

Study Introduction

Easter week is a time of reflection, a time to meditate on the cost of this precious gift of salvation that we have been given; a gift that has brought us into fellowship with God and the New Covenant He has made with us. We do not want to approach it casually, for this week is, in a sense, a memorial of the life Christ laid down on our behalf. We want to come with hearts prepared to worship Christ as our Passover Lamb. He is the “Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world,” (John 1:29) and who gave Himself as the ultimate sacrifice; one that allows the plague of death our sins deserve to “pass over” us who have been protected by His shed blood marking the doorposts of our hearts.

I pray this study will help you to do that; to reflect, to meditate, and to prepare your heart to worship as we look back over the days leading up to the crucifixion and reflect on His last works, His last words, and on His great sacrifice.

This week also ends in a time of celebration as we rejoice over an empty tomb and a risen Savior, one who has gone to prepare a place for us, who is at the right hand of the Father, who ever lives to make intercession for us and who has promised to come back for us again to live with Him forever.

As you take some time aside each day of Easter Week to do your study, I pray it will be a personal time of reflection for you, as well as a time of renewal. As the Jewish people prepared their homes to celebrate Passover, they cleaned out all the leaven in their house. Leaven was a symbol of sin, and this is a great time for us to do some spiritual housecleaning as well. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 5:7 & 8, “Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” (NKJV)

Have a blessed Easter Week & a joyful Resurrection Sunday!

Shawn

Easter Week Study

Day One

“The Resurrection and the Life”

Reflection:

Jesus had just performed one of His greatest earthly miracles in raising Lazarus from the dead. He had earlier received word that his good friend was sick, yet He delayed the journey to go from Jericho, where He and His disciples had been staying, to the city of Bethany, where Mary and Martha lived. He found when He arrived that Lazarus had been dead in the tomb for four days. Although Mary and Martha didn't understand why Jesus would not have immediately responded to the need, His delay had been intentional because a greater work would be accomplished after the death of Lazarus than it would have been before.

Read John 11:1-44.

- 1) Although Mary and Martha were clearly disappointed and heartbroken that Jesus had not been there to heal their brother, what does verse 5 tell us? Write down the verse below.
 - a. Do you think that maybe Mary and Martha were doubting the truth of this in the midst of their despair? Do we sometimes suffer with this doubt when we don't understand why it feels like God "isn't there" for us, why He seems to remain silent and isn't answering our prayers? Look up the following Scriptures: Psalm 145:8-9; Proverbs 3:6; Isaiah 49:15-16. Record below how these verses speak to your heart.
 - b. Are you in a place of wondering why God hasn't responded to your need? Have you considered that there may be a deeper, greater work He wants to do in the midst of your need? Stop and ask the Lord to deepen your trust in Him and in His love, even when we do not understand the whys of our circumstances. Write your prayer below.

2. Jesus makes a bold statement to Martha in verse 25. What does He say?
 - a. What important question does He ask her after He makes that statement?

3. Just prior to this, Jesus had assured Martha that her brother would rise again. Martha had given Him a statement of faith, telling Him that she knew her brother would rise at the resurrection on the last day. Jesus stretches her faith further with His bold statement and His question to her afterward. It is often easier for us to believe in the “someday” truths, and often much more difficult for us to believe God will meet the need we have “today” in our present situation. Martha had the faith to believe her brother would rise “someday.” She had no idea that Christ would raise him in her “here and now.” What provision are you in need of *here* and *now*? Do you need a fresh resurrection of your faith? The best way for us to revive our faith is to turn to God’s Word and remember WHO HE IS. Look up the following Scriptures and record how they minister to you: Psalm 46:1-3; 138:7-8; Isaiah 40:27-31; and Jeremiah 32:27; Romans 8:31-32; Ephesians 3:20.

4. What further proof do we have of God’s compassion towards us as we look at verse 35 of John, chapter 11? Jesus knew what He was about to do, yet what does verse 35 tell us?
 - a. Look up Hebrews 4:15-16. How does this verse further explain God’s heart for us?

Read John 11:45-56. After this miracle we see that many who had witnessed it came to believe in Jesus. Others, even though they saw the miracle chose not to embrace Him in faith, but to report to the Pharisees what Jesus had done. From this point on the chief priests and Pharisees began plotting Jesus’ death, and He could no longer walk openly among them and went into the wilderness to stay with His disciples in the city of Ephraim, about 5 miles west of Jericho.

Meditation:

We have all probably had the thought that if the Lord would just reveal Himself in some miraculous way then that brother, that friend or that co-worker we have been praying for would surely come into a saving faith that would bring them into a relationship with Christ. But true faith is a matter of the heart believing, not of the eyes seeing. Many saw the miracles Christ performed and still did not turn their hearts to Him. As believers, growing in our faith and trust in Christ is also a matter of the heart choosing to believe that God IS who He says He is, and that He is a keeper of His promises.

Day Two

“Extravagant Worship”

Reflection:

We have all heard of Martha and Mary, these two sisters who both loved the Lord and desired to serve Him. We read in John 11:5 that Jesus loved both of these two sisters, and their brother, Lazarus. Martha was a woman who loved to serve. She was one who saw a need and jumped to fill it. She was practical in her expression of faith, and we all love and appreciate the “Martha’s” in our lives. We need them and their ministry is valuable. Mary, on the other hand, was one who loved to sit at Jesus’ feet, to hear every word that He might say. She just wanted to be near Him, to be in His presence. That nearness produced in her a heart of true worship. It’s true that we need the practical things done, but oh, how we need to sit at our Savior’s feet; to spend time in His presence; to feed on His Word!

Lord, create in us a heart that hungers after you; a heart that can’t wait to be near You, that longs for You to speak to us and is ready to take in and embrace every word You have to say!

Read John 12:1-3.

1. We see that six days before the Passover, Jesus and His disciples travel back to Bethany and He attends a supper in the home of Simon the Leper (see also the account in Matt. 26:6-13 and Mark 14:3-9). As they sit down to supper, Martha is busy serving and Lazarus is dining with them at the table. Mary, however, does something quite different. Record below what Mary does.

This is such an extravagant display of worship! This is not the first time Jesus has experienced such an extravagant expression of devotion. There was also the woman who came in and fell down at Jesus’ feet and washed His feet with her tears at Simon, the Pharisee’s house. She dried His feet with her hair, and afterward anointed His feet with fragrant oil. She, too, poured out her worship extravagantly (see Luke 7:36-38). **Extravagant** is a word that implies “over and above.” It’s beyond the ordinary, it’s costly, it’s without restraint. How often is **our worship extravagant?**

During Passover, the Jewish people recite a praise called the Dayenu, which means, “It would have been enough.” It recalls God’s acts of kindness and mercy toward His people. As each act is recited by the head of the family, the family responds by saying, “Dayenu!” (If You had only done this and not that, it would have been enough). The point is that He did all those things, and so much more. We also, as New Testament Believers, have our own Dayenu. Some of those praise lines could be, “If You had only forgiven us of our sins and not given us Your Spirit, it would have been enough” and “If You had only washed us clean and not adopted us as Your

sons and daughters, it would have been enough.” We could recite an endless list of the things God has done for us that went over and above any expectation we could ever have.

2. Look up the following Scriptures and **list the ways** that **Christ has dealt extravagantly with us**: Psalm 103:10-12; Romans 5:8; Ephesians 1:13-14; Ephesians 2:4-6 and 1 Peter 1:3-5.

- a. Write down some Scriptures of your own and ask the Lord to help you respond to His **extravagant grace** with **extravagant worship**; a worship that **holds nothing back**.

3. After this display of extravagant worship, we see that Jesus’ disciples were not impressed, but indignant. While the accounts in Matthew and Mark include all the disciples having this negative response, in John’s Gospel he singles out Judas Iscariot, even giving us his motive for being indignant, saying he was the keeper of the money box and often stole from it. Our genuine praise and worship are not always appreciated by others. What is Jesus’ response in John 12:7 and Matthew 26:10-13 concerning Mary’s actions? Record in your own words what Jesus says to His disciples. (Note: Do you think that maybe the time Mary invested sitting at the feet of Jesus gave her an insight the others didn’t have regarding the things Christ was about to suffer?)

Meditation:

Our worship is an intimate expression of love between us and Christ alone. Worship done in sincerity and by the influence of the Holy Spirit is never given to win the approval of man and pays no thought to the reaction of others. The only litmus test that matters is the motivation of our hearts.

Day Three

“Even the Rocks Will Cry Out”

Reflection:

*In Isaiah, chapter 6 we read of the vision the prophet was given of heaven’s throne room. He tells of seeing the Lord on the throne, high and lifted up, with the train of His robe filling the temple. In verses 2 and 3 he describes the seraphim that stood above the throne and how they cried out to one another saying, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!” The scene left Isaiah completely “undone” having seen this vision of the King, the Lord of Hosts, and he trembled knowing that he was “a man of unclean lips, living in the midst of a people of unclean lips.” (Verse 5). When we have a glimpse of God’s holiness, it often “undoes” us, knowing that, we too, are people of “unclean lips” living in a world of sin. When we think of God’s glory, we usually think of heaven, but here in these verses, notice that we are told that the **whole earth** is full of His glory.*

Lord, open my eyes to see Your glory, even in this fallen world.

Read John 12:12-19 and Luke 19:29-40. The day after the dinner at Simon, the leper’s house in Bethany, Jesus and His disciples head out on their way towards Jerusalem. Jesus sends two of His disciples on ahead into the village where He tells them they will find a colt tied that no one has ever sat upon. He gives them instructions to untie the colt and bring the colt to Him. This was the fulfillment of a prophecy in Zechariah 9:9. John tells us that a great multitude has already gathered in Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, and when news started spreading that Jesus was coming they took palm branches and went out to meet Him. John also tells us in John 12:17-18 that many in the crowd had been eyewitnesses of His miracle in raising Lazarus from the dead, and their testimony of these things, no doubt, stirred up the crowd.

1. As Jesus approaches Jerusalem, what does the crowd begin to do? (Matthew 21:8; Mark 11:7-8; Luke 19:36-37 and John 12:12-13a).
 - a. What proclamations do the people cry out? Each writer of the Gospels gives us a little different insight. Nothing is contradictory, instead, together they give us a full picture of all that was taking place. From these verses list all the proclamations being made.

Matthew 21:9 –

Mark 11:9-10 –

Luke 19:38 –

B. These are all Messianic proclamations. The Jewish people often sang songs from Psalm 115, Psalm 116, Psalm 117 and Psalm 118 during the Passover feast, all known as the Messianic Psalms. The proclamations the crowd was crying out as Jesus approached Jerusalem were from these Psalms. Write down the direct quote the people were reciting from Psalm 118:25-26.

2. The Pharisees upon hearing the crowd were indignant and called out to Jesus. Record from Luke 19:39 what the Pharisees were asking Jesus to do.

a. The Pharisees were obviously upset that these Messianic statements were being made about Jesus. John's Gospel gives us further insight into their concerns. What does John 12:19b tell us that the Pharisees were discussing and concerned about?

b. What is Jesus' response to the Pharisees in Luke 19:40?

3. Psalm 24:1-2 declares, **"The earth is the LORD 's, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein. For He has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters."** Not only do the inhabitants of the earth tremble at His voice, but the earth itself. Look up the following Scriptures and jot down what each one expresses concerning the earth itself.

Psalm 50:1 -

Psalm 97:4-5 -

Psalm 104:5-9 -

Psalm 104:24 & 30-32 -

Psalm 119:90-91 -

4. Write out these following Scriptures:

John 1:1-2 -

Colossians 1:16 -

Revelation 4:11 -

Meditation:

John 1:10 says, "**He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.**" Just think about that for a moment. The Creator of all things is about to lay down His life for His creation..... His creation that does not know Him; His creation who won't acknowledge Him and is indifferent towards the greatest expression of His love for them. He came to pay the debt we owed; He came to set us free from the curse of sin so that the wrath of God could be removed from us, so that we could be cleansed and forgiven, so that our fellowship with God could be restored and we could experience new life in Christ; an eternal life with an inheritance reserved in heaven for us. He **became** sin for us so that we could be clothed in **His** righteousness - the **GREAT EXCHANGE** that Christ purchased for us at the cross. And they were **indifferent**.

Lord, sometimes, we too, can act indifferent toward You. Heal our backslidings and help our hearts to never grow apathetic to the great sacrifice You made on our behalf. Give us a new-found awe and awareness of WHO You are – The Maker of heaven and earth – The King of kings, and Lord of lords – The Almighty, All Powerful God – The Word that became flesh – our Messiah!

Day Four

“The Cleansing of the Temple”

Reflection:

In preparation for the Passover, Jewish families “cleaned house.” And one of those housecleaning duties, as mentioned in the introduction of this study, was to clean out all of the leaven. Every cupboard was searched and every bit of leaven thrown away. The floors were swept and every surface wiped down in order to ensure that no leaven remained. Leaven was a symbol that represented sin and this practical, outward expression was used to represent an inward cleansing of the heart. We, too, need to do some housecleaning. We, too, need to search all the nooks and crannies of our hearts and ask the Holy Spirit to cleanse us of the leaven of our sins, lurking within. Let’s make David’s prayer in Psalm 139:23 & 24 our prayer today.

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.”

As Jesus approaches the entry into Jerusalem, Luke 19:41 tells us that He overlooked the city and He wept. Luke 19:42 gives us insight into Jesus’ heart for Israel as He says, *“If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace — but now it is hidden from your eyes.”* In Matthew’s Gospel he also records that Jesus wept over Jerusalem, saying how he longed to gather them: *“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!”* (Matthew 23:37). What a sad commentary, and how true it is for so many. This heartbreak and this longing, is what filled Christ’s heart as He comes into the city.

1. Mark 11:11 tells us that as Jesus enters the city, He goes directly to the temple to observe all that is taking place. But because, by that time, the hour is late, Jesus returns to Bethany to stay the night and returns back to Jerusalem in the morning. As He goes back to the temple in the morning, He sees all the merchandise being bought and sold, and we’re told that He began driving out all those who were buying and selling in the temple, overturning the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. Read the account in Matthew 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-17 and Luke 19:45-46. Record the words that Jesus says to them.
2. Read 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 2:19-22 and 1 Peter 2:5. What do these Scriptures reveal to us?

3. Look up the following Scriptures. If we are God's house, then what also are we to be? 1 Corinthians 6:20; Ephesians 6:18; Colossians 4:2 and 1 Thessalonians 5:17. (Refer also back to Jesus' words in question #1).
 - a. What does that mean to you? What money changers and merchandise dealers need to be driven out of your temple so you can be a "house of prayer?" Write down the thoughts the Lord places on your heart.

Meditation:

Psalm 51:10 is David's heart cry, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right (steadfast) spirit within me." Sometimes we aren't even aware of the things lurking in our hearts. In Psalm 19:12 David says, "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults."

O Lord, make this my prayer today. Do a housecleaning work within. Sweep out all my leaven!

Day Five

“Christ, our Passover”

Reflection:

Shortly after Jesus had cleansed the temple came the Day of Unleavened Bread. In Luke 22:8-13 we see Jesus sending out Peter and John, telling them to go prepare the Passover meal for Him and the disciples. Luke 22:7 tells us that this was the day that the Passover lamb was killed, according to the instructions given to them by God, through Moses. I wonder what that must have been like for Jesus, to be preparing to celebrate this Passover meal, knowing that HE was the true Passover Lamb. In Luke 22:15 Jesus tells His disciples, “*With fervent desire I have longed to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.*” I can’t imagine all the things that must have been on Christ’s heart as He sat down to that meal.

Passover is a **feast of redemption** that began as a commemoration of the historic deliverance of God’s people from the bondage of the Egyptians. But, as with so many of the Jewish feasts which the Lord commanded the Israelites to observe, Passover was a type or a shadow of the true deliverance of God’s people from the bondage of sin through the Messiah. The symbolism of the Passover meal in relation to Christ is one that we could do an eight-week study on, in and of itself, but on this Day 5 of our Easter Week study, we’re going to look at 3 main things: The Lamb, the Bread and the Cup.

The Lamb:

1. From the very beginning of Jesus’ ministry, He was associated with this Passover meal. Read John 1:29 and John 1:36. What title does John the Baptist give to Jesus?
2. In Exodus, chapter 12, we read God’s instruction for the first Passover. What does Exodus 12:5 say about the lamb each family was to select for the meal? What kind of lamb did it need to be?
 - a. What does 1 Peter 1:19 tell us about Christ?
3. In Exodus 12:7, what instructions are given after the Passover lamb was killed? What were they to do?

a. Read God's explanation for this in Exodus 12:12-13. How does this relate to what Christ has done for us and to the title John the Baptist gave to Him that we looked at in question one? (See also Romans 5:8-9; Colossians 1:13-14)

The Bread:

4. Often Jesus referred to Himself as the Bread of Life. The Passover Bread, or Matzah, is called "The Bread of Affliction," commemorating the Jews affliction as they fled from Egypt. The matzah is an "unleavened bread." Three matzah, stacked on top of one another are used for the Passover feast. The Jewish Rabbis recognize that this represents a "mysterious unity," but they do not understand exactly what it means. We, as Christians, can easily recognize the perfect picture of "Three in One." What is this a symbol of?

5. Another detail about the matzah that is even more amazing, is that the middle matzah is taken out of the stack and is broken in half ---- an amazing picture of God the Son, who was broken for us. Half of this broken matzah is called "The Afikomen," which means "that which comes last." It is taken and wrapped in a white linen cloth and hidden in the house, to be found later at the end of the Passover meal (an amazing symbol of Christ's burial, before His resurrection). As Jesus takes the matzah during the Passover meal, what does He say to His disciples according to Matthew 26:26, Mark 14:22 and Luke 22:19?
 - a. What does 1 Corinthians 11:24 say?

 - b. Look up Isaiah 53:5 and write down the verse below.

The Cup:

6. There are Four cups in the Passover meal that the participants drink from: The **Cup of Sanctification**, The **Cup of Plague**, The **Cup of Redemption** and The **Cup of Praise**. Each one symbolizes a vital element of the Jewish Passover, and each one is significant to us as Christians. It is the third cup, the **Cup of Redemption**, that Jesus takes during the Passover meal and passes around to His disciples. What familiar words does Jesus say to them concerning this cup? Look up Matthew 26:27-28; Mark 14:23-24 and Luke 22:20.

a. After looking at all these elements of Passover and how they are a picture of Christ, Read 1 Corinthians 5:7-8 and record how this speaks to your heart and strengthens your faith.

Meditation:

Jesus, our Passover, has just eaten this Seder meal with His disciples. Every detail of the rich symbolism, He was, no doubt, more keenly mindful of than ever before. In His humanness, each part, each element of the meal was a preparation of His heart for what was about to take place.

When the meal was concluded both Matthew and Mark record that they sang a hymn and then went out to the Mount of Olives. Jesus was about to endure the most difficult night of His life. His disciples were oblivious to the weight He was carrying and the burden of His heart. Three times Jesus asked Peter, James, and John to keep watch for Him while He went to pray, and three times He returned to find them sleeping. Sadly, I can relate all too much with the sleeping disciples. It had been a long day; much had taken place. It was late and Matthew 26:43 tells us when Jesus returned the second time after praying, He found them asleep again, "for their eyes were heavy." Jesus had just told them (Mark 14:34) that His soul was, "Exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch." But they were not able to keep their eyes open. As Jesus tells them in Matthew 26:41 and Mark 14:38, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Lord, take my weak flesh and revive me by Your Spirit! "We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober..... For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him." (1 Thess. 5:5b-6, & 9-10)

a. What does verse 7 tell us about Christ's death on the cross?

b. Read through to Hebrews 10:12-14. Write down the final conclusion recorded by the writer of Hebrews in verse 14.

4. Write out the mystery of "The Great Exchange" found in 2 Corinthians 5:21.

5. Record what each of the following verses say that Christ's death on the cross accomplished for us (Note: You do not need to write down the Scriptures, just what the Scriptures state Christ accomplished.)

Galatians 3:13 -

Ephesians 1:7 -

Ephesians 2:12-18 -

Colossians 2:14 -

1 Peter 2:24 -

Revelation 1:5 -

Revelation 5:9-10 -

Meditation:

“For a tabernacle was prepared: the first part, in which was the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary; and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant; and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat.” (Hebrews 9:2-5)

When Jesus breathed His last breath, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom (Matthew 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45). This is the veil that separated the Holy Place, or the sanctuary of the temple, from the Most Holy Place, or the Holy of Holies, which represented God's very presence. Previously, only the High Priest could go into that place to represent the people, and that was only once a year. Previously, the people needed a mediator to speak to God on their behalf. Now, Christ ripped open, through His death, that separating veil, giving us access to the Father. He, Himself became our Mediator. 1 Timothy 2:5 tells us that there is only one Mediator between God and men (mankind), and that is Jesus Christ. Because He has torn the veil, we now have access to God and to His Mercy Seat, the throne of grace.

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” (Rom 5:1-3)

“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Heb 4:16)

Thank You, Lord for Your great sacrifice. Words cannot express our gratitude. We stand in awe of a love so great that You would willingly die on our behalf, and not only that, but that You would become sin for us, that we might be clothed in Your righteousness and be given access to your throne of grace.

"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!" (Rev 5:12)

Day Seven

“The Empty Tomb”

Reflection:

Jesus’ body has been laid in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, who had been a secret disciple of Christ. The tomb had been made secure, having been sealed with a large stone covering the entrance and a Roman guard had been posted at the insistence of the chief priests. It was the day after the Sabbath that a group of women came to the tomb early in the morning, wanting to anoint Jesus’ body because there had been no time to do so after His crucifixion. Each Gospel names Mary Magdalene as one of the women, and, with the exception of John, they each include some, but not all, the names of the others. Looking at all the Gospel accounts, we see that there were at least four women in this group: Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James and Joses, Joanna and Salome. It’s possible that there may have been others not named.

There has been a number of different speculations on why these women were given the honor of being the first to discover the empty tomb. Many have wondered why God orchestrated it that way, especially being that, in those days women were not considered to be credible witnesses. However, that fact also seems to give more credibility to the account being true, for if it were a made-up story, the originators would never have chosen these women to be the first witnesses.

Some have speculated that it was because several, if not all, of these women were present at His crucifixion and did not desert Him. Matthew 27:60-61 tells us that Mary Magdalene and the one he calls “the other Mary” were present even when Jesus was first laid in the tomb and the stone was rolled over the opening. Scripture doesn’t tell us the reason these women were given such an honored privilege, but one thing we can be sure of is the love and devotion these women had for Jesus. Even after He is laid in the tomb, feeling heartbroken and disappointed, not understanding how this could have happened or what the future for them now holds, they rise early in the morning to go to Him; to perform this last act of service of love and devotion.

Upon their arrival, what they discover is..... an EMPTY TOMB.

1. Record below what happens when Mary and her group arrive at the tomb according to Matthew 28:1-3.
 - a. What does Matthew 28:4 tell us happened to the Roman guards posted at the entrance of the tomb?

2. What do the angels say to the women according to Matthew 28:5-7; Mark 16:6-7 and Luke 24:5-7?

- a. Mark's account mentions that the angel told the women to go tell Jesus' disciples.....**and Peter**..... that they would see Jesus in Galilee. Why do you suppose that Peter is mentioned by name? (See Matthew 26:75 and Luke 22:61-62).

Mark 16:9 tells us that Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-17 gives us a detailed description of that appearance). Matthew 28:9-10 reveals that He appeared to the rest of the women as they were on their way to tell the disciples what had taken place. Mark 16:12 mentions that He then appeared to two of Jesus' followers as they were walking on the road in the countryside (read that detailed account in Luke 24:13-32). Luke goes on to tell us that these two followers then went to find "the 11" and those who gathered with them to tell them all that had occurred, and when they arrived, they were met with the whole group saying that "The Lord has **risen indeed**, and has appeared to Peter."

3. As they were all discussing these things, Luke says Jesus appeared in the midst of them. What are the words He says to them in verses 36-39 of Luke 24?

4. John 20:24-28 reports that Thomas was not with them when Jesus appeared to the twelve (now eleven). When they told Thomas that they had seen Jesus, Thomas didn't believe them. Eight days later, Jesus again appears to them when Thomas is present and we can read about that encounter in the Scripture reference above. What does Jesus say to Thomas in John 20:29?

5. Read Paul's account of those Christ appeared to after His resurrection. Jot down each appearance he lists in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8.

6. Record Peter's words in 2 Peter 1:16.

7. What encouragement do we find in Paul's words as we read Romans 8:31-34? Write down how these verses minister to your heart.

Meditation:

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life — the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us — that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that your joy may be full." 1 John 1:1-4

*Easter is a celebration of a **Risen Savior**, but like a soon to be bride awaiting her wedding day, it is also a celebration of the excited expectation we have in a **RETURNING LORD!***

"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know."

Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:1-6)

And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely. (Rev 22:17)

*He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. **Even so, come, Lord Jesus!** (Rev 22:20)*