



Return To The Empty Tomb
Sermon Small Group Questions
Speaker: Pastor Wil Lake

USING THIS SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

- This Sermon Discussion Guide is only a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. For most groups, there are too many questions to answer in one session together. After considering the needs of your group, you may choose one of the following options:
 1. one section of questions
 2. one or two questions from each section
- Feel free to adapt the format to meet the needs of your group. If your group is mature and wants to dig deeper, add Scripture and ask suitable questions. Remember that this is only a guide.
- Personal application is key to everyone's growth and should be included in every discussion. When asked how he or she intends to apply a certain principle a group member may say, "I need to spend more time in the Bible and in prayer." It is important for you to help group members make applications that are more specific and commit to a specific plan of action by asking, for example, "How are you going to begin?" An example is to get up 30 minutes earlier each morning, spending 15 minutes reading the Bible and 10 minutes in prayer. Encourage each group member to be accountable to the group for personal progress at the next meeting.
- As the leader your goal is to help bring the group into a stimulating discussion that helps the members recognize their need for personal life change. Ultimately you want them to be willing to commit to change with accountability to the group. Accountability helps us to persevere in our commitments and achieve the blessings of success.

INTRODUCTION

In our journey of faith, we sometimes veer off course, even though we know exactly where we want to go. Try as we might, rerouting often brings undesired delays. The most direct solution to return to the right path to reach our intended destination.

Ultimately, God wants to bring us freedom. God wants us to experience the fullness of purpose and the life abundance that He intended for us. He knows us as individual sons and daughters and directs us, continuously pointing us in the right direction by His Holy Spirit.

MESSAGE

Return To The Empty Tomb

[John 20:1-18]

Early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. ² She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. She said, "They have taken the Lord's body out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

³ Peter and the other disciple started out for the tomb. ⁴ They were both running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ He stooped and looked in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he didn't go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷ while the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was folded up and lying apart from the other wrappings.

⁸ Then the disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in, and he saw and believed—⁹ for until then they still hadn't understood the Scriptures that said Jesus must rise from the dead. ¹⁰ Then they went home.

¹¹ Mary was standing outside the tomb crying, and as she wept, she stooped and looked in. ¹² She saw two white-robed angels, one sitting at the head and the other at the foot of the place where the body of Jesus had been lying. ¹³ "Dear woman, why are you crying?" the angels asked her.

"Because they have taken away my Lord," she replied, "and I don't know where they have put him."

¹⁴ She turned to leave and saw someone standing there. It was Jesus, but she didn't recognize him. ¹⁵ "Dear woman, why are you crying?" Jesus asked her. "Who are you looking for?"

She thought he was the gardener. "Sir," she said, "if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him."

¹⁶ "Mary!" Jesus said.

She turned to him and cried out, "Rabboni!" (which is Hebrew for "Teacher").

¹⁷ "Don't cling to me," Jesus said, "for I haven't yet ascended to the Father. But go find my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

¹⁸ Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, "I have seen the Lord!" Then she gave them his message.

Jesus can turn your life around: He wants to encounter you, give you eyes to see how He sees, and touch lives through you.

Mary Magdalene's God-Given Success Story:

1. Mary became a leader of Jesus' female followers.
2. Mary is included among the many women who provided for Jesus' ministry from their own means.

3. Mary comforted Jesus during His death.
4. Mary was the first to return to the empty tomb and got to tell the boys about it.
5. Mary was the first person to see and speak to the risen Lord Jesus.

It doesn't matter what your past is; you have something to give, something to offer the Kingdom.

What the Empty Tomb Means to Us:

1. We have “died to sin.”

[Romans 6:1-2]

Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? ² Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it?

2. We have a “new life” to be lived in freedom from sin.

[Romans 6:4,7]

⁴ For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.

⁷ For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin.

3. We've been released from sin's power over our life (if we choose).

[Romans 6:16]

¹⁶ Don't you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living.

4. We are now free.

[Romans 6:18]

¹⁸ Now you are free from your slavery to sin, and you have become slaves to righteous living.

Everything about my past is buried in that tomb! The empty tomb reflects your death to sin and your total freedom in Him.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. Have you ever felt lacking in direction in your life?
What caused you to feel that way?**
- 2. How has or can your story bring comfort to others?**
- 3. What does the empty tomb represent in your life
today?**
- 4. What have you had to choose to obey God and live
in freedom?**
- 5. In your life, who are you bringing to the Risen
Savior?**