

Luke 24:1-12: “On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. <sup>2</sup> They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, <sup>3</sup> but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. <sup>4</sup> While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. <sup>5</sup> In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? <sup>6</sup> He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: <sup>7</sup> ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’ ” <sup>8</sup> Then they remembered his words.

<sup>9</sup> When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. <sup>10</sup> It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. <sup>11</sup> But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. <sup>12</sup> Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

### 1. It Declares who Jesus Is

The women who went to the tomb that morning did so to faithfully anoint the body of their friend, teacher and Lord. They were going to prepare his body for the grave!

But that day they discovered something that changed everything. “They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, <sup>3</sup> but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.” Luke 24:3

The stone was rolled away. The tomb was empty. The body was not where they expected it to be. And while they struggled to work out what had happened, two angels gave them the most amazing news: “Why do you look for the living among the dead? <sup>6</sup> He is not here; he has risen!” Luke 24:5-6

It took some time for all these women and the disciples to understand the significance of all of this. Even when Peter saw the empty tomb for himself, still “He went away, wondering to himself what had happened.” Luke 24:12.

But eventually the significance of this dawned on all those who followed Jesus.

Over the years, there have been many amazing people who’ve lived on this planet. They’ve achieved great things in science, medicine and technology. Human beings can be truly amazing.

But none of them have been able to rise from the dead. Even with all their ability and achievements, the graves of the greatest and the best are still occupied. Their tombs still contain their remains. None of them has conquered the grave.

Only one person has walked away from their tomb, forever. Only one person has ever been able to say, “I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever!” Revelation 1:18

#### a) He is the Son of God

And so the empty tomb declares the uniqueness of Jesus. His resurrection announces that he is a human being like no other. He’s not just a good man. He’s not just a great teacher of truth. He’s not just a generous worker of miracles. He is God! Romans 1:4 says that he “...was declared with power to be the Son of God, by his resurrection from the dead.”

The resurrection of Jesus announces to us this morning who Jesus really is. He is who he claimed to be. He is our Creator. He the giver and sustainer of life. He is the eternal Son of God.

This was Thomas’ conclusion when he met the resurrected Jesus for the first time. When he saw the nail marks in his hands and feet, he bowed before him and declared, “My Lord and my God!” John 20:28

And we need to do the same. As we come again to the empty tomb, as we again see the reality of who Jesus really is, we need to bow before him and accept him as our Lord and our God!

### 2. It Proves what Jesus has Done

The empty tomb of Jesus declares who Jesus really is. It also proves what Jesus has done.

Throughout his life Jesus made some amazing claims. He claimed to be able to transform our lives. To forgive our sins, to give us eternal life, to bring us into a relationship with God as our Father.

In fact he claimed that he was the only one who could do this: “I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to

the Father except through me.” John 14:6

Jesus said that he would do this through giving his life for us on the cross. Jesus had told these women who went to them tomb: “The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again” Luke 24:7

Jesus knew this was necessary, because it was only through his death and resurrection that our sin-debt could be paid for and our redemption could be secured. He said, “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” Mark 10:45

And on the cross, as we were thinking about on Friday, Jesus shouted, “It is finished.” John 19:30. With this word he declared that his work was complete, his sacrifice was fully made, and our sin-debt had been paid in full.

And it is the resurrection that proves to us that Jesus’ sacrifice was accepted. Our salvation depends on the resurrection of Jesus. Our forgiveness stands or falls on the emptiness of Jesus’ tomb.

That’s what Paul states in 1 Corinthians 15:17. He says that “If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.” Christianity with a dead Saviour is empty and powerless. It is hopeless and helpless. Without the resurrection there is no forgiveness, no rescue plan!

#### a) He is All we need

But today we celebrate that Jesus truly is alive. The empty tomb is the proof that Jesus finished the work that he was given to do. “He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.” Romans 4:25

Jesus died to pay for our sins. And when he rose again he proved that his sacrifice is over, his suffering is complete and that if we put our trust in him, if we accept him into our lives as the forgiver of our sins and the leader of our lives – then we will be declared right with God.

The Old testament animal sacrifices needed to be repeated again and again: “Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.” Hebrews 10:11 The fact that they were repeated proved that they were never sufficient to fully deal with our sin-debt before God. They could never make someone perfect in God’s sight.

But Jesus’ sacrifice for our sins was once for all: “But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God.” Hebrews 10:12

He rose again, ascended to heaven and sat down at God’s right hand, because his work was completed. No other sacrifice was needed. His payment for our sins was sufficient. Our salvation has been secured. The way to God is now open through his finished work!

The empty tomb declares that Jesus is all that we need to stand righteous before God. We do not need to add to it. We cannot pay for it. All we need to do is through faith accept it! The resurrection states that we are accepted by God if we are standing in Christ, and in him alone.

### 3. It Announces Jesus’ Victory over Death

The empty tomb declares who Jesus is, and what Jesus has accomplished. But thirdly, it also announces his victory over death!

In March 2008, the mayor of a village in southwest France threatened residents with severe punishment if they died. The reason for this strange threat was that there was no longer any room left in the overcrowded cemetery to bury them.

So in an ordinance posted in the council offices, the mayor told the 260 residents of the village that “all persons not having a plot in the church cemetery and wishing to be buried there are forbidden from dying in the parish.” The order added: “Offenders will be severely punished.”

Of course we recognise that this is a crazy law. We can’t control death. It is the other way around. Death controls us.

Paul, speaking of Adam, the first human being states: “By the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man.” Romans 5:17 Since Adam’s rebellion against God’s command in the garden of Eden, death has been in charge.

Without exception, death has had the last word. Everybody dies.

So if Jesus is still in his tomb, then we have no long-term future. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:17-18: [“If Christ has not been raised... then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost.”](#)

If death defeated Jesus, then it wins every time. The grave is the end, and all those who have died trusting in Christ – whether we think of the first apostles and martyrs – or those in our own family who have died in Christ – they’re all lost, forever!

If Jesus did not rise again, then there’s no hope. And we’re just like the rest of this world who do not know Jesus.

#### a) He Will Come Back for Us

But the empty tomb of Jesus declares that this is not the case. Because Jesus is alive today, we can be sure that he will come for us and all those who have trusted in him! Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians 4:14 [“We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.”](#)

Our communion this morning was not just a declaration of what Jesus has done on the cross – it also looked forward. [“For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”](#) 1 Corinthians 11:26

The resurrection of Jesus is the guarantee of the resurrection of all who trust in him. By rising again, Jesus shows that he has defeated death. He has broken its power. And he has set [“free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.”](#) Hebrews 2:15 He gives us a sure and steadfast hope of life beyond the grave!

When the disciples understood the implications of this, they lived in the amazing freedom of knowing that whatever happened and whatever people said about them or did to them – their future was certain, their destiny was sealed.

They had been given a [“new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you.”](#) 1 Peter 1:3–4

Because of the empty tomb, death doesn’t have the final word. The grave is not our destiny. Jesus is coming back again for all of us who have trusted in him. Because of Jesus’ empty tomb, death has been swallowed up in victory!

#### 4. It Offers Jesus’ Presence in our Lives

The empty tomb gives us amazing hope for the future. But it also transforms our present. The resurrection of Jesus is the promise of eternal life that starts now!

Easter Saturday for the disciples must have been intolerable. Can you imagine what it was like? The one that they had given up everything to follow was gone. Their lives were now empty, directionless, purposeless. They were now alone! What would they do now? How would they cope? How could they survive?

But on the Sunday everything started to change. Their fear was overcome. Their empty hearts were filled. Their direction became clear. Their purpose was fixed. And from then on they lived truly extraordinary lives.

That was because now, Jesus was with them. Their lives were transformed by the presence of the Risen Christ! Jesus said to them: [“Because I live, you also will live.”](#) John 14:19

And Jesus promised them that he would never leave them. His final words before his ascension were: [“Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”](#) Matthew 28:20

And this promise is for each of us who have trusted in Jesus. Because of the empty tomb, Jesus is alive today. By his Spirit he is with us! We have Christ’s presence with us every day. He’s promised: [“Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”](#) Hebrews 13:5 And this makes all the difference in our lives.

#### a) He is our Peace

So today, we can experience his peace. His Easter greeting was [“Peace be with you!”](#) John 20:19. And Jesus still brings that peace.

He brings us into a relationship of peace with God, as the empty tomb declares that there is nothing standing between us!

And he gives us peace in our hearts, a peace not based on easy circumstances, but a peace that goes beyond all understanding as it comforts our hearts in the middle of the storms and trouble and difficulties of life.

#### b) He is our Protector

We can have also his protection with us as he constantly intercedes for us. “He is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.” Hebrews 7:25

Jesus is our faithful high priest – always watching over us, always interceding for us. We never need to fear, because we are held in his hands – and he will never let go!

#### c) He is our Provider

We can also have his provision for our every need, as Paul said: “My God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:19

Whatever need we have today, Jesus is able to meet it and more. He will provide for us, not just according to our needs, but according to his glorious riches!

#### d) He is our Power

And we can have his resurrection power to enable us to do much more than we could ever ask or imagine – “That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.” Ephesians 1:19–20

The resurrection proves that however big our problems are – God is bigger still and his power is unstoppable!

#### e) He is our Purpose

And as a result of all of this, we can have a clear purpose for living. No longer do we need to just live for today, for ourselves. Now we are called to give our lives in service for the Lord, knowing that everything that we say and do has eternal significance.

As Paul said, “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” Galatians 2:20

Because Jesus is alive, we are called to live in him and for him! Today we are invited to allow the Risen Christ into our lives, because it is then that we will experience life in all its fullness - even in these difficult times!

**Video: He’s still risen!**

#### Conclusion

The empty tomb transformed the lives of those women who discovered it early on that first resurrection morning. And it is still the most important discovery of all time.

That day is still the most momentous day of history.

The empty tomb of Jesus still changes everything.

- It declares who Jesus is.
- It proves what Jesus has done.
- It announces Jesus’ victory over death.
- It offers Jesus’ presence in our lives.

I pray that all of us will live in the joy and freedom and power of the empty tomb!

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