



Topic: Easter Sunday, Resurrection. Bible Scriptures: 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, John 17:20-23 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

## At The Empty Tomb

At the empty tomb opposites collide. Earth and heaven, darkness and light, mourning and gladness, blindness and sight, hate and love, temporary and eternal.

Let us go back in time, to that moment at the empty tomb.

It is Sunday. Just two days ago they had crucified our Lord. We watched Him go to the cross and breathe His last breath. Confusion, sorrow and doubt have filled our hearts.

The ones who yelled, 'crucify Him, crucify Him' continue to deceive, manipulate and plot against Him. Even in His death they fear Him, having sealed His tomb with a large stone and placed guards around.

Everything seems so dark.

Yet as the dawn breaks through the darkness, victory is assured and destiny is redefined.

Heaven and earth testify.

From heaven, an angel of the Lord descends. Dressed in clothes as white as snow and with a countenance like lightening, rolls back the stone!

The guards are paralysed with fear. They cannot move, yet their bodies shake.

## Inside The Empty Tomb

Some women are there. They come to honour Him having brought spices prepared by their own hands. They saw the love in His eyes as He hung on the cross.

One woman has a moment alone. She knows the depth of His love. She knew she was forgiven of so much. He changed her destiny and called her by name. Standing outside the empty tomb she weeps... and weeps. Where have they taken Him?



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Stooping down, through the deep sorrow of her tears, she sees inside the empty tomb.

Two angels are there, one sitting at the head and the other at the feet of the where the body of her Lord once laid.

The angels speak to her. 'Why are you weeping?'

Mary responds. ' They have taken away my Lord and I do not know where they have laid Him.'

She turns around. A man is also there. He must be the gardener. 'Why are you weeping and whom do you seek?'

'Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him down and I will take Him away.'

Then it happens. 'Mary.' He calls her by name. She recognises Him. It is Jesus. He is risen from the dead and is alive!

Instantly her mourning turns into gladness. She must go and tell the disciples, Jesus is alive!

## Testify of The Empty Tomb

The other women gathered there come closer and see the two angels and the empty tomb.

They are greatly confused and afraid. As they bow their head towards the earth they hear,

"Do not be afraid. Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, He is risen!

Remember His word that He spoke to you? 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified, and the third day rise again.'

As the angels quoted His words, they remembered. Just like Mary, their mourning was turned into joy.

As they went to tell His disciples, Jesus met them, saying, "Rejoice!"

It is our Lord, He is alive!

They held Him by the feet in honour and worship of Him. Jesus assured them, "Do not be afraid.

Go and tell My disciples to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me."



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They went and told the disciples all they had seen, touched and heard. To the disciples their words seemed like fanciful tales. In their grief and tears they did not remember what He had told them. That He had to suffer for their sakes, for all humanity's sake and would be raised up on the third day. They did not believe Mary. They did not believe the women.

Yet Peter was curious. He ran to the tomb. John accompanied him and arrived first. It was true the stone was rolled away, just as the women had testified! Could it be true?

## At The Empty Tomb Opposites Collide

Looking inside, stooping down, they see the fine linen of their Lord and saviour and marvel at what had happened.

Earth and heaven, darkness and light, mourning and gladness, blindness and sight, hate and love, temporary and eternal.

That evening the disciples were hiding for fear of the ones who cried out, crucify Him, crucify Him! The doors were locked. No one could get in. Thomas was not with them. Then right in the middle of them appeared the risen Jesus.

How did He get in? He declares intimately to them, *'Peace be with you.'*

Jesus speaks peace over them. Perfect peace, complete peace, eternal peace.

He shows them His hands, feet and side. The parts of His flesh that were pierced for their sakes, so that they could believe and receive.

Having seen Him with their own eyes, they were exceedingly glad and believed. Their testimony and the women's testimony is indeed true.

When they told Thomas all they had seen, Thomas replied, 'Unless I see His hands, put my finger into the print of the nails and my hand into His pierced side, I will not believe.'



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Eight days later, again the disciples had locked themselves away in a room. All doors were shut. No one could get in. This time Thomas was there. Right in the middle of them the resurrected Jesus appeared to them again. This time He personally came to Thomas and said, 'Put your finger into My hands and see. Put your hand into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believe.'

Jesus knew what Thomas needed to believe and speaks belief into his heart and mind. At that moment Thomas knew and declared, 'My Lord and my God!'

His testimony is true.

## The Testimony is True

Time passes. The Apostle Paul encounters the risen Lord and also testifies.

**1 Corinthians 15:1-8** *Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas (Peter), then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.*

Only Jesus has been eternally raised from the dead. In His resurrected body He could appear in a closed room, eat fish and show the scars of His crucifixion.

God knew what we needed to believe and receive. In Jesus a new dawn has come. He is alive! He rose to life from our darkness, brokenness, loneliness, sorrow and shame, bringing revelation, wholeness, love, joy and honour.

The testimony is true. The evidence overwhelming.



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## The Hope of Today

Jesus declared over every subsequent generation, *'Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believed.'*

Today we are amongst those who are of that generation. We have not seen, but have heard the testimony and the testimony is true. We have chosen to receive and believe. As a result we too have a testimony.

In Jesus we are blessed with every spiritual blessing. That is in this life and the next. To know and experience God, intimately and personally, is to be truly blessed. In Him we live in the hope of today and in the hope of tomorrow.

The hope of today is living out of our identity in Him. We are chosen, holy, blameless, as first born sons inherit all things. We are most loved, redeemed, forgiven, predestined, made alive, raised up being built together, empowered, gifted, living witnesses, children of light, one with Christ, His bride, His body, forever and ever amen!

We live in His resurrection power through the surrender of self, knowing who we are in Christ Jesus, we are set free from the bondages of this world.

Let's take a moment to remember who God is and who we are in Him.

This amazing power of God is working on behalf of all believers. So we may know and experience His life giving, transforming, victorious power as a present and future reality.

### Life Giving Power

His life giving power that brought wholeness into brokenness (physically, mentally, spiritually), gave words of knowledge to unlock the secrets of the heart, brought freedom into bondages tearing down strongholds, pushed back the darkness, drawing all who are willing to Himself.

To be one with Jesus, one with the Father, immersed in His love and transformed in His power.



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Before Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection He declared over us who have not seen, yet received and believed in Him this oneness in Him.

**John 17:20-23** *"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.*

Jesus prays that we be one. Just as Jesus and the Father in heaven are one. That we be one in both Jesus and the Father.

Jesus testifies, the glory that the Father gave Jesus, He has given to us, that we be one with Him.

Just as the Father loves Jesus, so too the Father loves us. In fact the Father gave us His Son because He so loves.

The Father honours the Son, the Son honours the Father. So too both the Father and Son honour us. With the ultimate gift of Himself.

## The Hope For Tomorrow

Our inheritance is assured and for all eternity. It is for all those throughout the ages who have received and believed in Him. Those who have died physically and those who are still physically alive, together we will rise.

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18** *But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 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.*



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*Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.*

We have a future inheritance of perfect resurrected glorified bodies, that never get sick, never wear out, never die. This is our future inheritance. Resurrected bodies just as Jesus is the first human body to be eternally resurrected, so shall we be.

At the empty tomb opposites collide. Earth and heaven, darkness and light, mourning and gladness, blindness and sight, hate and love, temporary and eternal. Each one has a choice.

To either reject Jesus and chose to enter into eternal condemnation, darkness, bondage, suffering and shame. Or to receive Jesus, His sacrifice and resurrection and enter into eternal innocence, light, freedom, peace and honour.

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*At the empty tomb destiny is confirmed. The choice is real, the consequences eternal.  
The testimony is true, the events undeniable.*

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What is your response?