.

Joh 20:4 So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

Joh 20:5 And he stooping down, *and looking in*, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

Joh 20:6 Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie,

Joh 20:7 And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

Joh 20:8 Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.

Joh 20:9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

Joh 20:10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

Joh 20:11 But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, *and looked* into the sepulchre,

Joh 20:12 And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

Joh 20:13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

Joh 20:14 And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

Joh 20:15 Jesus saith unto her, **Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?** She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

Joh 20:16 Jesus saith unto her, **Mary.** She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

Joh 20:17 Jesus saith unto her, **Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.**

Joh 20:18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and *that* he had spoken these things unto her.

Two weeks from today is an exciting day for the Christian. You need to mark your calendars and be sure to be here, because it is on that morning that we will meet to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We will remember and give thanks that on that first day of the week after the crucifixion it was discovered, just as promised, that Jesus had risen victorious over death, hell, and the grave. We have hope and assurance today because of Jesus' resurrection. To many it is a day to buy new clothes, go to church once or twice a year, and hunt Easter eggs. To me it represents the victory we have in Jesus.

For the Christian, this ought to be the most precious day of the year. Christmas is wonderful, but His birth wasn't enough. Jesus had to die and rise again that we might have salvation and eternal life. Romans 4:25 tells us that Jesus:

Rom 4:25 ...was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

I want to take a few moments to look at the details of that resurrection morning as we consider: **The Testimony of the Tomb**. There are those who doubt, but I have complete assurance that Jesus rose again. He lives today! Let's see what the Bible reveals about His resurrection.

The Examination of the Tomb

Our text reveals three individuals, in particular, that came to the tomb that day. Their lives were filled with questions, but they couldn't seem to find the answers. As they came on that resurrection morning to examine the tomb, they were forced to examine their hearts also. Let's consider these who examined the tomb and their hearts.

A Committed Servant

Joh 20:1 The first *day* of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

Mary Magdalene was that committed servant. She came very early in the morning, while it was yet dark, unto the tomb. Mary was committed unto the Lord. He had performed a miracle in her life that no one else could. Jesus had freed her from Satan's bondage as He cast out seven devils.

Mary never got over what Jesus did for her. She often ministered unto Him, was present at the cross, and now has come to anoint His body with spices. Mary was devoted to the Lord and sought every opportunity to serve Him. She wasn't ready to give up on her Lord.

Now, I didn't have seven devils, but Jesus did free me from the bondage of sin. He did for me what no other could. As I consider the joy of His resurrection, I'm challenged to remain committed to Him. Our churches need more like Mary. May we never forget what Jesus did for us! Let us renew our commitment to serve Him. I want to serve Jesus at every opportunity as long as I live!

A Convicted Servant

Joh 20:3 Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.

Mary wasn't the only one to visit the tomb that day. She had come to Peter and John with news that Jesus wasn't in the tomb. They came with haste to see. Peter pictures the convicted servant. He was very close to the Lord. He and Andrew were the first to be called. Peter was privileged to be part of the "inner circle." He was bold and outspoken in his following of Jesus. He had confessed Jesus as the Christ, and proclaimed his faithful devotion, even to death. We all know of Peter's failure as well, how he stood in the courtyard denying, even cursing, that he didn't know the Man.

These had to be difficult days for Peter. He had denied the One he loved. I imagine he wondered if he would ever be able to overcome his denial. I believe Peter has run here to find forgiveness, to make things right with the Lord. He was hoping for one more chance to do what was right.

We often think of Peter's failure, but in reality he is a man to admire. Have we not all failed our precious Lord? Have we not, in one way or another, denied our faith? Even this morning, there may be those who need to get things settled with Jesus, but are unwilling to run to find Jesus as Peter did. I pray Peter's courage will challenge us to examine our lives. We all have failures, but Jesus already knows all about them and stands ready and more than willing to forgive!

A Compassionate Servant

Joh 20:4 So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

John was also there. He represents the compassionate servant. John had a love for Jesus unlike the other ten. I'm sure they loved Jesus, but John's love was special. He wanted to be near the Lord. He was found leaning upon His breast in the Upper Room and at the foot of the cross. John's love for Jesus brought a devotion that the others didn't seem to find.

It was his love that brought him to the tomb that day. He couldn't bear the thought of living without Jesus. John's love certainly speaks to my heart. We need that kind of love for the Lord. Jesus needs to be the focal point of our lives. I pray our love for Christ will grow during this precious season. We all could love Him more, amen?

The Evidence at the Tomb

There has been much debate as to whether Jesus actually rose from the grave. I hope this morning that you are among those who believe. Let's consider the evidence and let the facts speak for themselves.

The Stone Was Removed

Joh 20:1 The first *day* of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

In that day graves were often hewn out of rock, creating a burial room of stone. When the body was laid in the tomb, a large stone was placed over the entrance, sealing the tomb. This stood as a vivid reminder of the finality of death. When Mary arrived that morning the stone was rolled away. The Lord was no longer there.

You see, the stone wasn't rolled away to let Jesus out; it was rolled away to let men in. The stone was removed so that the world could see that Jesus had done as He said He would. I've been there, actually stood in the tomb, and can testify that beyond a shadow of a doubt, the tomb is empty today!

The Grave-clothes Remained

Joh 20:5 And he stooping down, *and looking in*, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

Joh 20:6 Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie,

Joh 20:7 And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

As Peter and John looked into the tomb, the grave-clothes were still there. Jesus had been wrapped by Joseph and Nicodemus at His death, preparing for His burial. Now the clothes remain, but the Lord isn't in them. Had Jesus been taken away, why would they have removed the grave-clothes? His clothes weren't taken off of Him, He simply passed through them.

The napkin that was about His face was wrapped together by itself. This has great significance. It was an ancient custom to use the napkin to signal ones intention at a meal. A napkin wadded up and thrown upon the plate signaled one was finished. A napkin neatly folded said, "I've left for a moment, but I will return." Jesus wasn't finished; He had completed the task of redemption for humanity, but He would return! That thrills my heart today.

The Angels Rejoiced

Joh 20:12 And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

Joh 20:13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

As Mary looked in, she saw two angels within the tomb. They asked why she was weeping. They were likely there to minister unto Jesus and to comfort the believers.

As I studied this, I thought of the joy the angels must've felt at the resurrection. Heaven hadn't been the same since the Savior left. This was the day that they had longed to see, when Jesus would overcome and rise again. They would've had no reason for rejoicing had Jesus not arose! Their joy is revealed in [Luke 24: 4-7](#).

Luk 24:4 And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:

Luk 24:5 And as they were afraid, and bowed down *their* faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

Luk 24:6 He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee,

Luk 24:7 Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

The Excitement at the Tomb

Mary soon realized that there was no need for sorrow; all Jesus promised, He had fulfilled. The empty tomb ought to excite us today. It reveals wondrous hope for the saved.

Jesus was Risen

Joh 20:14 And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

Mary saw Jesus standing and eventually recognized Him as He spoke to her. Can you imagine the joy she felt as she realized that the Lord was alive and well?

I am not serving a memory of a great man, or a dead idol; I'm serving the risen Lord, the eternal God, the great I AM, the Alpha and Omega. He has risen just as He said! Had Jesus not risen, our hope would be in vain, but He lives today. We can rejoice in our soul because Jesus forever defeated death! We can live, my brothers and sisters, because He lives!

Jesus Had Redeemed

Joh 20:17 Jesus saith unto her, **Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.**

Jesus wanted Mary to go to the brethren and tell what she had saw. He was preparing to ascend to His Father and God, as well as our Father and God.

Do you realize what Jesus has said? We are accepted in the family of God. The sin that separated us from the Lord had been atoned. Man no longer has to stand condemned before God. We can enjoy the righteousness of Christ through His shed blood. He came to redeem fallen man and that is exactly what He did! He purchased

our redemption on the cross of Calvary. That ought to excite even the coldest heart today. The saved have been adopted into the family of God!

Jesus will Return

Let's look back at verse 17.

Joh 20:17 Jesus saith unto her, **Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.**

Jesus said that He would ascend unto the Father. He did in fact do that as recorded in Acts 1:9.

Act 1:9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

He is no longer physically present with us, but He is coming again. Remember the promise Jesus made in John 14:1-3?

Joh 14:1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

Joh 14:2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were not so*, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

Joh 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also.

We can rejoice this morning knowing that Jesus has conquered sin, death, and Satan. He is right now preparing a place for the redeemed in heaven.

If you have trusted Jesus, you will be in that number that spends all of eternity with our precious Lord. We will then get to worship Him, in His presence, for all that He has done for us! If anyone has reason to be excited today, it is the church. We are the bride of Christ and He will return for those who belong to Him!

I can't explain the joy that I feel in my heart today. There is no goodness in me, but I have been given life, full and free. My Savior lives today! He loves us, He is with us and interceding on our behalf at this very moment.

I wonder, do you know Jesus as your personal Savior? If not, you can, let us show you how you can know that the Bible is true, from the In to the Amen, the very Word of God. Let us show you how God sees you right now. Let us show you the exact problem you, and all of mankind faces right now. An most importantly let us show you what God has done to remedy that problem forever. It won't cost you anything, just a little investment of time, at the place of your choosing. But I can guarantee it will be the best investment you have or will ever make. Please, ask us about those classes today.