

THE CROSS AND THE TOMB

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LUKE 24:1-7 (NLT) But very early on Sunday morning the women went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. ²They found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. ³So they went in, but they didn't find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴As they stood there puzzled, two men suddenly appeared to them, clothed in dazzling robes.

⁵The women were terrified and bowed with their faces to the ground. Then the men asked, "Why are you looking among the dead for someone who is alive? ⁶He isn't here! He is risen from the dead! Remember what he told you back in Galilee, ⁷that the Son of Man must be betrayed into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and that he would rise again on the third day."

Introduction: Everything for the disciples has changed over the weekend. Jesus had given them so much hope. They were convinced that He was the promised Messiah, the Son of God who would usher in the kingdom of God and free them from the rule of evil men.

But all their hopes and dreams were crushed in one fell swoop. He was betrayed by one of his friends, arrested and tried by the religious leader and brutally beaten and nailed to the cross by the Romans.

Peter had denied knowing him three times and the rest of them had run for their lives and were now huddled in a house with the windows closed for fear of their lives.

Then on Sunday morning things began to change. Jesus was alive. The one who had been killed was now living. The cross was empty and now the tomb was empty.

Death couldn't hold Him down! "Why are you looking among the dead for someone who is alive? He isn't here! He is risen from the dead!"

This was God's plan all along.

Remember what he told you back in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be betrayed into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and that he would rise again on the third day.

Notice that Jesus made clear that the Son of man must be betrayed, crucified and rise again.

The vacant cross and empty tomb was God's plan all along. Why?

Jesus through his death, burial and resurrection served as a ransom for us, releasing us from our sin debt, reconciling us to God, providing victory over both sin and death.

'THE CROSS' PROVIDED A RANSOM FOR US

Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Jesus became the ransom price, which means He died in our place to fully satisfy God's justice

and establish a covenant on behalf of all who believe in Him.

Isaiah 53:4-5 (NLT) It was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins! ⁵ But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed.

Galatians 3:13 (NLT) But Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law. When he was hung on the cross, he took upon himself the curse for our wrongdoing. For it is written in the Scriptures, "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."

Because we were unable to pay the price for our sins, Jesus became our redeemer or rescuer. His death freed us all from the bonds of sin and gave us victory over the sin and death.

'THE CROSS' PROVIDES RELEASE FROM OUR SIN DEBT (FORGIVENESS)

Acts 13:38 (BBE) And so, let it be clear to you, my brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is offered to you: ³⁹ And through him everyone who has faith is made free from all those things, from which the law of Moses was not able to make you free.

'THE CROSS' PROVIDED RECONCILIATION WITH GOD

Romans 5:10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

God and the sinner can meet at Christ's cross, with Christ standing between them, reaching out one pierced hand to the Father, beseeching, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing," and the other to those far from him, beseeching, "Be reconciled to God."

'THE CROSS' PROVIDES VICTORY FOR US

Hebrews 2:14-15 (GNB) Since the children, as he calls them, are people of flesh and blood, Jesus himself became like them and shared their human nature. He did this so that through his death he might destroy the Devil, who has the power over death, ¹⁵ and in this way set free those who were slaves all their lives because of their fear of death.

Colossians 2:13 (GNB) you were at one time spiritually dead because of your sins and because you were Gentiles without the Law. But God has now brought you to life with Christ. God forgave us all our sins; ¹⁴ he canceled the unfavorable record of our debts with its binding rules and did away with it completely by nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ And on that cross Christ freed himself from the power of the spiritual rulers and authorities; he made a public spectacle of them by leading them as captives in his victory procession.

Galatians 5:1 (AMP) It was for this freedom that Christ set us free [completely liberating us]; therefore, keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery [which you once removed].

The empty cross and tomb still speak today. It reminds us of:

- The love of him who suffered
- The purity and holiness of his character, for the innocent died for the guilty
- The price paid for sin, accomplishing what could be done by no other sacrifice.
- The pardon obtained for the guilty
- The fact that through it we become dead to the world, and are made alive to God
- The fact that it has gained us fellowship with the Father and access to His throne

These spiritual truths speak eloquently about the tenderness, majesty, and sacredness of the cross of Christ. This should instill in us a sense of devotion to the one who gave all for us.

Everything we do should be motivated by the impact that Christ's crucifixion has had on those of us who have been drawn to its rescuing grace and sustaining power. His resurrection speaks to the new life we now have in Him made possible by his sacrifice on the cross.

The vacant cross and empty tomb reminds us that Christ ransomed us, released us from our sin debt, reconciled us to God, and makes us victorious over sin and death.