

# The Empty Tomb

Matthew 28:6; 1 Corinthians 15:17-20

**FOCAL Read Responsively** 1 Corinthians 15:17-20  
And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. {18} Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. {19} If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. {20} **But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.**

**Matthew 28:6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.**

Americans often live in the moment, without regard for that which has happened in the past. Part of the reason so many keep their minds in the “now” as opposed to yesterday or tomorrow is because they are so focused on creating their own happiness. Yet truthfully, can *we* create our own happiness?

I stood in line at the local department store behind a woman who was complaining about the high gas prices, and how the price of gasoline was increasing food costs. Though I agreed with the lady, I noticed that her shopping cart was not full of food – it was filled with Easter baskets, candy, toy eggs, and other things that were certainly not essential to life. I read in a recent survey that Americans spend in excess of 30% of the income for entertainment purposes. Many Americans eat out at least once a week. They spend millions of dollars on holiday items – Easter baskets, Halloween costumes, Mother's and Father's Day gifts, and so on. We are the richest nation in the whole world – and yet, as a people most Americans are unhappy. Why is that? Because, dear friend, we cannot create our own happiness, we cannot



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make our own joy. When gas prices were lower, Americans were not happy. Now that gas prices are higher Americans are not happy. The *only* place you will ever find true happiness and wondrous joy is in a right relationship with your Creator. The Bible tells us:

**Habakkuk 3:18-19 Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. {19} The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places. ..**

Here is the true Source of Joy – a right relationship with God! Lower the gas prices, raise the wages, give every person a “chicken in every pot” and joy will still be fleeting. The Christian is someone who has:

**Romans 5:11 ... joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.**

Take away a Christian's riches, and he has riches stored up in Heaven to look forward to. We have “**an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us**” (1 Peter 1:4). Let time and corruption remove a Christian's health and he looks heavenward, knowing that one day God shall “**change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body**” (Philippians 3:21). Let a Christian lose his job or his position in this life, and he does not despair. Has not God promised that we are “**kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever**” (Revelation

1:6)? What can you steal from a Christian that will cause him to lose his joy? Nothing, not even his life. God has promised those who believe “**eternal life; and they shall never perish**” (John 10:28).

I pray that, this day, each and every one of you will accept God's invitation to **come, see the place where the Lord lay**. Never has an empty place brought more happiness. Fill your hearts with the truth that Christ rose from the dead, and you will not have to try and fill your hearts with the temporal happinesses of this life.

### **1. Come, See The Place!**

This invitation is not given to the lost and to the sneering, but to those who are willing to seek God's face. The tomb was guarded by soldiers, the same soldiers who took Jesus:

**Matthew 27:28-31 And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. {29} And when they had plaited a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! {30} And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head. {31} And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him.**

The mocker who will find his happiness in money will be content, like these soldiers, to ignore the Christ as He prays for them.

**Luke 23:34 ... Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. ...**

**“And they parted his raiment, and cast lots”**. These same soldiers would guard the Tomb of Christ – a borrowed tomb just as His birthplace was *borrowed* – and **set a watch on it (Matthew 27:66)**. But they would never reap the benefit of the empty Tomb.

The mocker who will find his happiness in power will, like the soldiers, be willing to ignore the empty Tomb. They will be content to

**Luke 23:35 ... derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.**

How sad! Though the invitation is given to all, only those who seek God's face shall benefit from the empty Tomb. The Bible says that:

**1 Corinthians 15:20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.**

Jesus is the **firstfruits of them that slept**. Note, dear one, that the word **slept** is in the *past tense*. The first half of this wondrous verse is a *present tense* promise for a *past tense* event. The Tomb of Christ is empty – He is the **firstfruits**, the first harvest from the dead. If He is the first, and His tomb is God's promise, then rejoice! for death had no hold on Christ, nor does it have any hold on any of God's people.

Come with us to the empty Tomb of Christ. If you have lost mother or father or husband or wife, if they were in His hand then their tomb is empty as well! The Great Shepherd is risen and has promised:

**John 10:28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.**

Death could not hold Christ, and Christ holds those who have called on His Name! O glorious day that we were saved. Hasn't the Bible promised:

**Romans 8:38-39 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, {39} Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

What wondrous love is this, the Empty Tomb of Christ. For thousands of years the grave was unconquerable and unbeatable. Yet now in Christ we can say:

**1 Corinthians 15:55-57 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.**

## **2. Where The Lord Lay**

The empty Tomb stands as God's promise to us of free and glorious Grace – yet it is free because of what Jesus did for us. He did suffer, He did die, for you and for me.

The tomb that Jesus lay in was a *borrowed* tomb, just as His birthplace was *borrowed*. His earthly Mother was *borrowed*, as the Holy Spirit came upon the little Virgin Mary. Jesus borrowed many things during His earthly ministry. He borrowed *boats* in which to preach, *donkeys* in which to ride on, and from evil men He *borrowed* kingly robes to be mocked in. Jesus had not even a stone to call His pillow, but the Creator of all Life borrowed all that He used. Why is that? Dear ones, Eternal God has no permanent need of a birthplace or a deathplace. God Himself cannot die, nor did any man take Christ's life. Christ voluntarily laid down His life for all. He said:

**John 10:17-18 ... I lay down my life, that I might take it again. {18} No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. ...**

Jesus knew that He would not need a permanent Tomb, but a temporary place for but three days. The Master said:

**John 2:19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.**

and again:

**Matthew 12:40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of**

**man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.**

A borrowed tomb was all that Jesus needed. When He laid His life down He cried out:

**Luke 23:46 ... Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.**

Jesus, having paid for our sins on Calvary, surrendered His earthly life to God the Father. We Who will one day enter Heaven will enter that glorious place – not because of our works – but because of His works. He borrowed while He walked this earth, gave of His life, and now we who believe on Him *by Grace receive His righteousness*. The Bible says:

**Romans 4:25 {Jesus} was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.**

In one sense we who are His *borrow* from Christ. Our first birth would not get us into God's Heaven, so we *borrow* a second birth from Him.

**1 Peter 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.**

Our first life was and is corrupt, so we *borrow* eternal life from Him.

**John 3:15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.**

We *borrow* righteousness from Christ,

**Philippians 3:9-10** And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: {10} That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

and because of His wondrous love we will one day stand in yonder glory, not having sickness or pain. The old will be passed away. This old flesh will be laid aside, just as Christ laid His borrowed grave clothes to the side. See them there, neatly folded, laid on the burial bench?

Do you belong to Jesus? Now we turn to a *borrowed meal*, a Last Supper that was part of the Passover Meal. Will all now ready your hearts for this wonderful meal?



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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**Habakkuk 3:18-19; Romans 5:11; 1 Peter 1:4; Philippians 3:21; Revelation 1:6; John 10:28** \_\_\_\_\_

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**1. Come, See The Place!**

**Matthew 27:28-31; Luke 23:34; Matthew 27:66; Luke 23:35; 1 Corinthians 15:20; John 10:28; Romans 8:38-39; 1 Corinthians 15:55-57** \_\_\_\_\_

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**2. Where The Lord Lay**

**John 10:17-18; John 2:19; Matthew 12:40; Luke 23:46; Romans 4:25; 1 Peter 1:23; John 3:15; Philippians 3:9-10** \_\_\_\_\_

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