

A Celebration Over the Fear of Death

Matt. 28:1-6 – Do not fear because He can be trusted, He is risen and has conquered death.
--In celebrating the empty tomb, we celebrate the end of fear – the thing we fear the most has been conquered and reversed.
--Boy is that something that needs to be said and heard in our day as we sit in a global fear of things coming apart.
--We don't have to make the resurrection relevant; it already is relevant. We just need to proclaim it and apply it with joy and confidence.

1. The tomb was empty of Jesus proving He was the Savior, but it was also filled several encouraging things.

1. An Exit.

--This was the first grave to be installed with an exit and *it wasn't the stone opening either*
--Since He raised Himself from the dead, do you suppose it was necessary that for the stone to move so He could get out?
--The first tomb/grave to be installed with an exit, but not the last!

2. The second thing we see filling the tomb is Power.

--In fact, a good way to think of the empty tomb is as a power switch

In your homes, you have rooms with lights in them and switches to turn them on. When a builder is building a home, he puts the light switches in the most likely places. Rooms = by the door, sink light = by the sink, etc. So if you were God and you were building a spiritual house for all those you loved, where would you put the light switch? In the most likely place; and that is what He did. He put the light switch right where we'd expect it: right where sin and Satan and evil had come together in a culmination ... right by death's door... He put the Light Switch!!

--Power over sin and death --Our debt was paid in full -- we know this is so because Jesus was raised from the dead. If it wasn't paid, He'd still be dead because He'd still be paying for them, but He's alive because they are paid in full.

--Power over everything—"All power has been given to Me." One of the most overlooked items in the tomb that morning carries, at least for me, one of the most comforting messages: **John 20:6-7**

--Who has time to fold grave clothes? Who has the presence of mind when the whole universe hangs in the balance?

-Someone who has it all together, that's who!!!

--Legitimate fear ended with Jesus' resurrection: **Mt. 28:5**

--That's our message and mission to our world: "Don't be afraid, come and see that He is alive!"

2. That has always been our message:

--Not "we can help you live a better life, or we can help you with your business, marriage, children, finances, etc."(we do have insight from the Lord into all those things and all the questions of life) but our message is **"do not be afraid!"** --no one else has that legitimate message

--Here is sampling of the messages of other religions: "we can help you be at peace with yourself" / "we can put you in-touch with the environment" / "we can help you be a stronger bolder you" / "we can bring you enlightenment"

--Of what good is that gobble-d-goop when you're staring death in the face?!

--People are not living in fear of being at peace with themselves, people are not afraid being out of touch with the environment, people are not fearful of being less enlightened ---they are afraid of death!

--Jesus and our message about Him go straight to the root of the matter: **Heb. 2:14-15**.

--Today, we celebrate the end of that fear because of the empty tomb!

3. The Hard facts

1. Everything is dying, especially the so-called highest evolved--people.

--There is no difference between us and the grass of the field – sooner or later we all keel over!

Ps. 103:15-16

--Doesn't matter how at peace you are, how enlightened, how stronger, bolder or self-realized— sooner than later you're going to be dead like the grass and flowers.

2. Only Christians celebrate an empty tomb:

Judaism looks back to Abraham, his tomb is among the most well-guarded places in all of Israel. In the sacred books of Buddha, it says Buddha died “with that utter passing away in which nothing whatever remains behind.”

--“*Like the flowers of last year, not a trace left.*”

Mohammed died in 632, and his followers gather around his grave there in Medina every day.

Mary Baker Eddy, the founder of the so-called Christian Science, claimed that there was no such thing as death, but, guess what? – died in 1910, and thousands of her followers visit her grave there outside of Boston every year.

--Not a shocker to anyone that these people are still dead—when people die they tend to stay that way!

--The resurrection is a shocker.

--The Bible invites to us consider **the empty grave of Jesus**. The angel said, “**he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.**”

--Consider the words of the One who only laid in His grave 3 days: **Jn. 11:25**

3. Jesus holds the only real answer.

--The world is scrambling right now, but it has been--constantly looking for a solution to our biggest problem – **A problem that Jesus has already solved.**

--**Revelation 1:17-18** – Jesus holds the Keys!

--You and I hold the keys to the things we possess--the things we own.

--Jesus holds the keys to death and the grave!

--The scientific community does not hold these keys, the doctors, nor the government, nor the economy nor the stock market.

--The empty tomb proves that Jesus really is who He says He is: **Rom. 1:4** “declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection.”

--Proves that He told us the truth: **Jn. 2:19** “Destroy this temple and in 3 days I will raise it up.”

--Proves that we can be forgiven for our sins: **Rom. 4:25** “delivered to death for our sins and raised because of our justification.”

--Proves that we can have eternal life through Him: **Jn. 14:19** “because I live you will also live.” **Jn. 3:16** “whosoever believes in Him will not perish but will have everlasting life.”

We have a word for the world today, every day, but it's not just message, it's a person, **His name is Jesus**, our risen Lord and Savior.

Hear the words of the angel at the empty tomb that resurrection day: "**Fear no more, He is not here, He has risen just as He said.**"