

Breaking Out of Your Tomb

Key Verse: John 20:24-29

Key Thought: Breaking from the Tombs of our Lives

When life gets tough, it is easy to doubt that things can get better. We see Peter running to the tomb probably filled with fear and confusion. Peter went to the tomb, running to see for himself that Jesus had left His tomb! It was not until Thomas saw the scars on Jesus' hands and side that he was filled with hope again. That he believed that Jesus overcame the tomb. Thomas was living in a tomb of fear and doubt. Some of us have experienced such tragedy and pain that we too struggle with doubt. We need to know that Jesus has overcome death and, if we have eyes to see, that He is active in our lives today. The Church must become a place that is safe for those who have doubts and want to breakout of their tombs...

In our lives, we all have "tombs" that we have placed ourselves in such as fear, doubt, anxiety, or unworthiness, just to name a few. Perhaps you live in a tomb of pride or addiction or even a tomb of prosperity. Tombs are typically a dark, cold place. Somewhere that life does not exist. Somewhere that if we stay long enough, we give up hope of ever living again. A tomb represents a place of safety, but also a place where nothing changes. If we are to change or grow, we all must leave the tomb. Now this isn't an easy task. It's something that takes time, and it's something we cannot do on our own. We need the help of the only man who broke out of His tomb, that person being Jesus Christ!

The hardest thing to realize is that to break out of our tombs, we must leave something behind, just like Peter and Thomas did. Thomas, the disciple that we all know for his disbelief. Every year, we hear the story of Jesus appearing to the disciples in the locked room on Easter Eve, and about Thomas' disbelief, and about the second appearance in the same room eight days later, seemingly for Thomas' benefit.

Jesus says,

"Put your hands here, feel the wounds and don't be faithless."

John 20:19-31

The sense of what Jesus told Thomas is actually more violent than “place your hands here.” It’s more like, “jam your hands in my side, thrust them into my wounds, let faith be born in you.” Jesus REALLY wanted Thomas to believe. He REALLY wanted to help Thomas come out of his tomb! To see LIFE! From the excitement of Resurrection to doubt, from doubt to seeing; from seeing to believing. It’s an interesting progression, which raises questions about what must be left behind in the Tomb.

I’m sure Thomas wasn’t happy during that week while the others all told him that they had seen Jesus, that Jesus was alive. He probably got tired of hearing that story, not so much because he didn’t want to believe it, but because to believe it, *he would have to leave the safety of his rational world where people did not rise from the dead.*

What do you need to do, to become Free of your Tomb?

I. **Discover Your Tomb**

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”

James 1:2-4

What is it in your life that has you captive? Perhaps you’re walking through a trial or tribulation at this part of your life. Could it be that God is testing your faith to help build you up? He did the same to Peter and the other disciples. When you take a honest look at what you’re going through, you are able to ask God for the healing and help that is needed to overcome that tomb.

Even Jesus asked the Father in the garden for His will to be done and not what the human side of Christ would have wanted. Let’s face it, no one wants to walk through pain and challenges that seem impossible. Just remember what we look at as impossible, is exactly how the stone being moved away from that tomb must have looked. We serve a God of the possible! When God moves the stone away,

we can walk into our freedom! What looks like something blocking our freedom, can become the door to bury our tomb..

“Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test.”

2 Corinthians 13:5

II. Bury Your Tomb

Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 3:13-14

How do we bury that tomb? We must walk in the love of God, and in the truth of His word. The world will try and keep us in the tomb, but God has a plan for us to have a life of freedom, not to have a yoke so tight that we cannot live in His will, and what He has created us for. When we use the very instruction God has given us, we win. We should not walk in a manner pleasing to other people, always looking to them for sense of belonging or validity. When we know who we are in Christ we can stand on His promises and be walking in His very Will.

Some suggestions to bury your tomb

1. Release the guilt and shame
2. Give forgiveness and forgive yourself
3. Walk in the spirit and not the flesh
4. Let the old person stay buried

“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.

Isaiah 43:18-19

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.”

2 Corinthians 5:17-18

III. Break out of Your Tomb with the Power of God

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Acts 1:8

The only way to true victory is through that risen power of Christ. They judged Him, beat Him, and turned their backs on Him, but He still stayed faithful to the Father. So many of us turn our backs when we are going through hard times but what if that’s the exact situation God allowed for you, to shine His glory in your life? God promises us if He brings us to it, He will walk us through it.

Jesus stayed faithful through all the pain and suffering so we could be saved because He loved us so much. If that tomb seems overwhelming and that stone just cannot be rolled away, then I believe you are on the proper road. God takes our weakest moments and shows His grace and compassion. Our path is to trust the brokenness and embrace the struggle to witness the amazing power of God!

“Many shall purify themselves and make themselves white and be refined, but the wicked shall act wickedly. And none of the wicked shall understand, but those who are wise shall understand.”

Daniel 12:10

“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

Ephesians 6:17

The resurrection... the empty tomb... a risen savior... Jesus exalted to the highest place, given the name above every name... the hope of our resurrection, the hope of our eternal salvation, the hope of an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade – kept in heaven for us. We celebrate; we gather, we anticipate our communion with Him in glory, all because of the resurrection of Jesus. Every ounce of belief, every display of faith, all the good works you could do, in His name – would be void and without meaning if the resurrection weren't true. The Bible says that my preaching is worthless and so is our faith if the resurrection didn't happen. So important is the resurrection: If you disprove the resurrection, disprove Jesus rising from the death, disprove the power over death and the grave, you could disprove and throw out the window all of Christianity. That's how important this one event is, that's how huge this one day is. It's so important that if it didn't happen, we would still be lost in our sins.

But Jesus has been raised – Glory has been fulfilled – power has been displayed – Authority has been given.

The seriousness of God the Father allowing His one and only Son to die on the cross – a horrible death so that if we believe we could have salvation – means that God is serious about the separation that our sin has created. He meant it – it was purposed in the heart of God to bring us back to Him, to bridge the gap, remove the space and bring us peace. God is serious about you – because He loves you.

Luke 24:1-12

The story of the empty tomb is told by all four gospels – each adding different features, each for a different reason.

Here's a few things we learned to help us to break out of our tombs.

1. Jesus died.

Jesus declared it is finished, gave his spirit to the father, and breathed his last. He didn't somehow avoid the cross, bypassing the need for the resurrection, run off to Italy with Mary Magdalene and raise a family. How mindless we can be when we play games with God's gift!

Most people in that time Died from the beating that took place before the cross. The ones who didn't were hung on the cross – they suffocated, because breathing required lifting the body with the legs. When a person was unable to lift themselves, they would stop breathing. So how do you check to see if they are dead? Cause, good Jewish people wouldn't leave bodies on the cross during the Sabbath. You don't have to check. You break their legs. They didn't have to break the legs of Jesus, it was clear he was dead – instead they took a spear and pierced his side, just to make sure.

The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken,"

John 19:32-36

Assume for just a second that He wasn't dead before the spear went into His side, assume for just a second that He was still alive – this would have killed Him for sure.

Another reason for us breaking out of our tombs is

2. Jesus died for OUR sins. HE wasn't guilty of anything – the reason for His death was OUR sin. When we sin, we earn what sin pays...

Romans 6:23 – For the wages of sin is death...

He took the place for punishment that you and I have earned. God, who is rich in mercy has given us a gift, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. God has given us a gift of eternal life – free for us to accept it, but also free for us to refuse it. Some of you this morning has done everything BUT accept His gift of eternal life – How do you accept this gift?? Confession, baptism, discipleship, growing, walking daily in His word.

The death of Christ brought us peace and brought us healing.

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

Isaiah 53:5

The final reason of the victory of the tomb for us Jesus defeated death. We see Peter get up, runs to the tomb, looking inside he sees only the strips of cloth. He goes away wondering what has happened...Of course, we know the rest of the story...Jesus appears – He eats with them, He stays with them, offers proof, allowing them to touch Him, His hands, His side. This story is really just amazing. It would be easy to join the disciples and the women in wonder and awe.

I suppose from time to time it would be even good to do that. We so often like Thomas question out of fear and carry some form of doubt but what would happen if we took ownership of this story, this message of hope and applied it to our lives?

What would happen if you and I not only applied it to our lives, but we told others about it – not just loving them to the cross but teaching a message of the hope we have. I don't think God gave His one and only son to die on the cross, raise Him from the grave so that you and I could get a warm fuzzy feeling, and feel good about ourselves.

So that we could go back to our everyday lives, our everyday habits, our everyday frustrations, and sins. I believe God was serious! We should be JUST AS SERIOUS. His power is revealed through the empty tomb -- the power to transform, the power to renew, the power to bring hope and with that hope assurance of peace and everlasting life.

Location: FCA

Date: Resurrection Sunday, April 17, 2022

Time: 10:30am

After Service Song: Glorious Day