



Welcome!

EASTER SUNDAY 2021

Today's Message: It's Still Empty
Dr. Lance D. Watson, Senior Pastor

PRAYER: Almighty God, today, mothers and sons, and fathers and daughters sing praise aloud. Prayers of thanksgiving rise from our hearts with one voice. We shout the good news: Christ is Risen! The tomb stands empty! We will look for our Savior among the living. Jesus Christ is alive and, in our midst, even now. We pray for every human soul that turns to you in longing and in love. Pull us out of our graves and into your life. Christ is Risen! The tomb stands empty! Alleluia! In Jesus' name, Amen.

ICEBREAKER: Have you ever bought something and later found out it was too good to be true? Have you ever made a purchase and regretted it due to poor quality?

INTRODUCTION: The entire narrative of Jesus' empty tomb and resurrection from the dead is written in order to give weight and truthfulness to the resurrection of Jesus. After all, John's entire purpose in writing is so that we believe. For this reason, John makes it emphatically clear that Jesus died a **real death**. Then John gives multiple details that make clear Jesus was buried in a **real grave**. With that, John turns toward elaborating on the countless witnesses that saw the empty tomb and the resurrected body of Jesus. Summarily, Jesus died a real death, was buried in a real grave, and his was a **real resurrection**.

SCRIPTURE: Read John 20:1-10 (NLT)

DISCUSSION:

1. What stood out in today's message? What is significant about Mary Magdalene being the one to discover the empty tomb? What was special about her relationship with Jesus? (See Luke 8:1-3 for clues)
2. Why was it such a shock that the stone was taken away from the tomb? (See Mark 16:3-4 and Matthew 27:65-66) What does this first sign tell us about the nature of what's taken place?
3. What do you make of Mary's response to her discovery in v.2? How have you struggled to understand or believe fully in Christ's resurrection (beyond mere intellectual assent, in a way that truly changes the way you live)? Can you identify with Mary's lack of understanding?
4. What do you think was going through the minds of Peter and John (most likely "the one whom Jesus loved" in v. 2)? Did they understand immediately what had happened? What accounts for their lack of understanding or belief?
5. Peter and John both had to 'experience' the empty tomb before they believed (see vv. 6-8). How did you first *see for yourself* the truth that Christ is risen? How might we continue to live in a state of truly 'experiencing' the empty tomb?



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6. The male disciples saw the empty tomb and believed (at least they believed that the tomb was, in fact, empty!), and they returned home. Mary stayed and saw Jesus Himself! What do you think caused this different response? How do you respond to the empty tomb? Like Peter and John, who saw, believed, and left? Or like Mary, who saw and stayed there?
7. Can you summarize the theological message of this text? How would you state the core message in one sentence?

CHALLENGE: John, the writer of this gospel wants us to know that Jesus actually died and was in reality resurrected by the power of God. The stone was rolled away not for Jesus' benefit but for the benefit of those first witnesses so they could see into the tomb. The grave cloths and spices were left behind to confirm that the empty tomb was not robbed, and the body was not stolen. The evidence all points to the reality that Jesus has defeated the grave and indeed has been resurrected to life! What difference does that make in terms of how you live from this point forward?

SERVE: Pray over John 20:1-10 this week. **Praise** God in advance for the possibility, power and potential that the Risen Christ brings to your life. **Listen:** when you are quiet before God, it is amazing how clear things become. **Respond.** Write it down, live it out, give God praise!

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Take this time to share group announcements. Church wide and campus specific announcements can be found at www.myspbc.org. You can also “find, follow and like” our Facebook page at facebook.com/myspbc. Turn on your notifications.

CELEBRATIONS: Take this time to share praise reports (e.g. answered prayers, birthdays, anniversaries, promotions).

PRAYER REQUESTS & PRAYER: Take this time to share prayer requests. Close with prayer.

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We Care!

NOTICE: DUE TO THE COVID-19 CRISIS, ALL OF OUR CAMPUSES ARE PHYSICALLY CLOSED AT THIS TIME UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

As a small group leader, we depend on **you** to show members that we care. Here's a list of resources to help you.

FOR PRAYER:

CALL: 804.463.2472
EMAIL: prayer@myspbc.org.

FOR COUNSELING:

CALL: 804.643.6177
EMAIL: Barnabas@myspbc.org

TO REQUEST A HOSPITAL VISIT:

CALL: 804.304.3890 (For Emergencies)
EMAIL: ecare@myspbc.org.

TO REQUEST FUNERAL SUPPORT:

CALL: 804.304.3890 (Pastor On Call)
EMAIL: ecare@myspbc.org.

TO FIND A SUPPORT GROUP:

CALL: 804.643.6177
EMAIL: Barnabas@myspbc.org.

TO REQUEST EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE:

CALL: 804.643.4000
EMAIL: emergencyassistance@myspbc.org.

TO CONTACT MY LIFE STAGE PASTOR/DIRECTOR:

CALL: 804.643.4000 and Press 1 for the Dial By Name Directory
EMAIL:

- Imagination (0-10): Vernita Williams (Vernita.Williams@myspbc.org)
- SMB (11-19): Martina Jones-Smith (SMB: Martina.Jones-Smith@myspbc.org)
- Dreamchasers (20-29): Curtis Ballard (curtis.ballardjr@myspbc.org)
- Aspire (30-39): Lance Watson, Jr. (lance.watsonjr@myspbc.org)
- Fusion (40-49): Michelle Townsend (michelle.townsend@myspbc.org)
- Encore (50-59): Jamie Duncan (Jamie.Duncan@myspbc.org)
- Prime Time (60-69): Maceo Freeman (maceo.freeman@myspbc.org)
- Refiners (70+): Wallace Simms (Wallace.Simms@myspbc.org)

GPS is a study guide based on the weekend message. The purpose of this guide is to assist small groups in study. Previous GPS Guides are available online at www.myspbc.org.