

The Empty Tomb

John 20:1-20

"Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her." - John 20:18

Main Point: Because Jesus rose from the dead, He has the power to give life-sustaining hope.

Introduction: Use the following questions to introduce the topic of discussion -

Do you have a favorite Easter memory from the past? What made it so special?

What about this Easter? Is this season unique for you in any way? How?

Sometimes in life, it feels like we are sleepwalking. We tend to live on a treadmill thinking that the future will never be any different than the present. So, we just continue to muddle our way through our days. But Easter is a wake up call. When we think about Easter, we remember that Jesus isn't dead; He is alive today. Because He has power over death, He has the power to make us fully alive in every area of our lives.

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

How would you, in one sentence, describe the meaning of Easter to a non-Christian?

What are some of the implications meaningful to you right now because Jesus is risen?

Easter is about hope. The one hope that has held human beings across every continent and culture together for over two thousand years in the face of difficulty, hardship, suffering, and death itself is that Jesus was dead, but He is now alive.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 20:1-10

What do these verses show us about the relationship Jesus had with His followers?

If you were in this situation, what's the first thing that would go through your mind? What would you do?

How were Peter and John's responses once they get to the empty tomb different? What does this show about each disciple's personality?

The Bible tells us that John went into the tomb and believed (v. 8). For John, it was that simple—a light bulb moment. A switch was flipped. From that point forward, John firmly believed Jesus was the Son of God. But for Mary and Peter, it wasn't so cut and dry.

Have you had a light bulb moment in your relationship with Jesus? If so, what happened?

In your faith journey, have you been more like John, or Mary and Peter?

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 20:11-18

Why do you think Mary didn't recognize Jesus? Have you ever been in a situation where it was difficult for you know that Jesus was with you?

Even though Mary didn't know Jesus, Jesus still knew Mary. Even when we have trouble recognizing Jesus' presence in tough times it doesn't change the fact that He knows us inside and out. As Pete told us, that means right now Jesus knows not only your name, but your strengths, weaknesses, and everything you've ever done or will do.

Is the fact that Jesus knows you intimately comfortable or uncomfortable for you? Why?

Because Jesus already knows your past, it means nothing you've done is beyond His ability and willingness to forgive. Do you ever have trouble believing that? Why or why not?

Is God's grace difficult for you to believe in fully? Is there something from your past that is making it hard for you to believe and trust in the grace of God?

The moment you attach strings to grace it ceases to be grace. Even though it's hard sometimes to fully believe that God loves us as we are, Easter is a chance to remember that Jesus has fully paid the debt we owe because of our sin. Because He is alive, we can also be fully alive.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 20:19-20

Why do you think Jesus greeted His followers by saying "Peace be with you"?

Is there any area of life into which you need Jesus to speak peace?

How does Jesus' resurrection remind us that there is not only forgiveness for our past but also hope for our future?

In the middle of this room filled with fear, doubt, and anxiety, Jesus brought peace. He wants to do the same thing in your life. No matter what walls might be standing in His way right now, because He is alive, Jesus is still bringing peace, and that brings hope for the future.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What situation in your life seems the most hopeless? How do you think Jesus wants to bring hope into that situation?

How are you going to remind yourself in the middle of that situation that your hope isn't built on circumstances but on the living Jesus?

Is there anyone in your life right now who needs to hear a word of hope? What is the best way for you to offer that to them this week?

Pray:

Thank God for Jesus. Thank Him that Jesus is the living hope of Easter. Pray that just as He brought life from death in His own body, He would bring life and hope to the specific situations your group mentioned.

Coming up the Life of VillageChurch:

- April 23 - Greeters/Hospitality Ministry Luncheon after 10am service
- May 5 - Faith and Family Night with the Fireflies
- May 14 - Baby Dedication
- July 10 - Vacation Bible School