

The Message of the Empty Tomb

Matthew 28

Are you afraid? (1-4).

Most people are, and most people ought to be. But men, especially, try to hide it. Our fears are formidable. But falsely believing it's not manly to be afraid, we pretend, often hiding behind a masculine identity that gives the impression that "I'm not afraid of anything!" What a lie! The truth be told, we're afraid of a lot things, and we _____ to be.

The Roman guards of verse 4, rugged, hardened, tested men, became like frightened little children, who "shook for fear and became like dead men." When they were confronted with the glorious appearance of an angel of God, their illusions of fearlessness were shattered like a glass bottle slammed against a concrete wall. In the narrative, there's someone unseen by humanity that's suddenly seen, who's awesome in power, who can't be stood up against, who can't be defeated with the sword, and, of course, they're terribly afraid, nearly to death, and well they should be.

The Message of the Empty Tomb:

"Do not be _____."

Fearless in the face of heaven's glory? Is that even possible? Is it a real option for us puny earthlings in the presence of heavenly beings? If it is, there better be good reasons! And that's **the message of the empty tomb**: "Do not be afraid," and here's why. **Because...**

1. Jesus, in being raised, defeated His _____ (1-6).

In His death and resurrection, our Lord defeated His foes: He defeated the people who put Him there, He defeated sin, He defeated the sin nature, He defeated death itself, and He defeated the devil and his demons. There isn't an enemy of God that wasn't defeated in His death and resurrection. And even though sin, death,

and the devil are still active, all of those who buy into the message of the empty tomb and embrace Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord, they win now and forever.

Did you know that *if you're in Christ*, the world doesn't have to have power over you? Death doesn't have to force you into desperate fear. Sin and Satan can be a defeated foe in your life.

2. Jesus, in being raised, kept His _____ (6-7).

Jesus had told His followers several times that He would rise on the third day (Matthew 16:21; 17:23; 20:19). In fact, the last time, was just a few days before His death: "I will be crucified, and will be raised on the third day." If He had not been raised, then He *would not* have been a promise-keeper, but a liar, and a deceiver, unworthy of our worship. But Jesus is risen, **just as He said**.

Also, in Matthew 26:32, Jesus said, "After I am raised from the dead, I will go before you to Galilee." And after His resurrection, Matthew 28:16 says, "Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.¹⁷ And when they saw Him, they worshiped Him, but some doubted." He was risen from the dead, and He met them in Galilee, **just as He had said**.

3. Jesus, in being raised, goes _____ of us (7-10).

Verses 7-9: The Lord Jesus always goes before His own, and if His own obey, we will always meet Him along the way. That's the principle: The Lord Jesus goes ahead of the obedient. So if you are obedient to Jesus Christ, you will meet Him on the path of _____ unafraid, because He always goes before you.

Verse 10: They left Jesus, but with a different kind of fear, and with great joy, and they met Him again in Galilee.

4. Jesus, in being raised, is the _____ (11-20).

Listen to the word of the Lord: *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.”* Like it or not, believe it or doubt it, Jesus Christ **is** the Sovereign Lord of heaven and earth! If you don't accept it, you should be afraid. But if you love His Lordship, and prove it through submissive obedience, then why would you be afraid?

The messages of the empty tomb...

1. To the believing, submissive, obedient:

“Do _____ afraid!”

2. To the unbelieving, unsubmitive, disobedient:

“_____ afraid!”

To those who believe, submit, and obey, the Lord Jesus Himself says to us, “Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Therefore, do not be afraid.” May it be so for all of us!