

Easter Weekend

Seeing the Resurrection

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Prayer Points for Prayer Time:

- **Pray for fresh eyes to see the Easter story in a new way.**
- **Pray for God to move you from knowing about Him to knowing Him.**
- **Thank Jesus for the Empty Tomb.**

Scripture Reading:

Early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. She said, "They have taken the Lord's body out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!" Peter and the other disciple started out for the tomb. They were both running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He stooped and looked in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he didn't go in. Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there, while the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was folded up and lying apart from the other wrappings. Then the disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in, and he saw and believed—for until then they still hadn't understood the Scriptures that said Jesus must rise from the dead. Then they went home.

John 20:1-10 (NLT)

A. Introduction

Today, I want to talk to you about having fresh eyes...

What I mean is ... To see the thing many of us have seen dozens or hundreds of times with fresh eyes...

I came across a few pictures recently of when my son Tristan was little...

One thing I noticed that I had forgotten is that when they would throw temper tantrums, I would film them so I could one day show them and remind them of the psychological pain they caused me... so my wife would try to comfort them, and I would just film them... in fact, here is one I found... check this out....

Show video... 😊 Happy Easter friends...

Here is a picture ... This was the first time he ever saw the ocean. He was amazed. He couldn't take his eyes off it. As I watched him, I was aware of how much his perspective gave me fresh eyes. I love the ocean, but I can often take it for granted because I've seen it so many times...

If you've grown up with the Easter story, a part of you becomes so familiar with it that you sort of take it for granted. But I'm praying that as you look at this passage, God will give you fresh eyes.

That God would awaken something new and fresh in you today. So that, like my son, you wouldn't be able to look away from this Jewish carpenter who rose and conquered the grave.

I want to look at John chapter 20 and show you three ways that John, the author, and Peter look at the evidence of the resurrection. There are also three ways that people look at the empty tomb today.

The book of John was written by the apostle John... he's probably the youngest of the disciples, probably written in his 20s.

What's funny is that he spoke about himself in the 3rd person... and he told the disciples *the one whom Jesus loved*.

This was humble, but one of the reasons I love the Bible and believe it's real is some of the details it includes, so John writes this...

Peter and the other disciple started out for the tomb. They were both running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first.

John 20:3-4 (NLT)

So, he had a good start. He's like, *I'm not going to mention my name, but I want every generation to know that I smoked Peter in this race...*

But then he says this...

He stooped and looked in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he didn't go in.

John 20:5 (NLT)

The original word used to describe the way John looked in the tomb is a *glancing look*. *It means to observe*. This is one way to look at the resurrection.

B. Ways to look at the Resurrection

1. **A GLANCE.** **(John 20:5)**

The first way some people look at the Easter Story is with a quick glance...

They will come on a Sunday, attend a service, take a quick look, and then go about the rest of the day.

So, you can be here and look at the Easter story but not have fresh eyes...

Now, notice John doesn't go in; he just took a quick look...

And the problem with a quick glance is you miss so much of the beauty of the story...

If you only take a quick glance, Christianity can look like other religions. Did you know there are other famous tombs out there?

Every year, people from all over the world who believe in **Buddhism** visit the Temple of the Tooth in Sri Lanka. Thousands of people pilgrimage to the Temple of the Tooth because supposedly one of Buddha's teeth is buried there. So, they go ... all because the founder of their religion is laid to rest there.

In China, there is a place called the Tomb of **Confucius**, and every year, thousands of people who practice Confucianism visit it because, supposedly, this is where part of Confucius's body is laid to rest.

And then there is a place called Mask of the Prophet located in Medina - and this is a place where *millions* of Muslims visit every year to make a pilgrimage to the place where their prophet **Muhammad** is laid to rest.

Christians visit Israel because it is the place where they best estimate Jesus was buried—it's the only tomb in the world famous for what is NOT in it! The **resurrection** and the **empty** tomb distinguish Christianity.

Jesus isn't in the tomb - He's not dead - He is ALIVE!

And because He's alive, it's worth a deeper look than a glance.

In many respects I find an un-resurrected Jesus easier to accept. Easter makes him dangerous. Because of Easter, I have to listen to his extravagant claims and can no longer pick and choose from his sayings. Moreover, Easter means he must be loose out there somewhere.

Philip Yancey

Is there anything in you that feels dead, or hopeless, or stressful?

Can I tell you that God is in the resurrection business.... Whatever is dead, he can bring back to life...

Religion will tell you to try harder. It's on you because all the other Gods are dead and, in the tomb... but Jesus is alive and with us...

The most central promise in the Bible is God with us...

Jesus is alive, so the empty tomb proves that whatever feels dead right now can be brought back to life! Easter Sunday is a reminder that God is in the resurrection business...

2. A THEORY. (John 20:6-7)

Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there, while the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was folded up and lying apart from the other wrappings.

John 20:6-7 (NLT)

The word *notice* is one of the most interesting words... It's actually the Greek word *Theoreo*.

It is where we get the word theory... but it also spells out the word ... The Oreo (you can't unsee it now)

But this word means to examine the evidence, to make a theory... It's the idea of wrestling to try to make sense of it all!

And what does Peter see? He sees the garments in the tomb and is trying to make sense of them because they are undisturbed.

Now, societies then had their distinct modes of burial.

Egypt- famous for embalming people.

Romans- cremated their dead.

Israelites- wrapped dead in linen bands, enclosed in dry spices, and kept them face up in a tomb.

So, they come in and find the cloths there, but Jesus isn't. They are wrestling with what happens.

John wants us to wrestle with the truth...

We live in a culture where people make up different conspiracy theories.... One of them is that the Earth is flat...

But I found the best evidence of why the Earth can't be flat...

Show cat quote...

There are hundreds of conspiracy theories out there, and there are conspiracy theories on Jesus! That his body was stolen, or that he was never really killed because he was in such good shape (but remember, the Romans were masterful at death), some people have said he has a twin brother (or as I've called it ... the Prestige Theory) ... but Jesus' mother was there ... she would have known. And also, his wounds were present when he arose.

The problem I have with these theories is that Jesus showed up to so many eyewitnesses... in fact, listen.

He was buried, and He was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve. After that, He was seen by more than 500 of His followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died.

1 Corinthians 15:4-6 (NLT)

If this was a lie, someone would have slipped up and told the truth...

Also, if Jesus didn't rise from the grave, how do you explain the disciples?

The disciples were timid and afraid, but after meeting Christ, they became bold, and 10 of them were martyred for their faith.

Andrew was crucified

Nathaneal was flayed to death with a whip

James the Just was thrown from the temple and then beaten to death

James the Great was beheaded

Matthew was killed by a sword

Matthias was stoned and beheaded

Peter was crucified upside down

Philip was crucified

Thomas was stabbed to death

Thaddeus was shot with arrows

John died in exile in a prison

Also, Jesus' very own family members were changed: James, his brother; Mary, his mother; Jude, another half-brother. When you live with someone and grow up with someone, you know who they are, and you see it all. What do you think your odds are of talking your siblings into thinking you're the Messiah...

Yet, in the Bible, they acknowledge him not just as family but as God!

What's your theory? I'm telling you, every way you dig into this, you are going to see the overwhelming amounts of evidence that the tomb is empty because Jesus rose from the dead!

Peter and John looked at the evidence and listened to what happened...

Then the disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in, and he saw and believed— for until then they still hadn't understood the Scriptures that said Jesus must rise from the dead.

John 20:8-9 (NLT)

(We get it, dude, you're a fast runner... come on)

3. BELIEVE.

(John 20:8-9)

Rich word that means to perceive with intelligent comprehension. To believe with trust.

Yet to believe, and because of his belief, he could see clearer than ever before. John shows us here that actually ***Believing is Seeing.***

Maybe it took Peter a second because he had such a bad week. Not only was Jesus killed, but remember, he said he would never betray Jesus, and he did three times. Maybe he didn't think grace, or the Jesus thing, was for him. Maybe he thought he wasn't worthy...

Maybe you are here and feel a little uncomfortable or out of place because you think church is where all the good and perfect people are ... Let me just say you came to the wrong church for that...

We say no perfect people are allowed... the Bible is clear ... all of us have sinned... but Jesus paid for it all... and you know what proves it ... the empty tomb!

Don't just glance or give partial importance... may God give you fresh eyes to see who He is today!

Christianity is a statement which, if false, is of no importance, and, if true, is of infinite importance. The one thing it cannot be is moderately important.

C.S. Lewis

Where are you at today?

Glance- (showing up)

Theory- (investigate... maybe it is time to jump)

Believe- (surrender)