

The Barren Tomb

Spilman Memorial Baptist Church, Kinston NC

Dr. H. Powell Dew, Jr.

April 9, 2023 – Resurrection Sunday

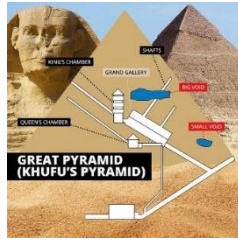
Text: Luke 24:1-10

Purpose: Jesus' barren tomb provides us with several truths we can hold on to in life. All that Jesus taught is true. Love is stronger than hate. We have redemption from sin through Jesus Christ. Jesus has defeated our last enemy death. We can have hope for better days as we abide in Jesus. Praise God!

I don't know if you are a fan of the National Geographic magazine, but I have been a subscriber for many years and love looking at all the beautiful photographs from around the world. I remember seeing on several occasions the Egyptian pyramids there in Cairo, Egypt. The largest one was built before 3200 BC. This massive structure is more than 5000 years old and was built as a monument and as a tomb for one of Egypt's pharaohs. The 500-foot-high memorial is built with a 13-acre base and stands as one of the largest buildings in the world and was considered as one of the "seven wonders of the ancient world." All of this was built to house the body of one person. There has been a lot of news recently about several new discoveries in Egypt.



There is a secret entrance into the center of one of the pyramids to a burial chamber. It goes some 225 yards deep into the interior, passing through the great gallery which is 137 feet long and 28 feet high. Its walls are polished granite. If you go through a smaller shaft about three and a half feet high and seventy five feet long, you will reach the kings chamber which has hieroglyphics carved on the ceiling. The only object in the room is an empty granite sarcophagus. The tomb was ransacked long ago by grave robbers and the body was stolen. All of this effort, made to have a burial place for one person, was ruined.



I have been to Jerusalem and entered another burial place, a donated tomb. It was not very expensive. It was not very large and it was not polished or filled



with granite walls. What made this burial place special was the person that entered it for only a few days. In Jerusalem there is a tomb, quite possibly the one where Jesus was

lain, a tomb which armed men sealed shut in order to make it secure from thieves. But on that Resurrection morning, an angel came and rolled the stone away, leaving an empty tomb and revealing a resurrected Savior.

What is the meaning of this barren tomb in Jerusalem?

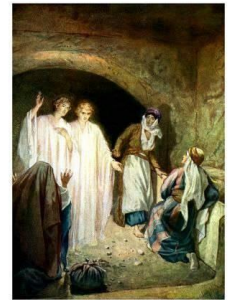
Jesus had told His followers that in three days He would rise again. He had said that in several different ways, to several different people, and at different times. The chief priests and Pharisees believed this more than Jesus'

disciples and went to Pilate to remind him of Jesus' claim that He would rise in three days. To prevent his disciples from stealing the body and claiming He rose from the dead, they asked Pilate to make the tomb secure. He sealed the tomb and placed a military guard to insure no one would enter the tomb.

The disciples may have forgotten Jesus claimed He would rise again, but the religious leaders had not! Jesus' enemies wanted to guard the tomb past the three days, so that the "last fraud" of stealing the body, would not be added to what they considered to be the "first fraud." This would prove that Jesus was a fraud and His teachings were false. Or at least that is what they thought.



But on that Resurrection morning, God intervened and the tomb was opened and Jesus was alive forevermore. It happened as the scriptures say, all the evil theories given to discredit the fact that Jesus rose from the grave have been proven false. There was no real threat from those remaining disciples of Jesus to steal the body of Jesus. They were disheartened and in a state of shock. If they actually whisked away the body of Jesus under the cover of darkness, how could that have rallied them to become faithful to the message of the gospel for the remainder of their days? They became emboldened to the message of the Gospel because they knew that Jesus DID come back from the dead.



But this is what you would expect from the One who brought the universe into being. You would expect the unexpected from the One that created mankind. You would expect Jesus to do what Jesus did. Maybe the greater miracle was the resurrection of the disciples' call to ministry and the formation of the church.

What does Jesus' resurrection and barren tomb mean for you and me today?

What is the meaning of the barren tomb?



Jesus' Resurrection: Vindicated of All that Jesus Taught

First, Jesus' resurrection from the dead vindicated all that Jesus taught was true.

JESUS CHRIST
TAUGHT

- His enemies had called Jesus a deceiver and an imposter – now His resurrection proved He was not.
- Jesus taught the kingdom of heaven – both now here on earth as well as a future kingdom.
- He taught about a saving faith – when He said in John 3:16. *“For God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son. Whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.”*
- He taught about forgiveness – forgive your enemies so you can receive forgiveness for your sins.
- He taught about God's love for all – love your neighbor as yourself.

- He taught about judgment – judge not lest you be judged.
- He taught about heaven – *“In my Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you.”*
- He taught us that He is the *“way, truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but through Me.”* Jesus Christ is the way to God. In Jesus Christ there is Truth. In Jesus Christ there is everlasting life.”
- He taught if you have seen Him, you have seen the Father. Jesus was God incarnate – God with Us.
- He taught He would die and three days later He would be resurrected.

All of Jesus' revolutionary teachings would be worthless words if Jesus did not come back from the dead. He broke the bonds of death and defeated our last enemy – death. Those that accept Jesus as their Savior will be resurrected once again just as Jesus was resurrected from the grave. His one sacrifice paid the penalty for all mankind to have fellowship with God once again – if we only believe.

The barren tomb also means

Jesus' Resurrection Proved: Love is Stronger than Hate

Prior to Jesus coming, the world operated on the theory that hate and cruelty were the forces that got things done. That same principle is widespread in our world today.



Some Christians today even operate their ministries out of hate, anger, and bitterness. There is a Church that has made it their mission to picket the funerals of America's service men and women because they have a misplaced emphasis on the role of the Christian in society. They believe God is judging America. With outright hatred, anger, and vile actions towards these families during their time of grief, they portray the message of Christianity as one of anger and cruelty.

Jesus never intended His followers to hate sinners. His intention for us was to love them into the kingdom. When Jesus overcame our last enemy death, He vividly portrayed that love is stronger than hate. The world has been shown time and time again that men cannot be forced to do anything against their will, but if you demonstrate love, they will do great and difficult things beyond what they thought possible.

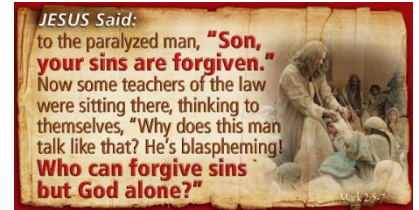
I am not saying this morning that we should stop fighting the enemies of America. There are times when war is just and war is necessary to defend freedom. But even if you win the war, sometimes your objectives can only be won through love instead of war.

The resurrection of Jesus unleashed the strongest force in the world – love. God so loved us that He gave His only Son to redeem you and me from the hopelessly lost state of sin we find ourselves.

The barren tomb also means ...

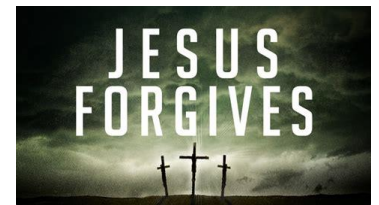
Jesus' Resurrection Provides: Redemption from Sin

Jesus had the audacity to say time and time again that a person's sins were forgiven. The Pharisees and Sadducees were outraged. Only God could forgive sins. That was the point – Jesus was God in the flesh forgiving mankind when they repented from their sins and accepted Jesus as their Savior.



These words of forgiveness were validated by the barren tomb. Jesus claimed He could forgive man's sins and now that He proved He was God in the flesh, the claims are now validated.

What hope does anyone have to be set free from the shackles, penalty, and habit of sin? Apart from Christ, there is no hope. You cannot overcome your tendency to sin by your own strength. You cannot overcome the judgment for that sin by yourself. You cannot break the continual pattern of sin, unless you turn to Jesus Christ. He has the power to break the stronghold sin has on you and set you free – free from the guilt associated with sin and free from the penalty for that sin. It is a free gift of grace offered to all that are willing to receive it.



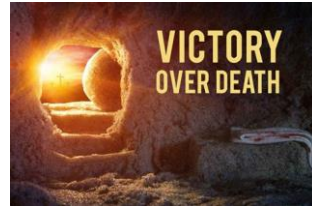
Some people try to use different words to describe sin and make it less of a reality. But all of us are guilty of sin and all of us are under the penalty of that sin. But through Christ, that sin is canceled and forgiven. The prophet Jeremiah (13:23) said, "Can the leopard change his spots

or the Ethiopian change his skin?” The answer is no. Only God can forgive sin and Jesus is the way in which forgiveness is obtained.

There is no other way to the Father except through Jesus.

The barren tomb also means ...

Jesus’ Resurrection Gives Us: Triumph of Life over Death



All generations of people have asked the question Job asked, *“If a man die, shall he live again?”* It is a question I ask at many funerals. We all have some degree of awareness of the reality of death. It is ever present around us. It hangs in the air like pollen in the spring. It hangs in the air like thick fog on a chilly morning. It covers us all and we want to know will we live again?

The barren tomb asserts that Jesus has triumphed over death for Himself and for all of those who give their life into His keeping. I Corinthians 15:51-58 tells us that Jesus has become the first fruits of them that sleep, assuring us of victory over death.

Satan and his forces have tried to derail Jesus’ victory over death. He tried to entice Jesus to forgo this way of suffering. But Jesus steadfastly accomplished the will of God so we could have the assurance of life over death. He arose victorious over death.

The enemies of Jesus provided the cruelest manner of death – the death of the cross. But death could not hold Jesus. His breaking forth from the grave means we can have that

eternal life and assurance of a future resurrection and reunion with all the saints in heaven.

The barren tomb means ...

The Resurrection of Jesus Gives Us: Hope for Better Days

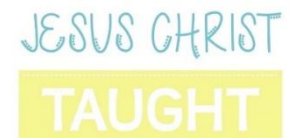


Jesus’ disciples had given up. Life was filled with despair and hopelessness. Our lives can also feel hopeless and filled with despair. We need to reclaim the unfailing hope of a certain future and presence of the living Christ. We have hope for better days when we walk daily with Jesus. The rising of Jesus assures us that our future is in the hands of God and that His children are guaranteed a bright future.

The Easter parade is not a matter of new suits, chocolate bunnies, candy, Easter egg hunts, or flowers. Instead, a true Easter parade is the recharging and revitalizing of a group of men and women who stare into an empty tomb – that barren tomb – and start their march from that first century scene, and continue on as long as the earth shall stand, testifying to all that Jesus taught, that He died for us, and that He was raised from the dead.

Let us hold fast to the truths of the barren tomb.

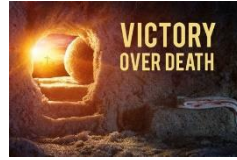
- All that Jesus taught is true.
- Love is stronger than hate.



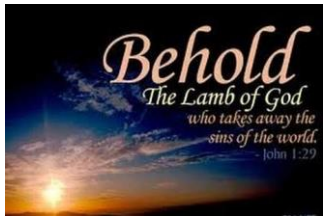
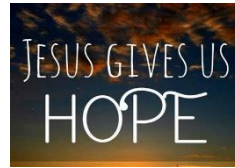
- We have redemption from sin through Jesus Christ. We are forgiven!



- Jesus has defeated our last enemy death. We have the Victory!



- We can have hope for better days as we abide in Jesus.



Behold the Lamb of God has won the victory for us and taken away the sins of the world!

Praise God – Praise God – Praise God!

He is Risen! He is Risen Indeed!

LET US PRAY