

Scripture: Luke 24:1-11

I. The resurrection was announced by angels. Luke 24:1-7 The two men were actually angels; they told them He is risen just like he said he would be.. **Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene.** John 20:11-18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her. **Jesus appears to the women.** Matthew 28:9 In a way this idea of arisen Savior was too good to be true. **The apostles did not believe they had seen the risen Lord.** (8-11) *And they remembered his words, And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.* The women were the first ones to proclaim that Jesus was alive but the message was met with doubt. Peter responds by running to the tomb. Later Jesus would appear to ten of the disciples but Thomas was not there. **Thomas doubts the testimony of his friends.** John 20:24-25 *But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.* **Dr. Stanley writes:** Thomas reminds us of the similarities between doubt and faith—both originate from the same place: a confrontation with the unknown. Doubt concedes defeat, while faith claims the victory. Thomas has conceded defeat. He believes all his hopes were gone. We do not know why Thomas wasn't with the group originally but he refused to believe these eye witness accounts. Thomas had been with Jesus; witnessed the miracles and had hoped that he was the Messiah. He would have scattered like the others. The idea of a man being resurrected from the dead was an unknown; could he trust it? If he believed would his hopes be dashed again? He says unless I see and touch the risen Savior I will not believe. There are people who go through so many trials in their life; a friend tells them about Jesus or even about how church has helped them but it seems too good to be sure. Let's face it there are times we doubt too. Maybe not the resurrection but will doubt the power of the cross to change our circumstances. Isn't that the biggest problem with the Pandemic; we are fighting an enemy we can't see and we don't see how God is going to work this problem out. Prayer, reading the Bible, surrendering my will to God all this is an unknown; doubt says God won't help or worse there is a fear God is not real. Perhaps in Thomas mind he doubted because of the finality of the crucifixion. There is turmoil in his heart and he is afraid.

1. We are blessed when we see Jesus by faith. John 20:29 *Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.* The empty tomb means we have eternal life and the power to live our lives in victory. **Romans 6:4-5** *Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.* Our Blessings today is a new life within. We are not delivered from our problems we are delivered through them. Jesus made a promise to us in **John 16:33** ³³ *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.* We all can make a list of tribulations but Jesus promises us peace. **Jeremy's Eggs** It's a true story, courtesy of Ida Mae Kempel, but the names have been changed. Jeremy was 12 years old and he was only in the second grade, seemingly unable to learn. His body was twisted, his mind was kind of slow, and his teacher, Doris Miller, often became exasperated with his squirming and his grunting noises. However, at other times he spoke pretty clearly and distinctly, as if a spot of light had penetrated that darkness in his brain. No one could have guessed that Jeremy would end up teaching his

entire class, oh, and his teacher. Doris Miller finally became so exasperated with Jeremy that she asked his parents to come to St. Theresa's for a consultation. When she explained that it would be better for Jeremy and the other students if, well you know, if he were in a special school. His mother begged for Jeremy to stay where he felt safe. After they left, the teacher struggled with what to do. She wanted to sympathize with the parents. After all, their only child had a terminal illness. But what about the other students? Well, God did something in her heart that day. She ended up praying for the patience to be what Jeremy needed. From that day she tried to ignore his noises and his blank stares. One day he limped up to her desk, dragging his bad leg behind him. And out loud, Jeremy exclaimed, "I love you, Miss Miller!" The other students kind of snickered and she was a little embarrassed. Easter approached and Doris told her students the story of Jesus, and she emphasized the idea of new life. She gave each child a large plastic egg and she gave them an interesting assignment. She said, "Bring it back the next day with something inside that shows new life." Well, the children were excited, well, all except Jeremy. Doris saw no signs that he "got it." She was going to call his parents that night to explain the assignment but she forgot. The next morning, 19 children came to school, laughing and talking as they placed their eggs in this large wicker basket on Miss Miller's desk. Then came the time to open their eggs. Well, one had a flower in her egg, another a plastic butterfly, still another had a rock with moss on it - all symbols of new life. When Doris opened the fourth egg, she just kind of gasped. The egg was empty! Yeah, it was Jeremy's. She was going to quickly set it aside, but Jeremy suddenly spoke up, "Miss Miller, aren't you going to talk about my egg?" Doris said, "But your egg is empty, Jeremy!" **He looked into her eyes and said softly, "Yes, but Jesus' tomb was empty, too! Jesus was killed, but His Father raised Him up!"** The recess bell rang and the children ran out to play. And the teacher cried. Three months later, Jeremy died. Those who paid their respects at the funeral home were kind of surprised by what they saw there. On top of Jeremy's casket, there were 19 eggs - all of them empty. **John 14:19** - something Jeremy really understood. Jesus said, "Because I live, you also will live." The tomb is empty. The arguments about the way to God end at that empty tomb. Our little, earthbound lives don't have to be small anymore when we open up to the power of the One who blew the doors off His grave, who died on a cross to pay for every sin we've ever done. *I thought about that illustration. Jeremy understood the greatest news the world ever heard as the tomb was empty. Romans 4:25 tells us He died for our sins and was raised for our justification. Look at the impact of his testimony; the teacher cried and all his classmates brought empty eggs. They learned the empty tomb means eternal life for their friend Jeremy and them. It also means Jesus was who he said he was, is true meaning all his promises are real.* Jesus tells us in Matthew 11 when we come to Him with our burdens and surrender them to him we become yoked to Him. He has another promise rest for our souls; that means peace for our minds, conscience and emotions. Worry, fear and anxiety lead to anger but surrender, prayer and faith lead to contentment which leads to peace.

II. The best way to have the peace of God is to stay close to the God of peace. Phil. 4:9 *Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you* One of the great blessings of Easter is the hope it represents. Our focus is on the risen Savior. Prayer, focus and being around God's people will keep you close to God. Then you will realize the blessings of being yoked to Christ and you will find rest for your souls. Today most churches would have been full because the news of an empty tomb represents a celebration of life. Christmas is hope arriving, the crucifixion is hope lost but Easter is life and hope restored. God still is honored when we celebrate the

resurrection of Jesus. When you are trusting Jesus He is the source of grace you and He is yoked to you. What does this have to do with the empty tomb? The empty tomb means there is hope for the empty life. It means there's peace available for the troubled mind. At the very least it means there is hope for eternal life. But what it means to you personally is up to you.

III. My hope comes when I actually see Jesus with my spiritual eyes. Job 42:1-6 Then Job answered the LORD, and said, ² I know that thou canst do every *thing*, and *that* no thought can be withholden from thee. ³ Who *is* he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. ⁴ Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. ⁵ I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. ⁶ Wherefore I abhor *myself*, and repent in dust and ashes. Sometimes we look at life and feel it is not fair. Job lost his family, his wealth, his servants, his position in the community and his health. God basically tells him you can't understand why this happens but what I will give you is me. Jesus says to the hopeless remember on Friday I was crucified and darkness came over the land. I was in the tomb on Saturday and it appeared that all hope was gone. But then came the morning the stone was rolled away to show the world that death had lost and life had won. The power to raise Jesus from the grave wants to enter into your human condition and give you a source of strength capable of solving any problem or capable to give you the power to rise above it. What life is promised **John 17:3** *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.* Just as Job came to know God personally we can know Jesus personally. **John 11:25-26** Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: ²⁶ And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? **Dr. McGee writes:** *Jesus says to her, "Martha, don't you know that I am the resurrection and the life?" If we have Jesus, we have life. "He that believeth in me, though he were dead" is referring to spiritual death. Though a person is spiritually dead, "yet shall he live." Then He looks into the future and says that the one who has trusted Him shall never die. Life begins at the moment a person accepts the Savior. Whosoever lives and believes in Jesus will never die because Jesus has already died for him. That is, he will never die a penal death for his sins. He will never be separated from God. Then Jesus asks the question: "Believest thou this?" When our answer is yes our spiritual eyes are open and we see Jesus. Because the tomb is empty, hope changes meaning from a possibility to an assurance.*