

What Will We Do With the Empty Tomb?

Key Verse: Matthew 28:6 *"He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay."*

As we gather today, let us reflect on the profound significance of the empty tomb and what it means for our lives as followers of Christ. In examining Jesus' life, we recognize that He lived two distinct lives in the flesh. The first life was constrained by our sins—a life filled with suffering, sighs, and ultimately, a slow march toward the tomb. The second life, however, transcends earthly limitations, the life after the tomb—a victorious life that embodies the promise of resurrection. The tomb represents a turning point, where the constraints of humanity were left behind, and the full power of divinity was revealed.

Before the tomb, Jesus experienced sorrow as He bore the weight of our sins. Isaiah 53:3 describes Him as "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." He sighed often under the burden of human suffering and rejection, enduring abuse and mistreatment. In Matthew 26:67-68, we see how Jesus was beaten and mocked, as the soldiers "did spit in his face, and buffeted him." He allowed Himself to be arrested and humiliated because He knew His mission was to take upon Himself the sins of the world, fulfilling the prophecies spoken about Him. The weight of humanity's transgressions constrained Him during His earthly ministry, but that burden would eventually lead Him to the tomb.

Yet, the tomb is the great turning point. The angel's declaration, "He is not here: for he is risen," signifies the moment when everything changed. No longer could anyone dictate who Jesus was or limit His movements—He had triumphantly conquered death. This empty tomb speaks volumes about the nature of His resurrection. It means that now, only those who truly love and seek Him will find Him, for He is no longer easily accessible to all. *In fact, many came to examine the empty tomb but chose to return to their old ways, believing the lies that circulated, such as the story that His disciples stole His body (Matthew 28:11-15).* This raises a profound question for each of us: "What will we do with the empty tomb?"

The empty tomb calls us to action and understanding. The Scriptures tell us in Luke 24:49, "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." We are reminded that we follow the God of the empty tomb, the one who appeared to over 500 witnesses at once (1 Corinthians 15:6), showing that His resurrection was not a mere event but a profound reality that changed

the course of history. Even after His victory over death, He took time to walk with the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35) and later with Saul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-6), revealing Himself personally to those who seek Him.

Today, we must ask ourselves: Will He appear to us as we navigate our own roads? While Jesus no longer lives in empty tombs, He resides in living temples—our bodies. The question we must confront is whether our bodies serve as living temples of the Holy Spirit or are merely dead tombs. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 reminds us, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." If Christ is in us, we are living temples, filled with His presence and power.

In parallel to the empty tomb and the lives we lead, consider the example of Lazarus. After being raised from the dead, Lazarus emerged from the tomb, bound with grave clothes. Jesus commanded, "Loose him, and let him go" (John 11:44). Just as Lazarus was instructed to shed his grave clothes and walk in newness of life, so are we called to cast aside the shackles of sin and death and to live according to the power of the resurrection. We must reflect on whether we are truly living in the freedom that comes from the empty tomb or if we are still wrapped in the bindings of our past.

The presence of Christ in our lives should evoke a powerful transformation—one that compels us to share the good news of His resurrection with others. As the disciples were empowered by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2), we too are called to be witnesses of the power and hope that the empty tomb brings. It is through this power that we can rise above our circumstances, just as Jesus rose above death. Romans 8:11 declares, "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." This scripture emphasizes that the same power that brought Jesus back to life dwells within all believers. We must awaken to this truth—acknowledging that our lives are now infused with resurrection power. This isn't merely theological rhetoric; it should manifest in the way we live, serve, and love others. So, what will we do with the empty tomb? Will we recognize the transformative potential it holds? The empty tomb lays a challenge before each of us: Will we embrace the life that Jesus offers and forsake the empty pursuits of this world? Will we step out of our comfort zones and into the calling He has for us? Many, like the guards and the religious leaders, saw the empty tomb and returned to their lives, choosing comfort over conviction,

lies over truth. It is a sobering thought that proximity to the miraculous doesn't guarantee transformation.

As we consider our own encounters with the empty tomb, we must be resolute in our choice. Will we choose to follow the risen Christ, allowing His resurrection to redefine our lives? John 10:10 reminds us that Jesus came "that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." This abundant life is accessible only when we acknowledge the significance of His resurrection and what it means for us. The empty tomb beckons us towards new beginnings, underscoring the reality that death is not the final chapter, but merely a prelude to a victorious resurrection. Just as Christ rose from the dead, we too are called to rise above our burdens. The burden of shame, guilt, fear, and despair no longer has a hold on us. Through Christ, our lives can be living testimonies of His grace and power.

We are now tasked with the divine mandate to share this message of hope. Are we willing to be vessels through which God can work? Are we living as temples that radiate His love and transforming power to a world desperately in need of the resurrecting touch of Christ? It is in embracing our identity as living temples that we become beacons of hope, demonstrating that the resurrection is not just an event in history but a present reality that can change lives today.

In conclusion, let us resolve to not only acknowledge the empty tomb but to actively engage with its implications in our daily lives. Christ is not dead; He is alive and is inviting us into a deeper relationship with Him. The power of the resurrection is ours to claim, and the empty tomb challenges us to rise up and fulfill our purpose. Let us choose to follow the God of the empty tomb and be transformed by His life within us. Amen.