"The Evidence of the Empty Tomb"
John 19:31-20:9

C.I.T.—The empty tomb led to John's faith.
C.I.S.—The empty tomb affirms everything that Jesus taught and therefore encourages us to respond with faith.
Purpose—I want the church's faith to be strengthened and thelost to come to faith because of the evidence of the empty tomb.
Introduction—Importance of the Empty Tomb—**1 Cor. 15:13-19**

I. ***Evidence in His Death***—vs. 31-37
   a. Preparation Day
      i. This referred to Friday, the day before the Sabbath.
      ii. The Sabbath was a day of rest, and in order to rest properly on the Sabbath, they would have to work hard the day before to prepare for that.
      iii. This Sabbath was a special Sabbath, it was the Sabbath of the Passover Festival.
      iv. According to the Old Testament, an executed body hung on a tree was cursed and if left overnight would bring a curse on the land.
      v. So they wanted them removed from the crosses.
   b. Breaking legs
      i. Most of the time, it would take days for someone to die on the cross.
      ii. The way they hung on the cross, they could not breath unless they brought their head above their hands.
      iii. The only part that was strong enough to lift them up over time was their legs.
      iv. In order to speed up their death, they would break their legs, disabling them from lifting themselves to breathe, and therefore suffocating them.
   c. The soldiers break the others' legs, but not Jesus.
      i. Breaking the legs was to speed up death, however, Jesus was already dead.
      ii. So the soldiers pierced his side with a spear.
      iii. As a result, blood and water flowed out.
      iv. A ton has been put into explaining this…his heart exploded…symbolic of baptism and the Lord's Supper…
      v. Bottom line, John uses this to say he was indeed dead.
      vi. The Roman's made sure and confirmed that he was dead.
   d. John's purpose was to give this as evidence to help someone believe.
      i. Fulfillment of Prophecy
      ii. **Exodus 12:46; Psalm 34:20**—no bones broken.
      iii. **Zechariah 12:10**—the one they have pierced
   e. The coincidence of how Jesus died and how his death was confirmed pointed to evidence that God was in control.
   f. But they didn't believe at his death.

II. ***Evidence in His Burial***—vs. 38-42
   a. Joseph of Arimathea
      i. Rich man who had become a disciple of Jesus, though secretly.
      ii. Prominent member of the Sanhedrin, who had disagreed with the majority's opinion concerning Jesus.
      iii. He possessed a garden and a tomb that was to be used for his family.
      iv. It just so happened that it was finished, cut into the rock, had never been used, available, and was close by.
      v. What a coincidence?
   b. Nicodemus

i. Pharisee who came to Jesus at night in John 3.
ii. In John 7, he argued that the Sanhedrin should give Jesus a fair shake.
iii. He is showing that he also is a disciple.
iv. Brings 75 lbs of spices, an amount used normally for royalty.

c. Both of these men would have been very wealthy.
d. **Isaiah 53:9**—buried with a rich man
    i. Usually, those executed on a cross would be unceremoniously cast into a common grave.
    ii. But here, Jesus is unexpectedly honored in his burial.
    iii. Both of these men, until now, were secret followers of Christ.
    iv. Now, they are public followers, which may have shocked the early disciples.
    v. What a coincidence?
e. But the didn't believe at his burial.

III. ***Evidence in His Tomb***—20:1-9
a. Mary goes to the tomb.
    i. Early on the first day—Sunday morning.
    ii. Saw the stone rolled away.
    iii. Assumed that someone had taken or stolen Jesus' body.
    iv. They would have been opponents.
    v. Notice, she did not even consider the possibility that he had been raised from the dead.
b. Peter and John to the tomb.
    i. John gets their first—gig at Peter?
        1. He stooped down and looked in and saw the fine linens that were wrapped around his body lying on the "bed."
        2. He stopped—dumbfounded by what he saw.
        3. I wonder if he was processing that this was not the work of tomb raiders.
    ii. Peter enters completely, John follows.
        1. They see the linens.
        2. They also see the face cloth lying folded.
        3. Not sure exactly how Jesus would have gotten out of this.
        4. Robbers would have taken the valuable linens and spices, and if not, would not have left it so tidy.
        5. Neither would someone simply stealing the body, since it would be cleaner and simpler to keep the clothes on His body.
c. John believes.
    i. They had not believed based on Scriptural evidence, yet.
    ii. They pieced this together later.
    iii. But the evidence of the empty tomb brought John to faith.

IV. Takeaway: ***The Empty Tomb provides the ultimate evidence for your faith***.

V. Illus.—The Lame man—Jesus declares his sin's forgiven, a spiritual unseen truth, and confirms the veracity of that truth with

VI. Application
a. We can make all kind of philosophical and intellectual arguments for the truthfulness of the Bible and Jesus, etc.
b. We can look at prophetic, historical, scientific, and archeological data to support the truthfulness of Scripture.

“The Evidence of the Empty Tomb”
John 19:31-20:9

c. But the greatest evidence is the empty tomb.
d. Don’t you think the Jews and the Roman heard about the missing body?
e. Don’t you think they wanted to find it more than anyone else?
f. Yet they couldn’t.
g. Why not? Because He wasn’t there, He had risen.
h. If you want to debunk Christianity, show me the body…you can’t, it isn’t there.

Conclusion

- Paul was right…if Jesus wasn’t raised from the dead, then everything is for naught.
- But if resurrection is true, then everything else is too!
- Easter should encourage your faith in the rest of the Bible.
- Easter should bring you to place your faith in Jesus.

1 Corinthians 15:13 If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised; [14] and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation is in vain, and so is your faith. [15] Moreover, we are found to be false witnesses about God, because we have testified wrongly about God that he raised up Christ-- whom he did not raise up, if in fact the dead are not raised. [16] For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. [17] And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. [18] Those, then, who have fallen asleep in Christ have also perished. [19] If we have put our hope in Christ for this life only, we should be pitied more than anyone.

Exodus 12:46 It is to be eaten in one house. You may not take any of the meat outside the house, and you may not break any of its bones.

Psalm 34:20 He protects all his bones; not one of them is broken.

Zechariah 12:10 "Then I will pour out a spirit of grace and prayer on the house of David and the residents of Jerusalem, and they will look at me whom they pierced. They will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child and weep bitterly for him as one weeps for a firstborn.

Isaiah 53:9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked, but he was with a rich man at his death, because he had done no violence and had not spoken deceitfully.

“The Evidence of the Empty Tomb”
John 19:31-20:9

I. The Evidence of His _____.
II. The Evidence of His _____.
III. The Evidence of His _____.
Takeaway: