

## **Easter 19**

### **"The Talking Tomb"**

**1 Cor. 15:12-19 "Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. 14 And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching *is* empty and your faith *is* also empty. 15 Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. 16 For if *the* dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. 17 And if Christ is not risen, your faith *is* futile; you are still in your sins! 18 Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable" (NKJV).**

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**It's Easter weekend, where we celebrate the life, death, and resurrection of an itinerant teacher and miracle worker named Jesus...**

**who traveled in a small geographical area in the Middle East for around 3 years.**

**He was immensely popular with the common folk, but hated by the religious leaders of His time.**

**At 33 years of age he was arrested, falsely tried, and sent to die by way of crucifixion, the most torturous form of execution known to ancient man.**

**He was buried in a rich man's tomb, and on the third day, the Bible says, He was miraculously raised from the dead.**

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**Now, some people scoff at the idea of a resurrection—that someone could actually come back to life after death.**

**"Impossible!"**

**But the Bible plainly records a total of 9 miraculous resurrections, 3 in the OT and 6 in the NT—3 by Jesus, 1 by Paul, 1 by Peter, and of course, the resurrection of Christ Himself.**

**The Bible says they were brought back to life, not by medical means, but supernaturally, even long after they had died.**

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**Now in our text, Paul lays out a hypothetical of just how hopeless and meaningless our faith would be *if we only had a dead Jesus*.**

**FIRST, Paul says...**

**I. Our preaching would be empty**

**The message about Him, the gospel itself, would be empty.**

**EMPTY means "worthless, or empty-handed."**

**If I give you the gospel without the resurrection, it is an empty-handed gospel.**

**This is because Christianity literally rises or falls on the resurrection.**

**If Jesus is still in the grave, Christianity is gutted of its power and stripped of its claims—it's an "empty handed" religion!**

**If Jesus is still in the grave, He's no better than any other inspirational personality that speckles the pages of history.**

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**So if Jesus is not risen, the GOSPEL that proclaims Him is EMPTY.**

**And not only is the GOSPEL empty, but Paul says:**

## **II. Your faith is also empty**

**A faith that has no basis, no truth, no power behind it is an empty, worthless faith.**

**What good is placing your faith in a BRIDGE that can't hold you up, a faith that brings no true solution to the problems and perplexities of life?**

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**IF Jesus didn't rise from the dead, He's not who He claimed to be, so faith in Him would be an EMPTY FAITH.**

**He had told His followers, “I will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon. They will scourge me and kill me. And the third day I will rise again.” (Luke 18:32-33 NKJV).**

**So if He didn’t come back to life on the third day, He was nothing but a fraud, and Our faith would be an empty faith!**

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**Then Paul goes on to say that if Jesus didn’t come back to life, not only is the MESSAGE empty, and our FAITH empty, but....**

### **III. Our faith is also FUTILE**

**Now, FUTILE and EMPTY have 2 different meanings.**

**While EMPTY means there’s not really anything there, FUTILE means you’re not getting anywhere—there is no progress, no positive results, no payback for what you’ve placed your faith in.**

**ILLUS: We’ve all seen a hamster’s wheel where the hamster gets in the middle of a wheel and runs yet gets nowhere, he remains in the same place.**

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**Faith in Christ without the resurrection is like that hamsters wheel—it leads nowhere—It is powerless to help you, to change you, to save you.**

**You see, Christ rose from the dead by the POWER of God, and the same power is made available to us *through His resurrection*.**

**This is why Paul said, “I want to have the same power in my life that raised Jesus from the dead” (Phil. 3:10 NLV).**

**It is the resurrection POWER that raised Jesus from the dead that EMPOWERS us to win over sin, to live a life that pleases Him.**

**So if Jesus didn’t rise from the dead, there’s NO POWER to help me!**

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**So if Jesus is not risen from the dead our preaching is empty, our faith is empty and our faith is futile—Then Paul says worst of all....**

**IV. And you are still in your sins**

**Our sins can be forgiven only by faith in Him, and through the power of His blood.**

**If He was not raised from the dead then He was an IMPOSTOR—and all our hopes of forgiveness through Him are in vain.**

**What a SAD AND HOPELESS world it would be without the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave!**

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**But Paul doesn’t leave us with these grim hypotheticals; he says in the very next verse:**

**“But now Christ is risen from the dead,” (15:20 NKJV).**

**The angel that appeared to the women that came to see the tomb on the first Easter morning said to them, “He is not here; for He is risen!”**

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**TESTIMONY: A number of years ago I went to the Holy Land with a group of people and got to not only see the tomb, but sit in it for a few minutes alone.**

**It was very solemn and very, very quiet—but some powerful truth began to wash over me...**

**That empty tomb had a message for me and all of us!**

**A. Because He lives, HOPE is alive!**

**The empty tomb of Jesus spoke of HOPE!**

**It said that my circumstances, my bank account, health challenges, or personal failures can’t keep me down—Because the worst of circumstances couldn’t keep HIM down!**

**Because He overcame the worst that hell could throw at Him, through Him I can overcome the worst hell can throw at me!**

**This is why the Bible says, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us!” (Ro. 8:35; 37-39 NIV)**

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**And then the empty tomb of Jesus said that:**

**B. Through Him, I can always get up again!**

**After a failure, a defeat, a setback, an attack, a loss, a betrayal.....Whatever knocks you down and threatens to knock you out—Because He arose, you too can get up again!**

**Maybe today you feel defeated, like there is no hope for your situation, that some mistake or setback has sealed your fate...**

**The risen Christ says to you today, “Because I live, you can get up again!”**

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**And finally...**

**C. The empty tomb is the answer for an empty life!**

**Empty is usually a negative—an empty wallet, empty bank account, empty marriage, empty gas tank, empty heart.**

**But the tomb of Jesus is the only place I know where EMPTINESS is a positive!**

**Because the empty tomb brings fullness of joy, fullness of purpose, fullness of peace, fullness of love, fullness of meaning!**

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**You see, without the empty tomb, you WILL experience a certain emptiness in life.**

**You may make lots of money, have many friends, great family, good job, great retirement...**

**But if you never accept the Christ of the empty tomb, you will experience a haunting, indefinable emptiness of your own.**

**A philosopher from long ago wrote, "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in Thee."**

**Today, that emptiness can be filled to the brim by accepting Christ into your life, by turning to Him fully!**

**LET'S PRAY**



