

The Tomb (Matthew 27:55-28:15)

21-Apr-19 (Easter Sunday)

G'Day Church Family

There are Bibles in front of you and a sermon outline in the bulletin if you want to take notes.

Let me pray for God's help before we begin. Let's pray...

## Intro

We finished up on Good Friday saying that...

Good Friday wasn't a bad day or a sad day

But a good day - in fact a ***glorious day - it brought glory and honour and praise to God the Father, because Jesus, the Son, was obedient and completed the Father's rescue plan***

[PowerPoint 1-Good Friday]

And that's because - Jesus - God's only Son - laid down His life willingly - on a cruel Roman Cross

- To fix our broken relationship with God because of sin and rebellion against God - and we said the Cross of ***Jesus was like a bridge back to God***
- So that we could have our sins forgiven
- And, so that we don't have to be punished for our sins

Now - even though Jesus has taken the punishment for sin - which is death - away from us - by dying on the cross

We're still left with the problem - that one day we all face death - and we will die

And we're also faced with the fact that on Good Friday - Jesus died.

So, death was even a problem for Him.

But what if death does not have to be the end of the Easter story and the end of our story?

[PowerPoint 2-Death not the end of the Story]

**The Promises (Psalm 16:9-10; John 3:16; Matt 12:39-40; 16:21; 17:22-23)**

It's worthwhile before we go any further then

to remind ourselves of a few promises from God's Word - about life and death

[PowerPoint 3-Psalm 16]

- King David in Psalm 16:9-10 - says: **Therefore, my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because *you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead***

[PowerPoint 4-John 3:16]

- John's Gospel - John 3:16 says - **For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that *whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life***

[PowerPoint 5-Matt 12]

- Matthew 12:39-40 - He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except ***the sign of the prophet Jonah***. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in

the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth”

[PowerPoint 6-Matt 16]

- Matthew 16:21 - From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and ***that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.***

[PowerPoint 7-Matt 17]

- Matthew 17:22-23 - When they came together in Galilee, he said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and on ***the third day he will be raised to life.***”

So, as we hit our Bible passage today

Because of these promises

There's an expectation that Jesus will be raised to life - and of course - He is!

Clearly, it's sufficient for us to simply have faith and believe that Jesus rose from the dead - we don't actually have to have any evidence - our faith is enough!

But, in our Bible reading today, Matthew gives us some evidence to support Jesus' resurrection

Why does he give this evidence?

Because - there is a conflict between the Christians' account of what happened at the tomb where Jesus was buried - and the Jewish account of these same events.

So, let's have a look at the evidence...

## The Evidence of the Tomb (Matthew 27:55-28:15)

### Women witnesses (Matthew 27:55-56)

[PowerPoint 8-women]

First, in Matthew 27:55-56 - We have *devoted women witnesses* - Mary Magdalene (whom Jesus had removed 7 demons from (Luke 8:2) - Mary the mother of James and Joseph - and Salome (Mark 15:40) - the wife of Zebedee and mother of James and John (Matthew 20:20)

They are so devoted they have *followed Jesus from Galilee* and joined him on His ministry travels (Luke 8:1-3)

So devoted - these *women didn't run away* when Jesus was arrested - like Jesus' disciples did.

We need to also understand that women were treated as 2<sup>nd</sup> class citizens in the Jewish culture of the day - and were often seen as men's possessions rather than as their partners. Also, women were not allowed to give evidence in court - their evidence was seen as irrelevant and unreliable. So *why would Matthew use the "unreliable" evidence of women* - if he was trying to prove a made-up story - unless the story was actually true?

In fact, the women were sitting opposite the tomb - so they know which tomb Jesus' body was placed in (see v61)

### Joseph of Arimathea (27:57-61)

#### [PowerPoint 9-Joseph]

In Matthew 27:57-61 - the next piece of evidence we have - is Joseph of Arimathea

It's Friday evening - the Jewish Sabbath starts at sunset on Friday - and goes until sunset on Saturday

Duet 21:22-23 says:

<sup>22</sup>If someone guilty of a capital offense is put to death and their body is exposed on a pole, <sup>23</sup>**you must not leave the body hanging on the pole overnight. Be sure to bury it that same day**, because anyone who is hung on a pole is under God's curse. You must not desecrate the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.

So, the rich man, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a prominent member of the Jewish Council (Mark 15:43) and a disciple of Jesus - but only secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders (John 19:38) and who had not consented to the decision to crucify Jesus (Luke 23:51) - risked his life to get Jesus' body for burial [Joseph could have been turned on by the Jewish Council and Jewish Leaders and even by the Romans] - instead Joseph bravely approached Pontius Pilate and asked Pilate for Jesus' body - so he could keep the requirements of the Law and take the body down before the Sabbath [no work can be done on the Sabbath] - and to also give Jesus a proper burial.

Joseph wrapped Jesus' body in a clean linen cloth and placed it in a **new tomb** (cave)

Jesus - came into the world in a **virgin womb** and He was raised to life from a **virgin tomb**. A new tomb where no one else was buried is important - it means there will be no confusion which body rose.

Matthew's emphasis on Joseph being rich should remind us of Isaiah 53:9

He was assigned a grave with the wicked,  
and with the rich in his death,  
though he had done no violence,  
nor was any deceit in his mouth.

### **The Chief Priests and Pharisees (27:62-66)**

In Matthew 27:62-64 - the next piece of evidence is the Chief Priests and Pharisees

[PowerPoint 10-Chief Priests & Pharisees]

They came to Pontius Pilate - the next day, the one after Preparation Day - that next day is actually the **Sabbath**

The Chief Priests and Pharisees were **prepared to break the Sabbath Law** and do business and go to the Governor's place

There's a great deal of **irony** here - these men had accused Jesus of breaking the Sabbath by healing a man with a shriveled hand and then plotted to kill Jesus (12:9-14) - now they're **so desperate to eliminate Jesus and His movement - that they break the Sabbath** themselves and come to the Roman governor to get Jesus' body guarded

Why?

See V64 - because they were worried that Jesus' disciples might come and steal Jesus' body - so the disciples could tell people Jesus rose from the dead like He said he would

The fact that even the enemies of Jesus are worried that his body might be stolen - shows they believe Jesus is dead and not in a coma as some try to argue

Also, their concern that the disciples might steal the body doesn't stack up - *the disciples had all run away in fear - they're hardly going to come and steal Jesus' body?*

What the *Chief Priests and Pharisees were really afraid of was that Jesus was telling the truth* and they were afraid of *His Power - even over death!*

Nevertheless - Pilate agreed to put a guard at the tomb V66

### **The Empty Tomb (28:1-7)**

The next piece of evidence is the empty tomb in chapter 28:1-7...

In v1 - it's the first day of the week [Sunday] - some of the women - Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to the tomb - to anoint Jesus' body

[PowerPoint 11-Empty tomb]

And there was some *Supernatural* evidence -

An *Earthquake* and

An *Angel*

The stone over the entrance of the tomb was rolled back by the angel

The guards were passed out in shock

And the **tomb was empty!**

And the angel said to the women (v5) - **Do not be afraid** - and in v6 - **He is not here - He has risen -and He's gone ahead to Galilee**

### **The Resurrected Jesus (28:8-10)**

The next piece of evidence is the resurrected Jesus Himself - in verses 8 to 10

[PowerPoint 12-Jesus]

When the women hurried away from the tomb - v8 - they were afraid and full of joy - then they came face to face with the Risen Jesus

They threw themselves down at His feet- v9

Jesus told them not to be afraid. **Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee - where they will see me!** (v10)

### **The Cover Up (vv11-15)**

Next, we have the guards as eye witnesses and a cover-up!

[PowerPoint 13-Cover Up]

They reported what had happened to the chief priests

And the chief priests and elders bribed the soldiers to say that the disciples stole Jesus' body while the guards were asleep

To believe this cover up - we have to believe:

- The guards were asleep

- That they broke Roman military law by sleeping on watch - which was punishable by death
- That they slept through the earthquake and rolling away of the stone from the tomb
- That the guards saw the disciples steal the body even though they were asleep?

## Other Evidence

Matthew gives some compelling evidence for the resurrection of Jesus  
Even though as we said earlier - our faith is enough - without any evidence.

There's other evidence too

[PowerPoint 14-Other Evidence]

Jesus did appear to the disciples in **Galilee** as the angel promised and as Jesus Himself told the women as they left the empty tomb (see Matt 28 - v17-18)

Jesus also made **resurrection appearances** for 40 days - almost 6 weeks (Acts 1:3)

And He appeared to Peter and the Apostles, and to over 500 people and then to the Apostle Paul (1 Cor 15:5-8)

Also, how do we explain **the change in the Apostles** - from frightened followers at Jesus' death - to bold fearless preachers after His resurrection.

## Conclusion

So, we must conclude from all of this that:

### [PowerPoint 15-Conclusion]

1. Jesus always keeps His promises
2. He did rise from the dead
3. His resurrection means we have the gift of eternal life as Jesus says in John 11:25 - "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die" (John 11:25)
4. Without the resurrection - Jesus doesn't fix death - and we have no hope of Heaven
5. Without the resurrection - we have no Good News. But Jesus is alive - and offers life into eternity to all who believe in Him

### Our Response (Matthew 28:16-20)

So, what should our response be this Easter Sunday?

### [PowerPoint 16-Our Response]

Firstly, we must have faith in His Resurrection of Jesus - to have the certain hope of Heaven!

Second, our response must be the same as the disciples' response

And it should be no surprise that the Risen Jesus gave the disciples - their response - when He met them in Galilee - see Matt 28:19-20

Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

The response to the Empty Tomb and the Risen Jesus

Is a Global Mission

The mission is to *make disciples*

How?

By *Going*

By *Baptizing* in the Trinity

By *Teaching* people about Jesus

So that more people follow Jesus - and get saved for Heaven

And those new followers of Jesus - in turn make disciples

It's a *multiplication* process

Disciples make disciples - who make more disciples...

The Empty Tomb and the Risen Jesus - are the platform that launches this

Mission

[PowerPoint 17-Feet/Hands]

It's my prayer - this Easter Sunday - that it would be our feet that go - and

our hands that do - and that we make more and more disciples of Jesus

Let's pray...