

Filling An Empty Heart

An empty bank account. An empty stomach. An empty house. An empty promise. Empty things usually disappoint.

Moreover, empty things can't fill an empty heart. And yet, we attempt to do this repeatedly and incessantly, hoping that at some point our efforts will yield a different result. Isn't this what some people have determined to be the definition of insanity? Yet God uses an empty cross, an empty tomb, and empty grave clothes to remind us that His gloriously wonderful promises are true. They are fulfilled in Jesus, the Messiah!

The Gospel of John recounts the last words of Jesus on the cross: "When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, 'It is finished,' ..." (19:30a). The empty, blood-stained cross gives witness that **Jesus' work was and is finished**. His suffering and death once and for all provided the sacrifice to fulfill God's plan of redemption. There is no need for additions nor risk of subtractions.

The Apostle John recounts that following Jesus' final words, "... he bowed his head and gave up his spirit" (19:30b). **Jesus willingly gave His life and took it up again**. As a matter of fact, He plainly told His disciples that, as the Good Shepherd, this was His plan all along: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep... No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father" (John 10:11, 18). The empty tomb verifies that Jesus was not a victim, but the Victor. He crushed the serpent's head (Gen 3:15) and conquered sin and death.

So what do the first two "empties" - the empty cross and the empty tomb - have to do with your life today? Are they merely miraculous prophecies fulfilled 2000 years ago or do they tear apart the very fabric of what is keeping us from God? The third "empty" - the empty grave clothes - is a powerful reminder of this new beginning. The Bible boldly proclaims that **Jesus makes all things new** for those who put their trust in Him (2 Cor 5:17). The stench of our past is left in the grave. God will never bring our failures up again (Ps. 103:12). He is our Father and Jesus is our Advocate and Intercessor. Furthermore, life before Jesus was spiritually dead. However, the garments left in the grave function as a reminder that Jesus has the power over sin and death. Per His resurrection, He is "the firstborn among many brothers" (Col 1:18; Rom 8:29). Believers' new life is resurrection life! Since Jesus is alive, you too are alive and one day will be resurrected and given a brand new glorified body!

The empty hearts that we often attempt to fill with empty things, long to be filled with the One it was created for - Jesus. Do you believe this? If not, pray that God would open your eyes to see the depth of God's love for you and the extent to which He went to prove it. If so, live like it! No more passive indifference, but passionate intent. Jesus is alive, He understands, and must be taken seriously!

John 11:25-27 (ESV) - "Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?'

'Yes, Lord,' she replied, 'I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.'"