

**John 20:1-9**

1 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. 2 So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." 3 Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. 4 The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, 7 and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. 8 Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; 9 for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead (NRSV).

We have a complex problem in the world today. The world is full of evil and I proclaim that we, the Christians, are at fault. We are charged to carry on with the legacy of Jesus. We are to bring love and peace to the world and help Jesus defeat evil. Jesus Christ fought evil and left us in charge to continue the fight. He established his legacy and it is imperative that we continue his mission. He turns over the care of his ministry to his followers. The followers of Jesus are to go out into the world and preach and teach what they know about the Lord. Throughout the process the church should be united but instead of staying united and fighting evil, the divided church is weakened and instead of uniting together we end up fighting amongst ourselves. When we do, we play into the hands of the enemy. Division creates weakness and one of the primary goals of the enemy is to divide and conquer. Whereas the divided church cannot stand up to evil, the united church can. To be united we need to let go of the things that divide us and hang on to the preaching and teaching of Jesus.

Jesus has risen from the grave. The people were not expecting Jesus to rise from the dead even though Jesus repeatedly told them he would rise on the third day. Matthew records five occasions where Jesus talked about his resurrection. **Matthew 16:21** From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised. **Matthew 17:9** As they were coming down the mountain "Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead." **Matthew 17:23** and they will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised." **Matthew 20:19** "then they will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified; and on the third day he will be raised. **Matthew 26:32** But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you to Galilee."

Even the conspirators knew about the prediction of the resurrection. **Matthew 27:63** "Sir, we remember what that imposter said while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise again'" Their action proves his resurrection. **Matthew 27:64** "Therefore, command the tomb to be made secure until the third day; otherwise his disciples may go and steal him away."

The women did not go to the tomb to see if Jesus had risen. They went to prepare his body for permanent burial. Mary Magdalene thought someone removed the body.

Jesus foretold it and angels announced it and the tomb is empty and his body is gone. Still after all the lessons they did not get it. Here comes a lesson for all of us. They were unprepared. Even though they were there as witnesses and were taught repeatedly, still they were unprepared.

We have to be prepared to encounter Jesus. The disciples are fully capable of testifying to what they saw. They were eyewitnesses to hard to believe miracles like the transfiguration, walking on water, and feeding thousands. They were eyewitnesses to the healing miracles for the blind, lame, and even the dead. But notice how unprepared they are to encounter the resurrected Christ. It is the job of the teacher to prepare you for life after graduation. It is the job of the followers of Jesus is to prepare you for life after death. What will you say on judgment day? Jesus had to rise from the dead. It was the fulfillment of **Matthew 26:53-54** “Do you think I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?”

If we claim to be one hundred percent obedient to the will of God and resolve our own problem of our own sin and our separation from God by sinning no more, we will fail. We are not perfect and never will be perfect. Our transgression from the will of God makes our salvation impossible and there is nothing we can do to settle the debt. Our only solution is provided for us by God. All you have to do is accept God’s gift of love and follow Jesus. There is nothing else for us to do. There are no other conditions. God loves us so much that Jesus paid it all. That’s why he came. Jesus came to teach us the love of God by bringing us the word of God. Jesus came to show us the love of God through his action. Jesus came to give us the love of God through his sacrifice to pay the price for our salvation. Now we don’t have to pay the price for our own penalty. It is paid in full. Our debt to God is wiped away. How do you show your appreciation? How do you respond to such a gift? Jesus did what he had to do for us. It is time we do what we have to do for Jesus.