

MESSAGE

EMPTY

APRIL 4/5, 2015 | PASTOR MATT ERICKSON | JOHN 20:1-31

"Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance." (John 20:1)

Empty: Death Defied

"They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead." (John 20:9)

Empty: Ache's Absence

"Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" (John 20:15)

Empty: The Past Surpassed

"Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you!'" (John 20:19)

Empty: Questions Quelled

"Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.'" (John 20:27)

Empty: Leaning into Life

"These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." (John 20:31)

RESPONSE

What sort of response should we have to the report of Jesus' resurrection?

For some of us, the response of faith is so strong we are catapulted into the highest levels of worship and joy. We believe that Jesus is the Messiah promised in the Hebrew Scriptures for all people, and that His death on the Cross and resurrection from the grave bring God's life-changing presence and power into our everyday lives today. The response for those of us living with faith is to let our lives sing out the goodness of God's gift in Jesus Christ, and to speak it out to those around us.

Others among us wrestle with it. Why would God do something like this and not something more straightforward? Could it really be that Jesus' death is so crucial for everyone? Is it really possible for someone to rise from the dead? We see how different some people's lives are because of this message, but what does it mean for us? A good response for those in this place is to continue wrestling with it by asking God to reveal Himself to you, to search the Bible for real answers, or to journey with us at Eastbrook as we seek to know God more together.

No matter where we stand, we cannot avoid the significance of Jesus of Nazareth. His teaching resounds with power and subtly impacts the way we think about real life with such phrases as "love your neighbor as yourself" and "go the extra mile." His life of loving service and bold action still captivates humanity's greatest thinkers. If Jesus' life continues to impact so many people from such diverse places, it is certainly worth taking time today to consider Jesus again, to reflect on all He has done, and, yes, even to worship Him.