

The Testimony at the Tomb

John 20: 1-18

Today is an exciting day for the Christian. It is today that we have met to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord. It was then that Jesus rose victorious over death, hell, and the grave. We have hope and assurance today because of Jesus' resurrection. To many it is a day to buy new clothes, go to church once a year, and hunt Easter eggs. To me it represents the victory we have in Jesus.

This ought to be the most precious day of the year. Christmas is wonderful, but His birth wasn't enough. Jesus had to die and rise again that we might have salvation and eternal life. It stirs my heart to be here today and have the privilege of worshipping our great Redeemer! I want to take a few moments to look at the [details](#) of that resurrection morning as we consider: [The Testimony of the Tomb](#). There are those who doubt, but I have complete assurance that Jesus rose again. He lives today! Let's see what the Bible reveals about His resurrection.

I. The Examination of the Tomb – Our text reveals three individuals, in particular, that came to the tomb that day. Their lives were filled with questions, but they couldn't seem to find the answers. As they came on that resurrection morning to examine the tomb, they were forced to examine their hearts also. Let's consider these who examined the tomb and their hearts.

A. A Committed Servant (1) – [The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.](#) Mary Magdalene was that committed servant. She came very early in the morning, while it was yet dark, unto the tomb. Mary was committed unto the Lord. He had performed a miracle in her life that no one else could. Jesus had freed her from Satan's bondage as He cast out seven devils.

- Mary never got over what Jesus did for her. She often ministered unto Him, was present at the cross, and now has come to anoint His body with spices. Mary was devoted to the Lord and sought every opportunity to serve Him. She wasn't ready to give up on her Lord.
- Now, I didn't have seven devils, but Jesus did free me from the bondage of sin. He did for me what no other could. As I consider the joy of His resurrection, I'm challenged to remain committed to Him. Our churches need more like Mary. May we never forget what Jesus did for us! Let us renew our commitment to serve Him. I want to serve Jesus at every opportunity as long as I live!

B. A Convicted Servant (3) – Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. Mary wasn't the only one to visit the tomb that day. She had come to Peter and John with news that Jesus wasn't in the tomb. They came with haste to see. Peter pictures the convicted servant. He was very close to the Lord. He and Andrew were the first to be called. Peter was privileged to be part of the "inner circle." He was bold and outspoken in his following of Jesus. He had confessed Jesus as the Christ, and proclaimed his faithful devotion, even to death. We all know the account of Peter's life, how he stood in the courtyard denying, even cursing, that he didn't know the Man.

- These had to be difficult days for Peter. He had denied the One he loved. I imagine he wondered if he would ever be able to overcome his denial. I believe Peter has come to find forgiveness, to make things right with the Lord. He was hoping for one more chance to do what was right.
- We often think of Peter's failure, but in reality he is a man to admire. Have we not all failed our precious Lord? Have we not, in one way or another, denied our faith? Even this morning, on this glorious day that we celebrate our victory, there may be those who need to get things settled with Jesus, but are unwilling to come as Peter did. I pray Peter's courage will challenge us to examine our lives. We all have failures, but Jesus will forgive!

C. A Compassionate Servant (4) – So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. John was also there. He represents the compassionate servant. John had a love for Jesus unlike the other ten. I'm sure they loved Jesus, but John's love was special. He wanted to be near the Lord. He was found leaning upon His breast in the Upper Room and at the foot of the cross. John's love for Jesus brought a devotion that the others didn't seem to find.

- It was his love that brought him to the tomb that day. He couldn't bear the thought of living without Jesus. John's love certainly speaks to my heart. We need that kind of love for the Lord. Jesus needs to be the focal point of our lives. I pray our love for Christ will grow during this precious season. We all could love Him more, amen?

I. The Examination of the Tomb

II. The Evidence at the Tomb – There has been much debate as to whether Jesus actually rose from the grave. I hope that you are among those who believe. Let's consider the evidence and let the facts speak for themselves.

A. The Stone was Removed (1) – [The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.](#) In that day graves were often hewn out of rock, creating a burial room of stone. When the body was laid in the tomb, a large stone was placed over the entrance, sealing the tomb. This stood as a vivid reminder of the finality of death. When Mary arrived that morning the stone was rolled away. The Lord was no longer there.

- You see, the stone wasn't rolled away to let Jesus out; it was rolled away to let men in. The stone was removed so that the world could see that Jesus had done as He said He would. I've never been there, but the tomb is empty today!

B. The Grave-clothes Remained (5-7) – [And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. \[6\] Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, \[7\] And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.](#) As Peter and John looked into the tomb, the grave-clothes were still there. Jesus had been wrapped by Joseph and Nicodemus at His death, preparing for His burial. Now the clothes remain, but the Lord isn't in them. Had Jesus been taken away, why would they have removed the grave-clothes? His clothes weren't taken off of Him, He simply passed through them.

- The napkin that was about His face was wrapped together by itself. This has great significance. It was an ancient custom to use the napkin to signal ones intention at a meal. A napkin wadded up and thrown upon the plate signaled one was finished. A napkin neatly folded said, "I've left for a moment, but I will return." Jesus wasn't finished; He had completed the task of redemption for humanity, but He would return! That thrills my heart today.

C. The Angels Rejoiced (12-13) – [And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. \[13\] And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.](#) As Mary looked in, she saw two angels within the tomb. They asked why she was weeping. They were likely there to minister unto Jesus and to comfort the believers.

- As I studied this, I thought of the joy the angels must've felt at the resurrection. Heaven hadn't been the same since the Savior left. This was the day that they had longed to see, when Jesus would overcome and rise again. They would've had no reason for rejoicing had Jesus not arose! Their joy is revealed in [Luke 24:4-7. Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen!](#)

I. The Examination of the Tomb

II. The Evidence at the Tomb

III. The Excitement at the Tomb – Mary soon realized that there was no need for sorrow; all Jesus promised, He had fulfilled. The empty tomb ought to excite us today. It reveals wondrous hope for the saved.

A. Jesus was Risen (14) – *And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.* Mary saw Jesus standing and eventually recognized Him as He spoke to her. Can you imagine the joy she felt as she realized that the Lord was alive and well?

- I am not serving a memory of a great man, or a dead idol; I'm serving the risen Lord, the eternal God, the great I AM, the Alpha and Omega. He has risen just as He said! Had Jesus not risen, our hope would be in vain, but He lives today. We can rejoice in our soul because Jesus forever defeated death! We can live because He lives!

B. Jesus Had Redeemed (17) – *Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.* Jesus wanted Mary to go to the brethren and tell what she had saw. He was preparing to ascend to His Father and God, as well as our Father and God.

- Do you realize what Jesus has said? We are accepted in the family of God. The sin that separated us from the Lord had been atoned. Man no longer has to stand condemned before God. We can enjoy the righteousness of Christ through His shed blood. He came to redeem fallen man and that is exactly what He did! He purchased our redemption on the cross of Calvary. That ought to excite even the coldest heart today. The saved have been adopted into the family of God!

C. Jesus will Return (17) – Jesus said that He would ascend unto the Father. He did in fact do that as recorded in [Acts 1:9](#). He is no longer present with us, but He is coming again. Remember the promise Jesus made in [John.14:1-3](#)? We can rejoice this morning knowing that Jesus has conquered sin, death, and Satan. He is right now preparing a place for the redeemed in heaven.

- If you have been born again, you will be in that number that spends all of eternity with our precious Lord. We will then get to worship Him, in His presence, for all that He has done for us! If

anyone has reason to be excited today, it is the church. We are the bride of Christ and He will return for those who belong to Him!

Conclusion: I can't explain the joy that I feel in my heart today. There is no goodness in me, but I have been given life, full and free. My Savior lives today! He is interceding on our behalf right now.

I wonder, do you know Jesus as your personal Savior? If not you can, all you have to do is come to Him by faith, believing, and He will save you as well. You can be saved today!