



### **The Tomb is Empty - Our Hearts are Full**

I remember on one spring-filled day my son Blake saw one of our trees in our yard full of buds and he was ecstatic. “Mom!” he shouted with joy. “Look how beautiful!” I was struck by the way his joy spilled over into my own heart. I stood for a moment in awe of new life. It reminded me about fresh and new beginnings. It was the promise of spring made visible. As we are approaching Easter Sunday, the uncontrolled excitement my son displayed lets me experience joy in a new and unexpected way. And suddenly, I was reminded of the empty tomb and the childlike wonder of those who witnessed it—those who stood at the entrance of the place where just hours before, the turning point in history had happened—human feet on holy ground. Hearts were filled with the utter delight of God’s love made visible in a way they had never been before.

That is what Easter Sunday should be like. We are all ready for some joy. Let it be felt on Easter Sunday like no other day. If we come into the sanctuary on Easter Sunday morning filled with His joy in a new way, and let it spill out everywhere, we could experience the joy Blake did when he saw the tree with new buds. The children in our lives have a lot to teach us about joy. We can experience the same joy our children demonstrate. Jesus knows it too:

***He called a little child to him and placed the child among them. And he said: “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 18:2-3 NIV)***

So, let us begin by being humble. Children ask questions. They have not yet convinced themselves that they are self-sufficient beings who should know most everything. If we have been following Christ, we are likely remarkably familiar with the facts about Easter morning. We feel safe knowing the answers and sometimes we let that be enough. But what if we ask God for more this year? Ask Him to nudge us out of our comfort zones into new experiences of His resurrection life? We can celebrate cherished traditions but let us show up with anticipation, trusting Him to do a new thing.

Let us leave room for wonder. One of the surest routes to authentic praise is to sink our roots deep in the wonder of life, as our children do naturally. Genuine gratitude springs from being present in the moment, aware of even the simplest joys. This Easter season consider revisiting (or beginning) that gratitude journal. The more blessings you discover, the more you will be filled with praise for the One who provided them. As you reflect on the empty tomb, your heart will be worshipful!

Let us all share the joy. “Did you see that?” “Watch this!” “Look close, Mama!” Our little ones often express their feelings without filters. They want to draw us into their experience so that we can share their excitement. But as grown-ups, we sometimes forget how wonderful a shared joy can be. We assume others would not understand or be interested in our experience. However, it is likely there are people in our lives right now who desperately need a renewed sense of hope. As you celebrate the resurrection this year, allow that joy to spill

over. Whatever it looks like for you, share the joy you've found in Christ with those around you—not because you have to, but because you just can't help yourself!

So, let us come to Him this Easter as His children, with open hearts and willing hands, to love and serve in whatever way He leads us. As we envision the empty tomb and celebrate that eternal freedom we have been given, let us not keep this joy to ourselves. Let us be a part of bringing His Kingdom here today--transforming this world with His healing love, one precious heart at a time.

### **Scripture for April 2021**

04-04-2021	Becoming Resurrected People	John 20: 1-18
04-11-2021	Being Rooted in Christ	Colossians 2: 6-7
04-18-2021	The Practice of Prayer	Psalms 139: 1-24
04-25-2021	The Practice of Reading and Reflecting on the Bible	2 <sup>nd</sup> Timothy 3: 16-17

In Christ's Love,  
Pastor Debbie