

The Rest of the Story

The Power of the Empty Tomb

John 20:1-16

May 14, 2016

Today

Last week we established that Jesus was God, Creator, and the Giver of life and light and that it matters because through Jesus God the Father:

- Reached toward humanity and provided a way for you to know him.
- Offers you complete forgiveness for all your sins – past, present and future.
- Offers you real freedom from your sin and guilt.
- Offers you eternity

But what if that was the end of the story? What if there was no resurrection after the cross? What if Jesus was still dead? Would that impact the truth of His claims about Himself and the promises that He made? Without doubt the answer is yes.

Let's continue the story:

They had given up everything to follow Him. For 3 years they followed Him and worked with Him and listened to every sermon and parable. They had believed His words to be true – and now He was dead - Jesus was DEAD!! But more than that, their dreams were dead.

- Dreams for positions of power and restored glory.
- Dreams of never going hungry,
- Dreams of never losing a battle,
- Dreams of defeat of the hated Romans - **all gone in a moment.**

Judas betrayed Him and now was dead. Peter denied Him and was who knows where. Only one disciple had actually managed to be at the cross when He died. The others were cowering in an upper room somewhere in the city – awaiting their own fate. The Sabbath was for the them a day of grief and fear

- **Ellen White {DA 782.4}**: When Jesus was laid in the grave, **Satan triumphed**. He dared to hope that the Saviour would not take up His life again. He claimed the Lord's body, and set his guard about the tomb, seeking to hold Christ a prisoner. He was bitterly angry when his angels fled at the approach of the heavenly messenger. When he saw Christ come forth in triumph, he knew that his kingdom would have an end, and that he must finally die.

Then came Sunday morning. While the disciples still grieved the women went to the tomb early – not to greet him as their risen Lord, but to anoint his body. Their hearts were heavy – their feet were heavy as they made their way to the tomb. They talked among themselves – who was going to move the stone away from the tomb?

- **John 20:1-16** - Now on the first *day* of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone *already* taken away from the tomb. ² And so she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him." ³ Peter therefore went forth, and the other disciple, and they were going to the tomb. ⁴ And the two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead faster than Peter, and came to the tomb first; ⁵ and stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings lying *there*; but he did not go in. ⁶ Simon Peter therefore also came, following him, and entered the tomb; and he beheld the linen wrappings lying *there*, ⁷ and the face-cloth, which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself. ⁸ So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb entered then also, and he saw and believed. ⁹ For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. ¹⁰ So the disciples went away again to their own homes. ¹¹ But Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping; and so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb; ¹² and she beheld two angels in white sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying. ¹³ And they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him." ¹⁴ When she had said this, she turned around, and beheld Jesus standing *there*, and did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said to Him, "Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away." ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Mary!"

And Mary was never the same again. Her sorrow was turned into Joy

Because Jesus IS alive:

- **Peter the Betrayer: Was restored.**
 - **John 21: 15-17** - So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My lambs." He said to him again a second time, "Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Shepherd My sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, *son* of John, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Tend My sheep.
 - **Acts 2:22-24** - Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know-- this *Man*, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death. And God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.
- **Stephen the Martyr: Was encouraged in the face death.**
 - **Acts 7:54-56** Now when they heard this, they were cut to the quick, and they *began* gnashing their teeth at him. But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."
- **Saul the great persecutor: Became Paul the Evangelist.**
 - **Acts 9:1-5** - Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. And it came about that as he journeyed, he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; and he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" And he said, "Who art Thou, Lord?" And He *said*, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting,

The theme that would run through the rest of Paul's life was Christ - His life, death and resurrection:

- **Romans 5:8-10** - But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.
- **1 Corinthians 15:20,22** - But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. ²¹ For since by a man *came* death, by a man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive.
- **Philippians 3:7-14** - But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the **surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord**, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith, **that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection** and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained *it*, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of *it* yet; but one thing *I do*: forgetting what *lies* behind and reaching forward to what *lies* ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

The focus of Christianity is not on a dead martyr, but on a **RISEN SAVIOR!!**

Jesus is alive and because of the empty tomb:

- **We** have assurance that even when we cannot see Jesus through our tears – He is still there reaching out to comfort us
- **We** have assurance of a life beyond this ugly sin-soaked world
- **We** have assurance that every forsaken sin is forgiven
- **We** have assurance that those who have died loving Jesus will live again
- **We** have assurance of a transformed life through the power of Jesus

Over the empty tomb, Christ had proclaimed in triumph, "I am the resurrection, and the life."