

WHAT THE EMPTY TOMB MEANS!

TEXT: MARK 16:1-8

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PRAYER:

Loving God, we recall Your Promise given to us, through your son. Blessed are those who have not yet seen and yet have come to believe. Amen.

INTRODUCTION:

I. How many times in the past year have any of us felt inadequate? How in the world am I ever going to be able to finish this task?

A. While leading a pall draped casket and watching children on their way to school. I reflected on the many occasions a person can experience the pain of inadequacy. Inadequacy can come between days on the school playground and recess and the close of life here on earth.

B. Moments of inadequacy are moments that we all share. Frequently combines a sense of duty and love.

II. In our text, the three women - Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome - express their corporate feelings of inadequacy when they ask the question; *"Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?"*

BODY:

I. Making history is a challenge;

A. Grace Nowell Crowell

Pilgrimage

*I shall plant a seed of this fruit on which I dine,
By the side of the road. Perhaps someday a tree
Will lift its leafy boughs, and its fruit will shine
Down a bleak evening goldenly.*

B. It takes tremendous courage and strength to persevere through a sense of

inadequacy. Seeing beyond history is difficult. Seeing God, who transcends time and give us a taste of the power of an endless life, requires effort.

II. The three women in our text are an interesting combination of courage and inadequacy.

A. Courage:

Seeking to understand the meaning of death:
They will pay their respects to this man whom they loved. They will anoint his body with spices. This deed is one of love and respect.

B. Inadequacy:

On the sad journey, in the midst of disappointment and defeat, they journey with a sense of duty and love. They want to go. They are afraid to go. On the way the anxiety becomes overwhelming and is expressed in the question of who will move the stone sealing the tomb. While on the way, they are overcome with a sense of, "this may be fruitless --we may not even be able to get into the tomb -- we may not even get to Jesus' body.

III. **Source of inadequacy. These women build obstacles between themselves and God.**

A. Asking the wrong questions. It cannot be answered. How can we move a stone! How can we move something that is immovable!

1. Their minds were working strictly within earthly terms. There was no room for God. **"How in the world" no earthly power can move the stones**

2. God makes room. The stone is moved, but there is no need to get into the tomb, because Jesus is no longer there, Jesus is with the living. **Don't worry about getting into the tomb, because the tomb is empty.**

IV. The way God meets us in time of inadequacy.

A. We ask the questions that cannot be answered, but God acts and an answer is provided. It may not be the answer we expected, but there is an answer. The answer frequently exceeds all of our expectations.

B. We create the obstacles. We litter the pathway to God with the trash of our fears. Just as these bold women spend some of their time of the journey to the tomb dealing with matters that never happen and create unnecessary hardships for themselves. They literally expect to be blocked off from the blessing of God's power.

C. Shy friend who hates groups, comes to church and sits with a scowl on his face and then goes home telling everyone how unfriendly the group was.

V. **THE UNIVERSAL POINT;**

The empty tomb means that God acts to remove all the obstacles. God provides free access to God's power. It is time to stop making obstacles, and accept the gift of new life. It would even to be better if we could trust this gift.

A. The tomb is a tunnel, not a blind alley!
Jesus Christ is Risen!

B. Each of us needs a set of beliefs. Go and tell others what you have seen and what you have heard. There is no proof or argument. One cannot argue the beauty of a rose. The beauty of a rose is, period! The proof is in the experience.

CONCLUSION:

**It can come as a haze on the far horizon,
The infinitely tender sky,
The ripe, rich tint of the cornfields,
And the wild geese sailing high;
And all over upland and lowland
The charm of the goldenrod.
Some of us call it autumn-
And others of us call it God.**