

THE TOMB OF JESUS

Matthew 28:6

Introduction:

Every circumstance connected with the life of Christ is deeply interesting to the Christian mind.

His pilgrimage from Bethlehem's manger to Calvary's cross is in our eyes paved with glory. Each spot upon which he trod is a consecrated one.

When he comes to Calvary - the interest thickens. We give our best thought to it. The agonies of the crucifixion, covers us with deep affection. He struggles - he gives up the ghost. His body is taken down from the tree. And Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus assisted by those holy women - drawing out the nails, taking down the mangled body, we behold them wrapping him in a clean white linen. They put about him belts of spices and then put him in his tomb. And departing for the Sabbath rest.

Now on this occasion we go with Mary on that first day of the week - when waking from her bed before dawn, she went early to the sepulchre of Jesus.

We will try if it is possible by God's Spirit to go as she did. Not in body - but I hope we can go in soul this morning, and stand at that tomb and examine it and hear some truth speaking and receive the comfort. And when we go away, we will say, it was none other than the gate of Heaven, a sacred place.

I. AN INVITATION TO YOU.

I will commence by inviting all Christians to come with me to the tomb of Jesus. "Come and see the place where the Lord lay."

If you will take my hand and let me guide you to it - it may make your heart burn within you. Now there are profane souls that would laugh at such an experience. There are carnal minds that have no taste for the spiritual. We ask not your company, but those who are beloved.

I do not need to argue to move your feet in the direction of that tomb - the Spirit will draw you.

First, it is a shrine of greatness. It is the resting place of the man - the restorer of our race. The conqueror of death.

Men will travel hundreds of miles to behold the place where a poet is born or buried. Or journey to see an ancient tomb where a mighty hero rests.

I remember standing by General Robert E. Lee's tomb, General Jackson, Sam Houston, Lottie Moon, Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, Will Rodgers, George Washington. But whether shall the Christian go to find the grave of one so famous as was Jesus.

If you asked me the greatest man that ever lived - I would tell you Christ Jesus. If you seek the chamber, the tomb, or the resting place - then I would worship at this grave. The choicest bones that were ever fashioned were there in that quiet garden - not too far from the walls of Jerusalem.

Second, it is the tomb of your best friend. I invite you to come with me. The Jews said that Mary goeth unto the grave to weep there. You have lost some friends - some of you. You have planted flowers upon the tombs. You go and you sit at evening-tide. And there you bathe the grass with your tears. Your mother lies there, your father.

Oh, the sorrow comes - to come with me to this dark garden of our Saviour's burial. Come to the grave of your best friend who stickth closer than a brother.

Come and see the place where the Lord lay on this Easter morning and pay a visit to this grave - for it is the grave of your best friend.

Third, come for the angels bid you. Angels said come see the place where the Lord lay. Where our Lord lay is a good interpretation. Yes, the angels put themselves with those poor women. Jesus is the Lord of angels as well as of men. Those feeble women who had called him Lord. Who had washed his feet. And yet he had provided for their wants. They had listened to his words. Been in his mighty presence. And bowing, we would say, come and see the place. *Who will roll the Stone away? Every thing comes in upon me*
The question - Who

Does fear lead them. The Christian is to step into the tomb - he does not dread to enter. Because here are the angels in this royal bed chamber. You know that angels did go into the tomb - for they sat one at his head and the other at his foot. And could you picture yourself talking with one of them. Those who were concerned with the deep things of God - the angels themselves, not because they were redeemed but because there, their Master was buried and they were obeying. He had become the slave of death - the

captive of destruction.

The angels are porters for us and they will let us see into this vault.

Hi. Th Come for it is a pure and a healthy place in this tomb. Do not fear to enter this tomb. We have come in with joy and love - there are no odors or smell of corruption. Oft times we know in the presence of a dead body, there is an odor. But fear it not, for Christ is not left in Hell - neither does his body see corruption. Here is perfume - the corruption that Jesus never saw. No worms ever devoured his flesh - nor did his bones rot. Three days he slumbered - but he arose perfect and uninjured.

Fifth, come because it is a quiet spot. Do you not long for rest. Quite often we hear, I wish there was someplace I might hide myself forever. I am sick, I am tired of this trying life. My body is weary. My soul needs somehow to be restored. Oh, I wish I could just stretch out by a nice quiet stream and look at some beautiful fair flowers and recline. And watch the summer bees at work. Or listen to a lark caroling. I wish I could be at ease in this world - my soul is so tired. The business world is such a rush. If I could get into a pleasant garden like the one in Jerusalem, in to that resting place.

II. YOUR (ATTENTION) IS REQUESTED.

You have been invited.

First, it is a costly tomb. It is no common grave. It is not an excavation dug out by a spade. It is a princely tomb made of marble - cut into the side of the hill.

Why Jesus had such a costly sepulchre. He had no eloquent garments. He wore a coat without seam - woven from the top throughout. He owned no great palace. He had not where to lay his head. His sandals were not rich with gold. He was poor. Why then does he lie in a noble grave.

Christ was unhonored til he had finished his sufferings. He suffered shame, spitting, and reproach - until he had completed his great work - he was trampled under foot. He was despised and rejected of men. A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. But the moment he had finished his undertaking - God said, no more, shall that body be disgraced. If it is to sleep - let it slumber in an honorable grave. If it is to rest, let nobles bury it.

Let (Joseph and Nicodemus) the men of the Sanhedrin, be present at the funeral. Let the body be embalmed with the precious spices. Let it have honor. It has had enough shame and reproach. Let it now be treated with respect.

Yes, Jesus after he had finished his work, slept in a costly grave. God loved him and honored him since he had done his work.

✓ Second, it is a borrowed one. Over the top of this grave - sacred to the memory of the family of Joseph of Arimathea. Yet Jesus slept there. Yes, he was buried in another's tomb., He who had no house of his own and rested in the habitation of other men who had no table - but lived upon the hospitality of the disciples. Who borrowed boats in which to preach. And had not anything in the wide world - was obligated to have a tomb from charity.

Oh, should not the poor take courage - the dead to be buried at the expense of their neighbors. But their poverty may be unavoidable. There should be no blush. Joseph thought he had cut it out for himself. And that he should

lay his bones there. He had it excavated as a family vault. And low the son of David makes it one of the tombs of the kings.

But he did not lose it by lending it to the Lord. Rather, he had it back with precious interest. He only lent it for 3 days. Christ's reign. He had not injured - but perfumed and sanctified, that borrowed tomb.

Why? I take it not to dishonor Christ. As his sins were borrowed sins. So his burial was in a borrowed tomb. He had no transgressions of his own. He never committed wrong - but he took all my sins and all of yours - and he bore your grief, he carried your sorrow in his own body to the tree. They were others sins. So he rested in another's grave. It was not his tomb - but it was the tomb of Joseph.

Third, it was cut in the rock - why was this. The rock of ages was buried in a rock. A rock within a rock. There was no way to steal the body from a back entrance. No way to dig it up. And this is good spiritual reasoning. It was not cut in the ground where the water might wash it away and it might crumble. But this sepulchre stands. And I believe that they tell us that it is still standing today. And if I ever lose my guilt - it must roll off my shoulders into that tomb.

Fourth, it is a tomb where no other man had ever lain. In thinking about this, Christ was born. He layed in a virgin's womb. When he died - he was placed in a virgin tomb, where never man had slept before.

Not could it be said that some old prophet had been buried there. And that Christ arose because he touchd his bones. Remember when Elisha was buried - and as they were burying a man - behold he touched the prophet's bones and

arose. Now Christ touched no prophets bones - none had ever slept there. He rested three days and three nights.

✓ Fifth, notice the grave clothes. All wrapped and layed in their places. The napkin being folded up by itself. And the grave clothes wrapped up.

Now if Jewish robbers had obstructed the body - they would have surely stolen the clothes. They would never have wrapped them up carefully - and placed them there. Not in haste.

Christ did not come out of it in a hurry. He slept until the last moment and then he awoke. And they shall not come forth out in haste. Neither by flight - but at the appointed moment, shall his people come to him. So at the precise time, the instant Jesus Christ leisurely awoke, took off his binding linen grave clothes - and left them all behind, and came forth pure.

When sin was atoned by Christ - he left all raiments behind him. The garments of guilt.

Now the napkin, mark you - was layed by itself.

The grave clothes were left behind for every departed Christian to wear. Death is well seated with the garments of Jesus. But the napkin was layed by itself. Because the Christian when he dies, does not need that. It is used by the mourners - and the mourners only. We shall all wear grave clothes but we shall not need the napkin. When our friends die, the napkin is layed aside for others. But our brothers and sisters use it. No, the Lord God is going to take away all tears from our eyes. We stand and view the departed - we moisten our faces with our tears. And grief showers over us. But those

who have departed weep - oh no!

Could they speak from that upper realm of glory - they would say, weep not for me for I am glorified. Sorrow not for me, I have left the bad world behind me and have entered into a better place.

They have no napkin - they weep not. It is strange - those who endured death, weep not. But those who see them die are weepers.

When a child is born, it weeps. While other people smile. When that child dies - it smiles while other people weep. It is so with the Christian.

Bear Christian lady Told me last Friday The pain is so unbearable, she took forward to the time No more pain, no more tears - That should be enough hope for any person to look up in faith -

III. EMOTION EXCITED

Now as we come to see this place -

First, the emotions of deep sorrow. You, my sins, my cruel sins - his chief tormentors were.

Each of my crimes became a nail and underneath a sphere.

Alas and did my Saviour bleed, and did my sovereign die.

I slew him - this right hand stuck the dagger in his heart. My deed slew Christ. I killed him who loved me with an everlasting love. Oh, I ask my eyes - why do you refuse to weep, when you see Jesus' body mangled and torn. Let us give in to our sorrow.

Hart says he could so sympathize with Christ that he felt more grief at the death of Christ than he did joy. It seems so sad a thing that Christ should have to die. And to me, it often appears too great a price for Jesus

Christ to purchase sinners with his own blood.

The cup which my Father has given me - shall I not drink it. I think had I seen him going up to the cross, I could have pressed in and said, Oh Jesus, thou shalt not die. I cannot have it. Wilt thou purchase my life with a price so dear. It seems too costly for him who is the prince of Glory. That his fair limbs be tortured in agony. That his hands which carry mercy should be pierced, with the nails. That the temples on his brow be torn with thorns. Cruel thorns. It appears too much. Oh we need to weep Christians and let our sorrow rise. Is not the price all but too great.

If a person were to save another from death, he would always feel deep grief if his deliverer lost his life in the attempt. I read the story of a man who was standing by a lake frozen with ice. He saw a young boy in the water - he sprang in and saved him. And as he handed him to those on the shore - he said, "here he is, here he is. I have saved him". At that moment they caught hold of the boy - the man who had delivered him sank in the water. His body was not found for sometime afterwards and he was dead. It was so with Jesus - my soul was drowned from Heaven's high portals he saw me sinking in the depths of Hell - and he plunged in. He sank beneath his heavy woes to raise me to a crown. There is never a gift his hand bestows - but cost his heart a crown.

We may indeed regret our sins - since it slew Jesus.

Second, Let our emotions be moved with joy and gladness. He does not lie there now. Rejoice because the tomb is empty. Sin slew him but divine power raised him up. Come and see the place where the Lord lay.

Look with solemn awe upon this. You living men, come view the ground where you must shortly lie. This clay must be your bed, inspite of all your powers. The tall, the wise, the reverend head must lie as low as ours.

It is a fact that we do not often think that we shall all be dead in a little while.

I know that I am made of dust and not of iron. I know that my bones are not brass and that my sins are not steel. I know that in a little while my body will crumble back to earth.

Some of you seldom realize how old you are, and how near you are to death. But the young die and the aged. See how few years there are before you will get there. You should remember your frailty. Sometimes I try to think of the time of my departure. We do not know whether it will be quick or suddenly.

Quite often I have known preachers to die in the pulpit. And to cease at once from their work. But it is not mine to chose.

Suppose I lie and linger for weeks in the midst of pains, grief, and agony. When that moment comes. Now a physician may put it off for years and weeks. He may say that you have perhaps so many months. But when death comes, how is a strong man bowed down, how does the mighty man fall. They may say they will not die, but they must yield. I read about a man who was wretched and wicked. He paced the floor in his bedroom. He said, "Oh God, I will not die." His friend begged him to lie down on his bed, and relax. For he was dying at that time. But the man said that he could not die while he could walk. He was determined to walk - and thus he felt that he would preserve his life.

You understood at first that this had something to do with Christ's divinity. That the first resurrection - that he arose in a different fashion. He arose by his own. He could not slumber in the grave because he was God. Death had no dominion over him. And this is proof that he is divine.

The second thing is, that this is a sign of your acquittal. That you have been forgiven and discharged of all your sins, if you have beheld the empty tomb. If he had not paid the debt, he never could have come forth from the grave. He would have lain there until this moment, if he had not cancelled the entire debt. He said, it is finished, it is finished!

And the bright angel stepped forth and rolled away the stone. He would not have done it if Christ had not finished all. He would have kept him there.

As a (justified man) I have not a sin against me in God's book. If I were to turn over God's eternal book, I should see every debt receipted and cancelled. Here is the pardon. The transgressions are past. It matters not how black the task. And oh my soul with wonder view, for sins to come, here's pardon too.

The third thing is the (doctrine of the resurrection) Jesus arose, so all of his followers must rise.

Die, I must. This body must be turned back to dust. The worms must eat it. This body may be scattered across this earth. But at the blast of the archangel's trumpet, every atom of my body will find it's fellow. Like the valley of bones in the vision of Ezekiel. The bones will creek

together - the flesh will come.

So let me die, let the beasts devour me, let the fire burn the body, so that the partials seem to be without restoration. And that actual body will start up from the grave, glorified, and made like Christ's body.

Christ's same body rose - so shall mine.

Do you dread to die? Or to lose a pardoner for a little while. Soul and body shall again be reunited, before the throne of God. The grave, what is it. It is the bath in which the Christian puts the clothes of his body to have them washed and cleansed.

Death - what is it? It is the waiting room where we robe ourselves for immortality. It is the place where the body is bathed in spices. Death is the gate of life. Do we fear to die? Him whose dying love and power - stilled its tossing, hushed its roar, safe in the expanded wave. Gentle as a summer's eve - not one object of his care. Ever suffered ship-wreck there.

Come and view the place where the Lord lay. Spend this Lord's Day meditating upon it. Go to Christ's grave both to weep and to rejoice. Not to be afraid.

Faith would not have given him a funeral at all.

Faith would have kept him above ground and would have never let him be buried. For it would have said that it would be useless to bury Christ, if he were to rise. Fear buried him. Nicodemus, Joseph - came secretly for fear of the Jews. And they buried him.

Say to your heart when you are in distress, and when you are in sorrow. Come see the place where the Lord lay.

And as he walked - he said, oh God, I will not die. And then there came a moment, that last moment. And the sweat on his brow and the dryness of his tongue and his parched lips. He shut his eyes and went into slumber. We know not when this may come. When the spirit is going to break away.

Come to Christ's tomb and before the silent vault - for this must soon be your habitation.

Come to Christ's grave for you must slumber there. You as a sinner. Because you must die as well as the rest of us. Your sins even cannot keep you back from the jaws of death. Remember Queen Elizabeth crying out and saying that she would give an empire for a single hour.

A man aboard a boat once that was sinking shouted - to some fellows on a life boat. Come back and get me - I'll give you 30,000 pounds. If you will come and take me in. "Awe, that poor man. If he had had 30,000 worlds - he could not have prolonged his life. Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath - will he give for his life.

Some of you can laugh this morning. You can spend a merry hour.

But how many Sabbaths have you wasted, and walked around like Ghosts. How many precious hours have you wasted - and they are gone and you can not recall them.

In conclusion, here is good instruction. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. What did you see when you visited the place where the Lord lay.

He is not here - for he is risen.