

John 20:1-20

The Empty Tomb

¹Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. ²So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

³So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. ⁴Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. ⁶Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, ⁷as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen. ⁸Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. ⁹(They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.)

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

¹⁰Then the disciples went back to their homes, ¹¹but Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb ¹²and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. ¹³They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"

"They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." ¹⁴At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. ¹⁵"Woman," he said, "why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."

¹⁶Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher).

¹⁷Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' "

¹⁸Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

¹⁹On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁰After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

Introduction

Welcome to Easter 2009! For almost 2000 years the people of God have been celebrating the hope, life, and love we can experience in the person of Jesus Christ. The celebration continues! Every Sunday is a declaration of the reality that God has defeated death through his Son, Jesus. We believe that God is seeking to rescue, embrace, restore, and transform every child, woman, and man into his global and eternal family.

If you are a disciple of Jesus Christ, welcome to the celebration! If you are still searching, looking to be found, yearning to be loved, you have come to the right place! Jesus is here to meet you today. Jesus is here to transform broken lives into healed, forgiven, hopeful lives today.

- In order for God's Spirit to work in us, God's Spirit needs to be inside of you and me.
- In order for God's Spirit be inside of you and me, we need to invite God in. It is a simple invite, a pray, saying Come Lord Jesus, forgive and rule in me.
- In order to be able to invite Jesus in our lives, our inner hearts, we need to step out and trust Him.

The Text

You and I learn to trust people when we see their actions and discern their hearts.
In Luke 7:11-18 Jesus show us his heart. Let me read the story to you:

¹¹Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. ¹²As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out—the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. ¹³When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, "Don't cry."

¹⁴Then he went up and touched the coffin, and those carrying it stood still. He said, "Young man, I say to you, get up!" ¹⁵The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.

¹⁶They were all filled with awe and praised God. "A great prophet has appeared among us," they said. "God has come to help his people." ¹⁷This news about Jesus spread throughout Judea^[a] and the surrounding country.

Background

This healing account comes as Jesus is travelling through the countryside of Galilee early in his ministry. He has been teaching in the synagogues and in open spaces. Many came to Jesus to be healed and many left restored. In Luke, we discover that Jesus has a heart of the person on the outside, the person that feels far from God. When questioned about why he spent so much time with sinners and tax collectors, Jesus replied, "**Who needs a doctor: the healthy or the sick? I'm here inviting outsiders, not insiders—an invitation to a changed life, changed inside and out.**" (Luke 5:31)

At the beginning of Luke 7, we find that Jesus is amazed at the faith of another outsider, a Roman Captain. This Centurion (a captain of 100 men) believed Jesus could heal in any way or manner Jesus chose. He sent word to Jesus that he did not have to come to his house, but to just give the word and his servant would be healed. This man had learned to trust Jesus. He had experienced authority in his teachings and healings. He decided to place himself under this authority! This trust is well placed, for his servant is healed without Jesus coming into the house. Jesus is the one you can trust.

The Scene

As Jesus leaves Capernaum; he has a large crowd following him. He heads toward Nain, a small town in Galilee, just 12 miles southwest of the Sea of Galilee, and 60 miles north of Jerusalem. This little town is not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible, but it is very near the town of Shunem where prophet Elisha brings a young boy back from the dead (2 Kings 4) some 900 years earlier. Something really great happens here, as well.

As Jesus is about to enter Nain, he is met by a large funeral procession. A young man has died and is being carried out of town to be buried. Though this is sad, death is a daily occurrence in most towns. But this death caught the attention of Jesus. This dead man was the only son of a widow. In that culture, once a woman lost her last male relative she was in serious trouble. She could not own land. Who would provide for her and protect her? Unless a distant relative stepped up, she would most likely be swindled and reduced to a life of begging or prostitution.

The Heart of Jesus

"When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, "Don't cry." ¹⁴Then he went up and touched the coffin, and those carrying it stood still. He said, "Young man, I say to you, get up!" ¹⁵The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother."

Picture this: Dead man laid out, dead man being carried, dead man sitting up, dead man talking, and then, dead man walking. Jesus restored this man to life so he could

love and serve his mother. Jesus has a heart for mothers. He knows how hard it can be for women. He knows how difficult it can be to be a mother. Ladies, please know this day that Jesus is for you, with you, and will never abandon you. Some other people might leave you, but not Jesus. You can trust him.

This young man was restored to because he had good work to do. God still had important things for him to accomplish. He had people who needed his love and people who needed the work he could do. You and I have important work to do. There are people for you and I to love and serve with our own unique combination of skills and opportunities. Jesus is eager to live and work inside you and me. Jesus wants to send us out to bless a hurting world. Do you know your work? Ask Jesus to help you discover it.

Note that this man was restored, not resurrected. He would eventually die again. Somewhere down the line a funeral procession finally put him in the ground. Like others who were healed by Jesus, he would later die. That is why this day, Easter, is so important. Jesus knew even after he healed people, his work on Earth was not done. To really love us, Jesus needed to rescue us from all the things that hurt us, wound us, and eventually destroy us. Jesus needed to save us from ourselves.

Dead man walking. Dead woman walking. Without Jesus you and I are dead people walking. Restoration is not enough. To be fully and spiritually alive, we need to be born from above. Jesus went to the cross to conquer death's grip on humanity. The Bible gives us this precious truth and invitation in the book of John: **"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16).** You and I can trust Jesus today with our lives, our tomorrows, our forever...

1. He spoke words of truth that have transformed lives for centuries,
2. He helped and healed people who came to him (specially the outsiders),
3. He has a special place in his heart for mothers,
4. From the Cross he has experienced the full terror of our sins and satisfied all the requirements of the law,
5. Once dead and now alive, resurrected and not just restored, Jesus welcomes all to a newly transformed life now and a full and resurrected life after death.

This Jesus, we know his heart and we can trust him!

Let us pray... Jesus, thank you. Thank you for loving us from before the beginning of time. You, the Father and the Holy Spirit took great delight in working through history to win us back. You came, Jesus, took our form, ate our bread of hardship and suffering, taught us about how to be connected to God once again, took the penalty for our sins on the Cross, and then conquered sin and death so we can now be free. We welcome you today! We worship you as our Risen Lord and King. We ask your Holy Spirit to come and dwell and forgive and change us in Jesus' Name. Amen.