

**Put Yourself at the Empty Tomb – With Peter, With John, and With Mary**

- Welcome back to ch; to worship in this snctry, whether in person or online service video. For many wks this church basically empty. And even now as we continue vigilantly fight vs deadly pandemic, many among us aren't able/ready to return to pews. Let me say: that is okay! J: 2/3 gather, w/them. So whether we gather tog in person or online, J is with us.
- Let me also say: happy Estr! I couldn't say that to you in person back mid-April bec couldn't come ch! Prob 1<sup>st</sup> time in cong's histry, maybe 1<sup>st</sup> time in our lives, missed ch on Estr. But Esrt not just 1/yr clbrtn. Res of J is what defines our lives as Xians; foundation of our Xian faith. Today, we're turning to Scriptures/focus that would've had at the Estr sunrise service, so that tog we can celebrate Estr as cong. So happy Estr! Xp risen indeed, alleluia!
- When Jn 20 tells Estr story, it focuses on 3 main chartrs: Pt, Jn, MM. Today I want you put self in their shoes; want you put self right in mid this Estr acct, pretend there. Put self at empty tomb with Pt, Jn, Mry.
- Early/dark, heading tomb hrtbrkn is MM, doesn't mention women – focuses her, stone, robbers or Jews, runs back to Jrslm, finds Pt&Jn, wakes/tells, check out, sprint, chuckle, age, Jn faster/smokes Pt, gets 1<sup>st</sup>, looks in tomb, doesn't go in, min/2 later Pt huffing. **Vs 6a.** Barrels right in; get out way, want see – bec impetuous, impulsive, bold – you that re him. Today I want you put self at ET w/Pt, want you be bold w/Pt; want you barrel way in tomb, see what can see & can't. Can't J, not there, gone. But here's can: **vs. 6b-7.** If grave robbers'd come steal body, wouldn't upwrapped burial linens; and even if did, certly not left lying there neatly, in order. But as Pt (you) looking in tomb where dead body Lord placed, you see: all wrappings/linens positioned right where would be if body'd simply, supntrly passed thru them. How?! Upper room, Emmaus. Those linens prove J's dead body came back life. He who dead, now alive; using body to pass thru linens, doors – can do that bec Son God. Put self at ET w/Pt, be bold; barrel into tomb, look for self. J not there, only linens, bec J is alive!
- Evtly Jn (had stayed outside) went in look for self. **Vs. 8.** Saw: linens, stone slab where expctd see J; didn't see J there. **Vs. 8b,** J alive! Today I want put self ET w/Jn & like Jn, bel. Bel J alive! There's reason Xians called belvrs. What makes you Xian is not: parnts took ch; membr of ch; know basic story of J; or even live good, godly lifestyle. Not what makes you Xian. What makes you Xian: you bel, specfclly that J rose fr dead. There's lots ppl bel there was a J: 1<sup>st</sup> cntry Jewish rabbi, cruc by Romans – just part world histry. But being Xian is more than knowing world histry. Means believing: this J is God; our sins make us guilty b4 him; this God-man J, on cross, bearing our punshmnt, takng our place, cancelling our guilt; and that on ES morn this J actly, physcly rose fr dead. And if J did rise fr dead (I bel did) means: evrthng says true, all proms, incl prom of eternal life hvn. If J did rise fr dead (I bel did), means: J is in control of world; of universe, of coronavirus, my life & yours; our family, health, future. J in control. If J did rise fr dead (I bel did), means: God loves me, & someday going raise me fr dead. He's going bring me back to life – just like J came back life. And I bel all this is true not bec it's warm, fuzzy fairy tale w/ happy ending. No, I bel this true specfclly bec of ET. Today I want you put self at ET w/Jn. **Vs. 8b;** and I invite you bel, too. Later in Jn 20, J: stop doubting & bel. Put self at ET w/Jn, and in hrt of hrts, bel.
- Finly get to MM. We left Mry in Jrslm, reporting to Pt/Jn psbl grave rbry. Mry seems to have tearfly trudged her way back to tomb. **Vs. 11;** get this: **vs. 12-13a.** If me, too shocked answer. Woah, angels! But so crushed that Lord's body stolen, answers these angels matter-of-factly, **vs. 13b.** And then, whether rustling sound behind Mry, or maybe she noticed angels looking past her out into garden, I don't know. But something causes Mry turn around, look behind her. 'Guy there; well, probly just gardener, I'll ask him. Sir, you have body?' What happens next, I think, is single most intimate, endearing exchange in entire Bible. **Vs. 16a.** Mary! Called her by name, w/ love in voice & kindness

in eyes. She: his friend – and 1<sup>st</sup> eyewitness of risen Savior! And all he had do to convince her: say name, Mary; and she knew. **Vs. 16.** And tears/sdns turned tears/joy, bec she knew, J alive!

- Today, I want you put self ET w/Mry, & listen as J says your name. J is your GS who **“calls his own sheep by name;”** and **“his sheep follow him bec they know his voice” (Jn 10:3-4).** You know this voice; you’ve heard it many times in Bible. This is voice of your Sav, your Lord, your friend, who died on cross & rose fr dead, not just for world, but also for you, as an individual. You’re not just another soul in a sea humanity that needs saving. No, J loves you individually. And w/ love in his voice & kindness in eyes, J calls you by name. Put self at ET w/Mry and smile back at J, bec he’s alive, he loves you, and he calls you by name.
- My dear sis/bro in Xp, when we place selves right in middle this Estr account & pretend we’re there; when we put selves at ET, right next to those 1<sup>st</sup> disciples, this makes Estr msg very personal for us. This isn’t just a story. This is our faith, our everything. Was for Pt, Jn, Mry; is for us. This may’ve been unusual Holy Week and Estr for us all. But in end, doesn’t matter when we celebrate the res. Fact is, J is alive; always will be. Alleluia! Amen.

### **John 20:1-18**

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. <sup>2</sup> So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!”

<sup>3</sup> So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. <sup>4</sup> Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. <sup>5</sup> He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. <sup>6</sup> Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, <sup>7</sup> as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus’ head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. <sup>8</sup> Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. <sup>9</sup> (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) <sup>10</sup> Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

<sup>11</sup> Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb <sup>12</sup> and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus’ body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

<sup>13</sup> They asked her, “Woman, why are you crying?” “They have taken my Lord away,” she said, “and I don’t know where they have put him.” <sup>14</sup> At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. <sup>15</sup> He asked her, “Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?”

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.”

<sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means “Teacher”). <sup>17</sup> Jesus said, “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”

<sup>18</sup> Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them that he had said these things to her.