
Sunday of the Myrrh Bearing Women.

Acts 6:1-7 & Mark 15:43-16:8

Early Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene, Mary mother of James and Salome got up, dressed themselves, grabbed their spices, and walked through the streets of Jerusalem heading to the tomb where Jesus lay. They were going there to anoint His body as was the custom. They loved the Lord and He was in need, but the Apostles were in hiding. The women witnessed His sufferings and were present at his burial Friday evening. They were on their way to anoint Jesus' body and no shadows of darkness, no Sanhedrin nor the soldiers guarding the tomb would stop them.

The women were intent on showing their love for the Lord by pouring myrrh upon His body. So, when they returned from the burial on Friday, they immediately bought a goodly amount of aromatic substances and waited for the break of day following the Sabbath to anoint His body.

As they proceeded to the tomb, they remembered that a large stone had been rolled to seal the grave. The concern was their lack of ability to roll the stone from the tomb. (Mk. 16:2). For it was a huge one.

But when they arrived at the tomb, they breathe a sigh of relief for the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. An angel who had descended from heaven to the grave had rolled it away. He sat on the stone, waiting for the women's arrival. When they came, he announced the Lord's resurrection and told them to let the Apostles know. This made the holy women the first among humans to hear and preach Christ's resurrection

As they went running back later to Jerusalem, suddenly Jesus appeared to them. They fell on their knees and clasped His feet. and worshipped Him. Then the women arose from worshipping the Lord and went into town to tell the others. What started as a terrible day, had suddenly changed into a day filled with great joy. The difference between the journey to the tomb and the one from the tomb is overwhelming. The steps they take now are full of hope, something they did not have when they had gotten up this morning.

The holy women showed and proved by experience their heartfelt dedication to the Lord. Their gift turned out to be unnecessary for Jesus was resurrected. But they were rewarded a hundredfold by the appearance of the angel, up to then invisible to them, and by the wonderful announcement that Jesus has risen and resurrected mankind with Himself.

So, the ladies hurried to tell the others the great news of hope. Can you even imagine what it would be like to be the first to ever tell the good news that Jesus is alive! The tomb was empty!

What does the empty tomb mean to humanity? The empty tomb means there is forgiveness. And if anyone ever needed a dose of hope, if anyone ever needed to know what Jesus said was true, it was a distraught, guilt ridden, sun weary fishermen named Peter.

Peter was standing with John when the emotionally filled women came running into town screaming, crying, and laughing all at the same time. When Peter and John saw them in this hyper condition, they ran to them and tried to calm them down. "slow down, slow down, we can't understand you. What? The tomb is empty? Jesus is not in the tomb? Are you sure? You saw Jesus on the road?"

And at that moment Peter and John headed to the tomb as fast as their legs could carry them. His friend John was running beside him. Peter was in the lead, but then Peter thought to himself of the time when he denied Jesus three times. Can you picture Jesus, putting his hand on Peter's shoulder saying, "It's all right Peter, I forgive you!"

So, the empty tomb means there is forgiveness. The empty tomb means that our sins can be washed away. The empty tomb means that Jesus Christ has won the battle over death, sin, and the grave. That is why the gospel is such good news. Thankfully, our sins can be forgiven.

The empty tomb also means we can have a new life. Jesus died to give us new life. The empty tomb means there is hope! There is more to this life than what we have here on earth. As Christians, we are headed to a better place, a perfect home where there is no more pain, suffering, heartache, disease, and death. This new life sounds wonderful! Yet strangely enough there are some who want none of it.

Although the women displayed much courage in our Gospel reading, they are by no means the only brave women on earth. Let us bring this example of courageous women closer to home where we find many inspirationally brave women in history. Their achievements are even more impressive in a modern world. Throughout history, women have fought courageously and tirelessly to assert themselves as individuals. For example, we have all heard the story of Malala Yousafzai on the news several years ago.

On October 9, 2012, a gunman stormed Malala's school bus in Pakistan, asked her name and then shot her three times in the head. Her crime? Speaking out about education for girls. Miraculously she survived the ordeal. Fear lost and bravery triumphed. Shooting Malala led a teenage girl into an overnight stateswoman for equal rights. She was just 17 years old. Her comment to the media was: *'I don't want to be remembered as the girl who was shot. I want to be remembered as the girl who stood up.'*

If our hearts are troubled, peer into the empty tomb, and see the Resurrected Lord. Forgiveness hope and a new life that Jesus has called us to live are ours for the taking if we want it.

So, if we are looking for happiness, true happiness, we must look beyond all the material things and gadgets of modern life. They have their rightful place in this world, but as we grab for them, we must be careful not to lose grip on faith, love, and hope in Christ. Our Lord warned about this long ago when He said: "A man's life does not consist in the abundance of things which he possesses." Well you might ask, what does a person's life consist of? St. John the beloved apostle tells us clearly: "He that has the Son has life, and he that does not have the Son of God does not have life." Life has meaning, life has joy, life has happiness when centered on Christ the Son of God.

The Myrrh-bearing women centered their lives about the Lord, and they found life's meaning and happiness. May God give us the wisdom and the desire to do the same.

Amen!