

Title: **THE TOMB WASN'T EMPTY**
Text: Luke 24:1-12
Subject: *The Resurrection of Christ*
Date: Sunday Evening — December 10, 2006
Tape # Z-16b

Introduction:

We often speak of “the empty tomb” as proof of our Savior’s resurrection from the dead, but that really is not accurate. The tomb wasn’t empty. Let’s read Luke 24:1-12 together. Then I hope to show you the blessedness of the fact that — **THE TOMB WASN’T EMPTY.**

(Luke 24:1-12) “Now upon the first *day* of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain *others* with them. (2) And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. (3) And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. (4) And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: (5) And as they were afraid, and bowed down *their* faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? (6) He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, (7) Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. (8) And they remembered his words, (9) And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. (10) It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary *the mother* of James, and other *women that were* with them, which told these things unto the apostles. (11) And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not. (12) Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.”

We who believe in the risen Christ have entered into his rest, because he is resting at the right hand of the Father. We rest in Christ, the risen Redeemer, because his work is finished. His resurrection is the pledge that he has perfected forever them that are sanctified. He has finished all the salvation of his people, and we are complete in him. It is my hope that God the Holy Spirit will enable me to set before you some restful thoughts, as

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we make a pilgrimage to the new tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, and see the place where the Lord lay.

ONCE DIED

The very first thing that must be remembered is this. — Christ Jesus once died. — “For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God” (Romans 6:10). So, as we gather around the place where Jesus slept “with the rich in his death,” seeing the stone rolled from the mouth of the tomb, we know he is not there. Yet, he assuredly was once there. — “He was crucified, dead, and buried.” He was as dead as the dead whose bodies are buried in the cemetery down the road. Though he could see no corruption, though he could not be held by the bands of death beyond the predestined time, yet he was once dead. There was a time when there was no light in his eye, no sound in his ear, no thought in his mind, and no word in his mouth, because there was no pulse of life in his heart. Christ died for our sins. He did not merely appear to be dead. He died unto sin once, because he was made sin for us. He was, therefore, buried in the sepulcher. A dead man is a fit occupant of the silent tomb. But, blessed be his name, he is not there now! He is risen from the dead. We look to the risen Christ as our only Savior and our only salvation.

(Romans 4:25) “Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”

(Romans 5:1-11) “Therefore being justified, by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: (2) By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. (3) And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; (4) And patience, experience; and experience, hope: (5) And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. (6) For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. (7) For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. (8) But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (9) Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. (10) For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much

more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. (11) And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.”

Tonight, I want to show you some memorials of the fact that our blessed Savior was once in the tomb, memorials that he has left for us in the tomb.

(1 Corinthians 15:1-4) “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; (2) By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. (3) For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; (4) And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.”

What memorials of this fact can be found in the tomb? How are they to be used by us?

SWEET SPICES

First, the Lord Jesus left sweet spices in the tomb. When he arose he did not take those costly spices in which his body was wrapped with him. He left them behind. Joseph had brought about one hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes, and the odor remained still. That tomb must have smelled like a perfume store, when Peter and John stepped into it.

What a blessed thought that is, when taken in a spiritual sense! Our Lord Jesus has filled the grave with fragrance. It no longer smells of corruption and foul decay, but we can sing with the poet of the sanctuary—

“Why should we tremble to convey
These bodies to the tomb?
There the dear flesh of Jesus lay,
And left a long perfume.

The graves of all the saints He blessed
And softened every bed.
Where should the dying members rest
But with their dying Head?

Thence He arose, ascending high,
And showed our feet the way.
Up to the Lord we, too, shall fly
At the great rising-day.”

That bed awaiting our bodies beneath the earth is now perfumed with costly spices and decked with sweet flowers. There the truest Friend we have once laid his holy head. The angel’s first word to the women who came to the tomb was, “Fear not ye” (Matthew 28:5). We should never draw back with fear from the grave. Our Lord was once there; and where he goes no terror can remain.

(Psalms 23:4) “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”

GRAVE CLOTHES

Next, I want you to see that our Savior left his grave clothes behind him in the tomb. When Peter went into the sepulcher he saw the grave clothes carefully folded by themselves, laying to one side. He did not leave behind him a moldy shroud, but, as Luke tells us in verse 12, “linen clothes.”

He left those grave clothes for us to look upon as tokens of his fellowship with us in our low estate, as reminders that as he has cast aside the garments of death so shall we. When he arose from his chamber he left his bedclothes behind. And when we drop these bodies in death, as we ascend up to heaven, we will leave these garments of death behind.

Look at it another way. We have seen old tattered flags hung up in places as the memorials of victory, memorials of defeated enemies and battles won. So in the crypt where the Savior vanquished death his grave clothes are hung up as the trophies of his victory over death and assurances to us that we have been made more than conquerors through him that hath loved us. — “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”

Take one more look at those linen grave clothes in the fragrant tomb. Do they not lay before your eye of faith as emblems of his righteousness, that righteousness by which he merits heavenly glory as our Surety, that

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righteousness he has made ours, by which we are made “meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light”?

(Psalms 132:7-9) “We will go into his tabernacles: we will worship at his footstool. (8) Arise, O LORD, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength. (9) Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout for joy.”

(Revelation 19:6-9) “And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. (7) Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. (8) And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. (9) And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed *are* they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.”

(Revelation 14:4-5) “These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, *being* the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. (5) And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.”

THE NAPKIN

Then, John adds, Peter saw “the napkin that was about his head” carefully folded up and laid by itself.

(John 20:6-7) “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.”

I see that napkin in my Savior’s tomb still. It is the handkerchief with which the Lord God wipes every tear from my eyes. The widow and the orphan, the widower and the broken-hearted father, mourning brothers, and sisters,

and friends, take handkerchief and wipe their tears away forever. — “Thus saith the LORD; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the LORD; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy” (Jeremiah 31:16).

(Isaiah 26:19) “Thy dead *men* shall live, *together with my dead* body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew *is as* the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.”

And with this same handkerchief, he wipes away all other tears from our eyes.

- Tears of Repentance
- Tears of Trouble
- Tears of Fear
- Tears of Bereavement

(Revelation 7:17) “For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

(Revelation 21:4) “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”

ANGELS

Our Lord Jesus left something else in his tomb. He left angels behind him and made the grave...

“A cell which angels use
To come and go with heavenly news.”

Angels were not in the tomb before, but, at his resurrection, they descended. One rolled away the stone, and others sat where the Savior’s body had laid. I have never read that our Master has recalled the angels from the sepulchers of his saints. And we are assured that when his Lazaruses die the angels of God carry their souls into the bosom of their Lord, and their bodies, too, shall be watched by guardian spirits, as surely as Michael kept the body of Moses, until the resurrection.

A WAY OUT

Another thing was left behind in the tomb by our blessed Redeemer. — A Way Out. He left an open passage from the tomb. The stone was rolled away. Death is a for God's elect a prison without bars or doors. — The open tomb tells me there is a Door open in Heaven. The risen Christ is the Way out of death for us.

- Spiritual Death

From darkest night to brilliant light,
O praise His name, He lifted me!

- Physical Death
- The Second Death

Our mighty Samson has pulled up the posts and carried away the gates of the grave with all their bars. The key is taken from the girdle of death and is held in the hand of the Prince of Life. As Peter, when he was visited by the angel, found his chains fall from off him, while iron gates opened to him of their own accord, so shall the saints find ready escape at the resurrection morning. Yes, we shall sleep awhile, each one in his resting-place, but we shall rise again in the morning, for the stone is rolled away. A mighty angel rolled away the stone, for it was very great, and when he had done the deed he sat down upon the stone. His garment was white as snow, and his face like lightning, and as he sat on the stone he seemed to say to death and hell, "Roll it back again if you can." — That mighty Angel who rolled away the stone from the tomb for us is Christ himself!

LIGHT

Our risen Savior left one more thing behind in his tomb for us. Tombs are places of utter darkness. But our Lord Jesus left in his tomb the brilliant light of life and immortality.

(2 Timothy 1:9-11) "Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, (10) But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought

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life and immortality to light through the gospel: (11) Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.”

Our Lord has gone into the tomb and illuminated it with his presence, “the lamp of his love is our guide through the gloom.” He has brought life and immortality to light by the gospel; and now in every cemetery there is a light which shall burn through the watches of earth’s night till the day break and the shadows flee away, and the resurrection morn shall dawn.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:20-58

20. But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of them that slept.
21. For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead.
22. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.
23. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.
24. Then *cometh* the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.
25. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.
26. The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death.
27. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under *him*, *it is* manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.
28. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.
29. Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?
30. And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?
31. I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.
32. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die.
33. Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.

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34. Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak *this* to your shame.
35. But some *man* will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?
36. *Thou* fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die:
37. And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other *grain*:
38. But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.
39. All flesh *is* not the same flesh: but *there is* one *kind of* flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, *and* another of birds.
40. *There are* also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial *is* one, and the *glory* of the terrestrial *is* another.
41. *There is* one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for *one* star differeth from *another* star in glory.
42. So also *is* the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:
43. It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:
44. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.
45. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam *was made* a quickening spirit.
46. Howbeit that *was* not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.
47. The first man *is* of the earth, earthy: the second man *is* the Lord from heaven.
48. As *is* the earthy, such *are* they also that are earthy: and as *is* the heavenly, such *are* they also that are heavenly.
49. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.
50. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.
51. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,
52. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

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53. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.
54. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.
55. O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory?
56. The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law.
57. But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
58. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Amen.