Easter 2019 **– Empty – 3 Days**

**We love to take pictures. My first camera as a kid - ruined film opening the back – or the worst taking pics only to find it was empty.**

**Easter pics – new clothes and lilies… but what was it like for them? What if we had snapshots of that first Easter weekend?**

**2000yrs ago God walked thru the door of human history and walked the earth 33yrs. Jesus - miracles followed everywhere. But then - dead!**

**A historical carpenter who said he was God. A real person now crucified - Some say he never died at all – or came back to life.**

**\*\*Either it’s fiction, fantasy, a fraud or the greatest feat of all!**

**If it is true, the grave clothes are the centerpiece of a plan to restore a broken world – if it’s not, let’s end this and go home and eat our ham…**

**Jesus said this would happen - it was the plan... John 10:11 “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. - 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”**

**Let’s look at those 3 days through the lens of His 3 closest friends: Peter, James and John – Jesus poured his life into them**

**Knew him like no other, heard his words more than any other.**

**They were his Ride or die – the people with you to the end.**

**But when the time came where were they?**

**Let’s relive that weekend… 3 DAYS**

**Day 1 - FRIDAY Jesus is Crucified - Jesus Physically dies on the Cross**

**7 fatal blows to Christ – recorded in Mt, Mk, Lk, Jn**

**1 The face - Fist and beard, concussion, nerve damage, blood loss**

**2-3 Back & chest – Razor sharp bones, lead balls tied to a whip**

**4 The head – beating rod, crowns of thorns (in critical condition)**

* + **Forced to carry a 80-lb wood beam thru streets to skull hill**

**5-6 His hands & feet - 7-inch spikes driven in, lacerating nerves**

* + **Excruciating (out of the cross) word created to express it**

**7 The side - Hand-width wide spear (blood & water) ruptured heart**

**At 3pm he breathed his last breathe – and died.**

**Where were his three closets friends? 3 Friends Responds**

**Peter - Promised to never turn away, denied him 3X - cursed young girl. (Matt 26:69-75) We are rarely as strong as we think.**

1. **He denied Jesus – he walked out on Him! (broken promises)**

**Perhaps at one time you were on fire for God, willing to give your life, but then life pressures & peer pressure got to you, and you live w/ guilt of broken promises to God - a life you walked out on**

**John –The only disciple at the cross, stood in disbelief and watched in total confusion – he doubted even up to Sunday morning**

**John 20:9 “…for he still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead…”**

1. **He is present but faithless - Maybe that speaks to you**

**You are here - pretty consistent attendance - You show up, but you’re going thru the motions. Your present, but your faith is isn’t.**

**James (John’s Brother - first disciple of Jesus) His absence speaks loudly! Jesus gave the care of Mary to John, not James. He is AWOL! Missing.**

1. **He is nowhere to be found**

**Glad you’re here today, but this is some of you the rest of the year. AWOL. Perhaps like James hiding, hurt, turned off, disappointed.**

**If we could take a picture of our most shameful moment.**

**Maybe you have broken promises - regret & guilt is eating at you.**

**Maybe your body is present, but your heart is not…**

**Maybe your AWOL with your wife and kids… and with God**

**John’s describes what happens next - two secret followers - John 19:38 Afterward Joseph of Arimathea (wealthy follower), a secret disciple of Jesus (because he feared the Jewish leaders), asked Pilate for permission to take down Jesus’ body. Pilate gave his permission, so he came and took Jesus’ body away. (pulley – held him up and pulled his hands and feet through the nails…) 39 Nicodemus, (John 3) the man who had come to Jesus at night, also came, (Where are the others?!! Two backrow followers show up) ...bringing about seventy-five pounds of embalming ointment made from myrrh and aloes. (75lbs of oil - 20lbs of wrapping) 40 Together they wrapped Jesus' body in a linen cloth with the spices, as is the Jewish custom of burial.**

**Washed him - anointed body w/ the oil, wrapped in white linen, folded His arms over chest, closed His eyes, kissed His cheek, With mouth shut - place linen over face & wrapped head.**

**(Jewish law prohibits to bury after sunset – they were rushing to get it done) Mark 15:46 So Joseph bought some linen cloth, took down the body, wrapped it in the linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. (Reality sunk in, knots in their stomach, empty feeling of losing one you love - the grave clothes told them - “It’s was over…”)**

**These grave clothes brought their hopes & dreams to an end**

**All the promises of the messiah seemed to be empty.**

**Day 1 – Friday - Jesus is physically buried (first day in the tomb)**

**Day 2 - SATURDAY (Sabbath) – The Tomb is sealed**

**Jesus physical body sits dead in a grave**

**Matt 27 records that the religious leaders worried that Jesus would be stolen by his disciples - had the tomb sealed and guarded by soldiers.**

**Little is said about the disciples. I imagine - shock, depression, anger, fear, hopelessness. They left everything for Jesus – their future buried.**

**What kind of pictures would there have been**

**Why not leave town? Nowhere to go, no money, no strength, no direction - dazed, confused. All we know is - they lingered. I’ve been there, you want to stay close… don’t want to go…**

**When it’s Sat in your life, do you leave or do you linger close to Jesus? When you feel defeated, buried, broken, disappointed, cornered, afraid- linger close to Jesus and wait. Sunday is coming!**

**Day 2 – 2 days in the grave**

**Day 3 – SUNDAY – Third day in the tomb – Empty!!!**

**As the sun breaks the dawn… the earth shakes!**

**(Later that morning - Mary, Mary & Salome) Mark 16:1 When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus’ body. (finish burial - takes a year) 2 Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb 3 and they asked each other, “Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?”**

**Perhaps that is your Q today- Who will roll the stone away?**

**That barrier- demo of dead dreams- a dead marriage- lost relationship- sickness- bitterness- depression- grief- hopelessness- that dark tomb is sealed. Who will role that stone away. You can’t – who can – who will?**

**But when they arrived… Mark 16:4 But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. (Not so Jesus could get out – but so they could look in) 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. (Luke and John say he was 1 of two angels) 6 "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. 7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He (Jesus) is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.' "**

**3 Friends Responded – Now Jesus Responds to them**

**Peter - Peter – Don’t give up - I have not given up on you!**

**Go, tell his disciples and Peter… (Why point out Peter? Tell that dirty scoundrel Peter, I am coming for him!!)**

**Mark is believed to be the transcribed notes of Peter. Lump in throat and tears when Peter got to this point… 1 Cor 15:5 – there was a private conversation with Peter not recorded in scripture.**

**All of heaven saw him fall - God wanted Peter to know he was not finished w/ him – Just like you!**

**Peter and John heard… John 20:3 So Peter and the other disciple (John) started for the tomb. (Peter & john took off - foot race) 4 Both were running, but the other disciple (John) outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 He (John) bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. (froze at the door) 6 Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went in. He saw the strips of linen lying there, 7 as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. *The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen.* (Is that significant? Yes!) 8 Finally the other disciple (John), who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed**

**John – Don’t stop believing – I still believe in you!**

**Some tran. say the linen is folded or wrapped, same word. The scene is evidence of a very calm & orderly event - not chaos or burglary. This was not a robbery - sat up, got up, folded them.**

**3 short yrs – they walked w/ him, watched him open blind eyes, deaf ears, raise the dead - then watched Him die - their dreams wrapped in grave clothes… For 3 long days - they were in the depths of despair**

**But when they saw an empty tomb and those folded clothes – They knew their master was not done - He was back!!!**

**(They went back and told the others – what did this mean?) John 20:19 On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” (walked right through the walls - que pasa?!)**

**James – Don’t hide - I can find you!**

**You can’t avoid me, hide from me, or be too far for me. Wherever you are, I am there. You might be missing, but I know right where you are.**

**You might be missing, but I can find you!**

**Luke 24:36 While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” 37 They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. 38 He said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? 39 Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.” 40 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. (Physically alive) 41 And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate it in their presence.**

**Throughout that day Jesus would appear to all 3 - They would touch him, laugh w/ him, eat w/ him! For 40 days He appeared to all the disciples and another 500 people at one time. (1 Co 15)**

**Why is this so important? That cross was the payment for our sins. At that moment Jesus bore the weight of every shameful act and failure.**

**(John 19:30) Jesus shouted “it is finished” just before his death - “Tete-lestai” Business term = PAID. The debt is covered. Our debt of sin covered – finished! Credited to you – by faith.**

**The resurrection proved – Jesus is who He says He is (God in the flesh) and the cross did what He said it would do.**

**Where are you at today?**

**Like Peter – running from God – a possible life of regret and shame.**

**Like John – present, but without faith and spiritually dry.**

**Like James – checking out and drifting. Absent.**

**\* Peters grave clothes of regret and shame - left behind in tomb**

**He went on to be a great leader, preacher, and central figure – leading 3000 to Christ w/ one sermon. Crucified upside down.**

**What would cause a man to be crucified upside down? A second chance with God.**

**\* John’s grave clothes of doubt and confusion – left behind in tomb**

**He went on to lead the church, preach the gospel, define Theology in his letters and gospel and entrusted with the mysteries of Revelation.**

**\* James grave clothes of disarray and drifting - left behind in tomb**

**He went on to preach the gospel - His devotion to Jesus was so great, he was the first disciple to die for Jesus. Sparking great revival!**

**Camera - The stories those pictures would tell. What would yours say? (Take pictures) What disappointments, pain, regret? If you could open up – lay bare your heart – expose it to the light… it could all be erased. Christ could take it and replace it (new role in)**

**2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.**

* **God has not given up on you / God still loves you**
* **God knows right where you are**

**Jesus kept his empty promise – the promise of an empty tomb.**

**He promised he would die – and that he would rise – again.**

**God used what they thought was a tragedy to change the course of history. He can do the same for you. As hard as it may seem - you could be only a Saturday away from a resurrection in Christ.**

**We are not asked to believe the doctrine of the resurrection. We are asked to meet this person raised from the dead… Resurrection is not an event or holiday – it is a person.**

**I pray Easter is more than a basket of candy, dress clothes, and a nice dinner - but a new and fresh start with the resurrect-er – Jesus.**

**\*\* Those two “secret followers” of Jesus teach us something…**

**It is never too late to step forward and to make a difference.**

**Truth of Jesus is - He lived, was crucified, buried, and the tomb is empty. How will you deal with that? If it is true – it demands our life.**

**Today you can know his resurrection power in your life.**

**Next week – We take a look at what happened next – and what that means for us! The book of Acts – Ground Zero.**

**Cross brought down**

**White sheet**

**White face clothe**

**Camera / Film**