

John 20:1-10 and 1 Peter 1:3-9

¹Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance.

²So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

³So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb.

⁴Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first.

⁵He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in.

⁶Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there,

⁷as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen.

⁸Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed.

⁹(They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.)

¹⁰Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

⁴and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you

⁵who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

⁶In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.

⁷These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

⁸Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,

⁹for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Good Morning My Sisters and Brothers in Christ and Welcome to Resurrection Sunday Service. It is always a challenge to preach on Easter Sunday for in many cases a preacher needs to preach a sermon to someone we may not have seen since Christmas and may only see again on Mother's Day. Yet on the other hand if you are only going to attend church three times a year then this is a good day to attend. For without a Resurrection Sunday our faith would be dead! And we would still be waiting for the first coming of the Messiah.

I began this sermon on Monday and I sent out a text message to many of my 20 somethings asking for their take on a common phrase. To each of you who responded, thank you and you will be hearing that sermon in the near future. But when I sat down to my draft again I heard another word so I ask that you pray with me and for me as I focus on a portion of verse 2

² So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

I wish to capture those last eight words in the verse and make them personal and ask you a question

WHERE HAVE YOU PUT JESUS?

SHALL WE PRAY?

Father God we thank you for the week that has past because it was during this week we were able to reflect on all that you did for us by sending your Son. Thank you for the wisdom that has come before us that taught us the importance of the Seven Last Words spoken by your Son as he hung bleeding and dying for us. Thank you for men and women who are not afraid to preach your Word in season and out of season. Now I ask that you help me to make Resurrection Sunday meaningful and urgent for your people. Help them to hear from the throne room of grace. Abba, use me to preach your Word in a way that allows your people to hear and be transformed. Abba, do not forsake me because of my failures, but use me for your kingdom. Amen and Amen.

WHERE HAVE YOU PUT JESUS?

Friday evening Jack walked out of the house, he did not see me as I was sitting in my car. He went to his grandfather's car and opened the back door and climbed in. He did not find what he was looking for so he got out of the car went back in the house and down to his grandfather's office. "Granddaddy, where have you put my monies?" Jesse did not know where the money Jack had had in the car was located and that lead to a meltdown. Jack expected his grandfather to know what he had done with his money. Jack was looking for an explanation for something not being where he had left it. Jack was operating on human expectations.

The women went to the tomb with human expectations. They had heard Joseph ask for His body, they had witnessed the body being wrapped in their faith tradition and placed in a borrowed tomb, they had seen the rock rolled across the opening and sealed. They got up after the Sabbath had passed and with human expectations they went to see Jesus. With human expectations, they went and told the others the tomb was empty and they did not know where Jesus was.

***"They have taken the Lord out of the tomb,
and we don't know where they have put him!"***

On Wednesday I went with Jesse to hear him preach the last sermon in the Lenten Sermon series sponsored by the African American south side preachers of ABCMC. I had climbed a long flight of stairs and was relieved when I found a place to sit that would allow me to stretch my long legs and not be in anyone's way. I was greeting friends from many different churches and rejoicing in the fellowship of being with like-minded people when a woman said "You will have to move, this is my seat." Initially, I thought she was playing, but another look at her face told me she was serious. Here I was in the Lord's house on the Wednesday of Holy Week and I was being asked to move because I was in someone's preferred seat. I wondered where had she put Jesus?

The disciples, Peter and the one Jesus loved, heard what Mary Magdalene and my Bible says they went running to the tomb. Were they running because they did not believe the report and wanted to see for themselves. Were they running because they perceived themselves to be special and therefore if Jesus had been moved they should have been informed? Were they running...? We really don't know because scripture does not say. I wonder where they had put Jesus?

On Wednesday evening a woman I met over 37 years ago, when Jesse was called to pastor FBC Chicago, died. She had been in poor mental health for many years, but her physical health had been excellent. Yet she had a massive heart attack and was brain dead almost immediately. As I sat with her god daughter and her husband as they turned off the machines and pronounced her I found myself at peace. For I could truly say that every day that I had known her she knew where Jesus was. Jesus was in the care she showed her mother-in-law when she moved her into her home and cared for her until her death. Jesus was in the love she showed her husband when his health failed and he could no longer work, drive and finally walk. Jesus was in the teaching as she taught the children of the Robert Taylor Homes for 37 years.

On Saturday and again this morning I asked myself where is my Jesus? I responded to myself Jesus is in my heart. But I asked myself is that enough? Did Jesus become fully human and fully divine so I could carry Him in my heart? Did Jesus leave heaven, suffer the humiliation of 6 trials, endure the pain of nails in his hands and feet so I might store Him in my heart? Did Jesus die and lay in a borrowed tomb so I could hide Him in my heart? Did Jesus get up with all power on heaven and earth in his hand so I can have Him in my heart.

No, Jesus got up so that men and women; boys and girls; old and young; slave and free; red, yellow, black and white would have a way back to the

Father. No, Jesus got up so that He could draw all to Him. Jesus got up so that He might provide one last set of instructions:

18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

My sisters and brothers where is your Jesus this Resurrection Sunday morning?
Is his word hidden in your heart so that you might not sin against God?
Or is in collecting dust on the night stand?

Are you doing what He called you to do
Or are we planning to get round to it

Are you still looking for Jesus?
As the choir sings "We Offer Christ to You", pray and ask if today is the day for you to turn your life over to Christ.

Benediction

And now unto him who is able to keep us from falling, and lift us from the fatigue of despair to the buoyancy of hope, from the midnight of desperation to the daybreak of joy, to him be power and authority, forever and ever. Amen.