

## **“The Tomb is Empty! He is Not Here!”**

04-05-15 Sunrise

Jesus Christ had been crucified on Friday. Some of the women in the Easter story had been at the foot of the cross and watched Him suffer. After He'd died, they watched as Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus took Jesus' body down, wrapped Him in cloths and put Him in a new tomb no one had ever laid in before. Joseph had carved it into a rock hill.

But because the Sabbath was going to begin in a few hours, the women knew Joseph and Nicodemus had only done the minimum preparation for the body. Nicodemus, and Joseph had anointed the Lord's body, but since it was done in haste, it wasn't satisfactory enough for these ladies!

So on that First Easter, **The Women arrived early**. These women didn't arrive early wondering if anything had happened or not, but rather to take care of unfinished business. After they had seen where the tomb was, listen to Luke 23, verses 55-56, *“The women who had come with him from Galilee followed and saw the tomb and how his body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments. On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.”*

Their work had been delayed because of the Sabbath. But, as early as they could, they went to the tomb! It was still dark that early morning. They met together as a group and made their way to the tomb. You've got to admire the devotion, and courage of these ladies. Oh, how they loved Jesus their Teacher and Savior! He had to have a proper burial! It was the least they could do. They were courageous in what they did. They didn't fear the darkness or fear being identified with Christ. We've also gotten up early this morning and come to this place for a different reason.

**The Women arrived expecting**. What did those women expect? They expected to find a body. They came there to anoint the body of the Lord with spices, and ointments since they were unable to do it earlier because of the Sabbath. What do we expect when we go to a graveyard? We expect there will be tears shed, grieving over loved ones lost, and that a body will be lowered down in the ground, and covered with dirt.

But not Jesus! Joseph must have been rather wealthy to pay to carve a tomb into the side of a rocky hill and have it all be ready, not only for him but all of his family. It must have been a large tomb because listen to Matthew 27:59-60, *“And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away.”*

Open your Bible to Mark 16. The women had come with a singular purpose, anoint Jesus' body! But the closer they got to the tomb, the more concerned they became. Look at verses 3-4, *“And they were saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?” And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large.”*

As these women had seen where Jesus was laid, they also saw there was a large stone covering the door and Roman soldiers had been placed to guard it. They began to realize they wouldn't be able to move the stone and they ladies came to the place where they had seen the body of Christ laid, they were discussing how they would be able to get into the tomb.

They had seen the huge stone that was rolled in front of it after his death, and knew that it was too large for them to move.

The women's major concern was access to the body! And they had little or no confidence that the Roman Soldiers who had been dispatched to guard the tomb would be courteous enough to roll away the stone. After all the soldiers had been instructed to seal the tomb making sure it wasn't disturbed.

**The Women arrived entering.** Yet, God gave them access to an empty tomb! They arrived anticipating to find a stone in front of the tomb, but what they found was the stone rolled away, and the tomb empty!!! They couldn't believe it! They were expecting to see the dead body of Jesus, and instead they talk to an angel! This was nothing like they expected!

**The Women Departed in Fear and Joy. Look at verses 6-8,** *"And he said to them, 'Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go; tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.' And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid."*

These ladies were fearful but they were also excited! The source of their excitement was the resurrection of their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! Mark says they fled from the tomb in fear but also astonishment that Jesus had risen! They were so confused that they didn't tell anyone what they saw! Matthew 28:8 captures the moment in a beautiful way, *"So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples."*

The resurrection of Jesus allows us to take a different view of death. **Death is no longer a dead end.** Our life doesn't end when our physical body comes to its end. Our life goes on for eternity! **Death is no longer fearful.** We know what happens after death and it is nothing to fear at all! **Death is no longer the enemy.** For those who believe, we know that death has been challenged and Jesus Christ has been victorious over it! Because Jesus lives, **We shall live forever!**

The Passion of Jesus Christ, and His death on the cross would have meant nothing if there was no resurrection! The devil thought he had won! Jesus had died on the cross. His limp, lifeless body was removed from the cross, and laid in a tomb secured, sealed, and guarded by Roman Soldiers. Yet, "Surprise"! Death, and the grave couldn't hold Jesus Christ, Son of God! He had the authority to lay down His life, and He had the authority to take it again!

Listen to Jesus' words from John 11:25, *"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die!"*

This Sunrise morning, be filled with the overflowing light and grace of Jesus Christ! Praise, worship and serve Him your Risen Lord and Redeemer!