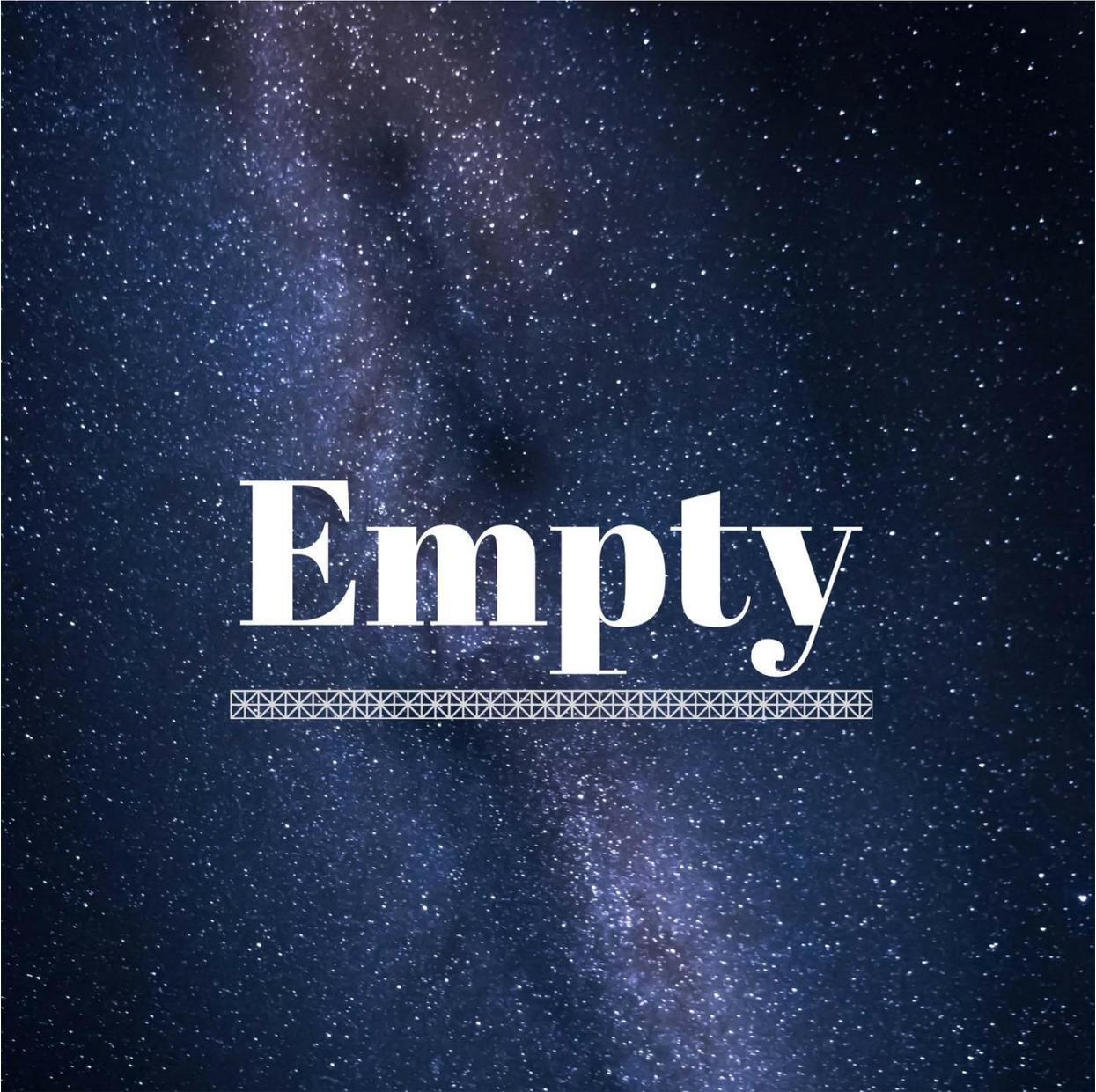


Easter, 2019

Good News: Empty = Filled

16 When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. ² And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. ³ They had been saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?” ⁴ When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. ⁵ As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. ⁶ But he said to them, “Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. ⁷ But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.” ⁸

He is Risen, yes, He is Risen indeed.



Empty



Who likes to drive and stop because the fuel tank is empty? Open the refrigerator and the milk jar is empty... Who is excited when they opened their bank account and it is empty? Think more of the word empty. What good can come out of empty? Think of the empty chair. It brings us pain when the person, our loved, the one who used to sit there with us and now it is empty... Remember the time when you are surrounded with many people, music, entertainment but you are just empty... nothing can fill the emptiness you have. I can't imagine my house to be empty longer than just half a day. I think Andrew is already looking for some support group for me to join for coping with an empty nest syndrome. How many even today, we are just empty... Emptiness in our hearts and in our lives. Our house can be filled with stuff but our heart, our soul can be so empty that it hurts. No, we do not need any more things to put our schedule, nobody needs an extra meeting, an extra thing to do... But our busy lives, so many times leaves us empty...

“When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him”. Think how crazy

that is. Don't they know about the stone? The stone probably would weight about 1 ton. Why would you go to do something when you know you will not able to do? What was it that did not stop these women from going? Believing? Hoping? Going forward even when you are not so



sure what you will do when you get there? Just not being able to stay still?

I am thinking about these women who walked in the dark toward the tomb. Did they pass the empty crosses? Did they stop? Did they cry? Surely they did not rejoice, because it reminded them of the crucifixion, the death. Empty cross brought the pain.



In Mark's gospel we read that they entered the tomb. Let's consider for a moment a tomb. What would you expect from a tomb? What would you expect when you go in to the cemetery? Graves and buried people. There are no lives in cemeteries, in the graves. Let's talk even about us today in this beautiful place, dressed in the best clothes? How many of us struggle everyday? How many of us are broken and dead spiritually? There is no joy in us... we make from one day to another, sometimes from one hour to the next. We lost hope and faith in having a life. We work hard, thinking that might help us to feel alive. We work hard so we can get something, do something, with a hope that this might gives us life... Satan wants us to be dead, his goal is to lead us to death. Satan desires we will not change, we will not truly believe. Evil one wants us to stay filled with **sin that leads us to destruction.** How is with your soul today? How much alive you are in Christ? We all know the Easter story. We all know what are the Good News...But



didn't we lose a hope, the power and faith that Jesus is still giving a life to me? Maybe before we can be alive we need to be empty of a sin and all the deadly things that are in us?

Think of the first miracle of Jesus. Remember the wedding. Remember when they ran out of wine. Here is a question: Would Jesus be able to fill the jars with water if they would remain filled? They had to become empty, they had to realize and see that they are empty. Even feel stress and urgency to be filled. Only when the jars were empty Jesus was able to fill them with the water and make a miracle. Emptiness is not bad. Emptiness allows us to look and seek to be filled. Today, today is the time, today is the best time to be empty from all your sins, addictions, habits, hangovers... Does not matter how many times you have done it before, - it is the only way to get life is to keep coming before the Lord. Sure you can stay in your old life and continue the existence... But today we have another call, another moment to start with an empty cross, - empty cross means your burdens, your sins are washed away. Empty cross is a love and forgiveness for you. Empty cross is bad, it is a good.

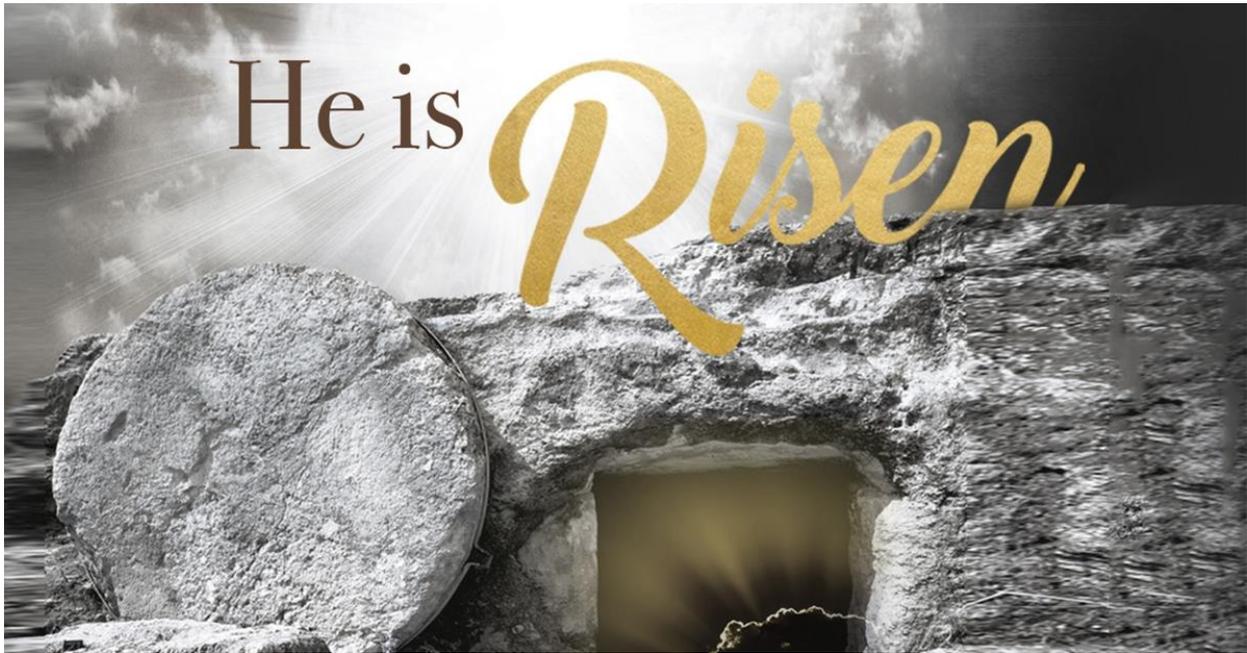


According to Mark these three women went into the tomb and saw a young man dressed in a white robe; sitting on the right side. The women were terrified, frightened, startled. Yes, it was a messenger, an angel. Think again, not a little chubby creature that you want just to grab his cheeks and hold in your palms. Do not be misguided. Angels are scary. They are terrifying. Nothing little or cute. Women were scared not only of empty tomb but also by a man.

Empty grave. Graves are for the dead people. It is a place for death. It is the end of life, and there is no life where death has taken place.... But Jesus was not there. Jesus is life. Jesus conquered the death. Not only He raised from death he said that we will live with Him. Jesus did not go straight to heaven. No, Mary saw Him and many others. The New Testament records 11 appearances of the risen Christ. There may have been more, but the record attests to 11 at least.

He appeared indoors and outdoors, in the day and at night, to individuals and to groups, and in Judea as well as Galilee. The appearances were so ordered as to involve all kinds of circumstances to demonstrate the reality of his resurrection.

But listen to what the men says in white clothes: **He said to them, “Do not be frightened. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen. He is not**



here. See the place where they laid Him. Go, tell his disciples.

It is in these words that we receive is the life changing message. It is in these words, we base our faith and on the facts of what these women witness we continue to proclaim the Good News. It in these words: He is Risen. The fact that Jesus is risen changes whole life.

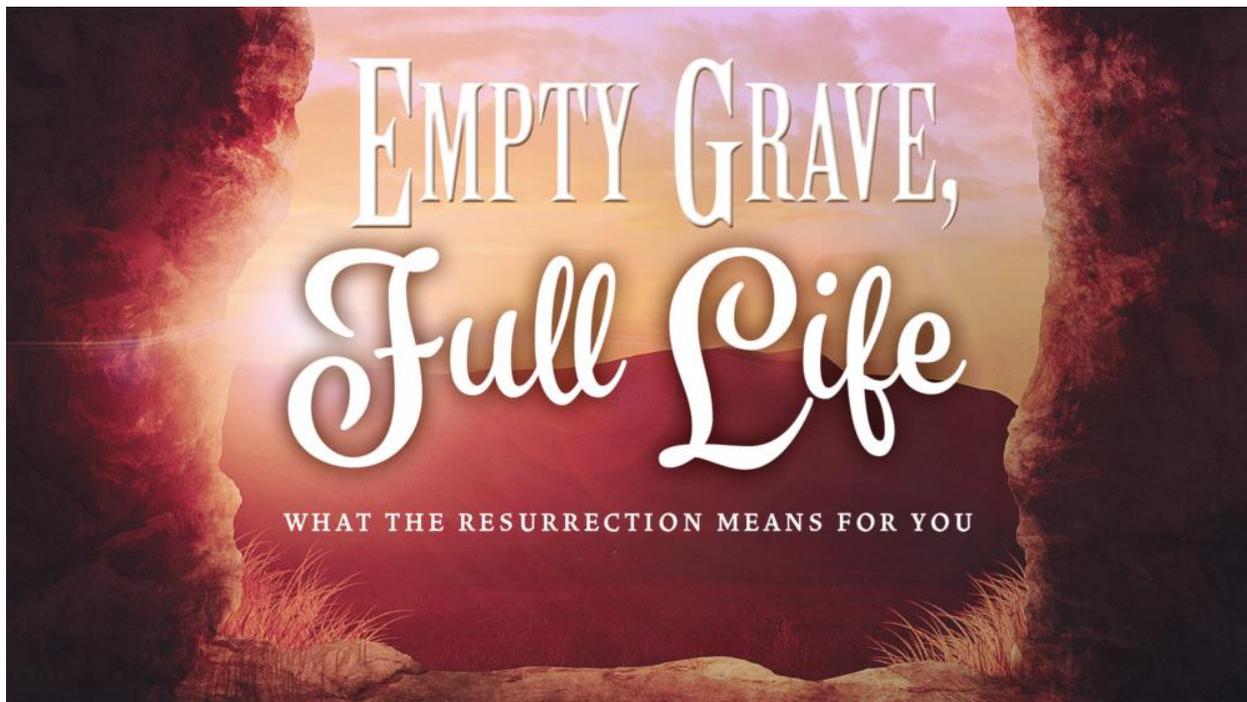
Jesus is not hanging on the cross. He is not dead. If we truly believe what we proclaim that Jesus is alive, we have a Savior and a life in Christ, that the death has no power, that in the most hopeless situation we have hope, the sin has no power to continue to keep us in bondage...

If we believe in the Risen Christ,- cross brings us forgiveness, reminder of Jesus is not there, reminder to not continue to sin, is a sign for us to forgive others. **Empty cross fills your empty life.**

Empty grave -gives us not an empty hopes. Empty grave shouts that emptiness brings hope that will not disappoint you. When we loose our loved ones, we have emptiness in our

hearts, in our lives. This emptiness can create a space for God's presence, for His promise to be with you. Empty grave is a promise of a hope, that though we die, - we will live. "Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die" (John 11:25). If we have empty heart,- we let the truth of the everlasting life to soak in us. It is for a little while that we are separated. Believe in me, Jesus says.

Sometimes we get married, hoping this person will fill my life, my empty heart... We have children and we say: "now my life is filled". We look or we have friends and we hope they will fill our lives. All these are the blessings and the gifts from God. But nobody and nothing in this life will make you be filled with joy, internal joy, everlasting joy in Jesus. It is not even fair towards our spouses, children and friends to even expect from them to make us happy. It is not their role, their task, their goal of life... You are God's creation, only when you are alive in Christ, have a personal, intimate relationship with living Jesus, you will have joy and will be able



to accept, to love and receive love.

Because of the empty grave, empty cross gives us joy and hope. Do not give up, keep believing and you will experience the life that is filled with life and joy.

Mark's gospel ends up in the most scared way. It was so awkward for the first century Christians, that they had to fix it. They added the ending. But the original ending is this: "So

they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid”.

What you do with that ending? The message, the facts are the same. Jesus is risen, the women witnessed it, but what? The feeling of fear, amazement and terror paralyzed of saying or doing anything. They were afraid. Feelings are powerful. Maybe today you feel uplifted? Maybe encouraged? Have some hope that is a little bit stronger? Fear that this is not true? Good story? Great words? Fear that this is not enough to change your life?

“For they were afraid”. Of what? People? Next step? Today reality is that Jesus is Risen and it can change your broken life. It can heal your wounds that are still bleeding. It can free you from the bondage of addiction. It fill you empty life. Jesus is a living Savior. Believe and except.

I would like to tell you that now you will be good, but faith and life in Christ is a journey. It is a daily, hourly, step by step journey. Come join us next Sunday as we continue to fill ourselves with a joy in Christ.

The Empty Cross Promises Forgiveness 2. The Empty Tomb Promises Hope 3. The Empty Grave Clothes Promise Relationship 4. The Empty Promises of the World