

A FRESH LOOK AT AN AMAZING FIND

March 29, 2026

When It All Went Down // John 20:1-10

Message Context

On this Sunday morning — the “first day of the week” — the disciples arrived at the tomb expecting to find a dead Jesus and a shattered future. Instead, they encountered an empty tomb, neatly folded grave clothes, and the dawning reality of a resurrection that changed everything. The sermon explored four postures we can bring to the empty tomb: seeking a dead Jesus (sad), standing before a disowned Jesus (sobering), seeing a death-defeating Jesus (scriptural), and sensing a purpose-changing Jesus (stunning). The resurrection is not simply old news — it is the hinge of history and the power that animates every believer’s life, mission, and hope.

CONNECT – Announcements (page 2) & Building Relationships

1. If your life from this past year were entered in the NCAA tournament bracket, what was your “biggest upset” — a moment that went nothing like you planned or expected? Did it turn out to be a blessing in disguise?
2. Share a time when you felt like you were “coming to the tomb in the dark” — spiritually confused, hopeless, or walking through something you didn’t understand. How did you get through it?

REFLECT - Out of the Word and Into Our Lives

3. Have someone from the group read John 20: 1-10 out loud. What stood out to you most from a fresh reading of the passage? And is there anything from the message that you want to be sure we talk about in our group time this week?
4. Mary came to the tomb “while it was still dark” and assumed someone had stolen Jesus’ body. In what ways do people today still effectively treat Jesus as a dead historical figure rather than a living Savior?
5. Peter had denied Jesus three times — yet the angel at the tomb specifically named him: “Go, tell His disciples and Peter” (Mark 16:7). What does it mean to you personally that the risen Christ sought out Peter despite his failure by name?
6. Pastor Jeremy said: “Grace compels us to live from acceptance, not for it.” In which areas of your life are you still striving to earn God’s acceptance rather than resting in it? How can our group help you walk in that freedom?
7. John believed at the empty tomb before he fully understood all the Old Testament scriptures pointing to resurrection (such as Psalm 16:10, Hosea 6:2, Isaiah 53:10–11). Pastor Jeremy emphasized: “People come into the family of God through the simple gospel of a risen Christ, not through mastery of systematic theology.” How does this challenge and encourage you in terms of how prepared you are to share the gospel?

8. As Peter and John entered the tomb, Christ's grave clothes were still there, neatly arranged — evidence of an orderly victory, not a grave robbery. As you contemplate the historicity of Christ's resurrection, what argument or piece of evidence has been most challenging or convincing for you?
9. After encountering the empty tomb and believing, the disciples "went away to their own homes" — but they did not stay there long. As we've practiced with our "Who's Your One?" strategy, they went to their oikos (their own people or household) first, and from there to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. Who specifically is God calling you to share the resurrection hope with in your own oikos this week? And how can our group help or encourage you in that task?
10. Pastor Jeremy made this claim in light of the change we see in the early disciples: "You cannot authentically encounter the risen Christ and remain unchanged." Do you agree with this statement? And what might God be convicting you about in your own life, calling you to surrender or step into as you take this message seriously?

♡ PROTECT – Care for one another (divided, gender-specific groups)

11. The sermon highlighted that Peter ran to the empty tomb rather than away from it, even after his spectacular failure. Is there an area of sin, failure, or shame where you have been running away from Christ rather than toward Him? How can we help you as you make a turn for the better?
12. Who in this group — or in our broader church family — may be walking in darkness right now, feeling hopeless or like their "bracket is totally busted"? How can we intentionally reach out to encourage them this week with resurrection hope?

Announcements

Easter week is here! If you haven't already, we encourage you to let us know which service you will be attending here: <https://nvf.life/easter>

And if you either aren't currently serving and would be willing to serve for a Sunday or have an extra cycle to serve an additional service, we would love to know about it. We need all hands-on deck to pull off a great opportunity to share the gospel hope with the ones God is leading our way.

<https://my.nvf.life/easter-serve>

Don't miss out on this week's special events:

- **Journey to the Cross: Friday, April 3rd @ 6:00 pm**
- **Easter Egg Hunt: Saturday, April 4th @ 11:00 am**
- **Easter Services: Sunday, April 5th @ 8:30 am, 10:00 am, 11:30 am.**

Resources for Going Deeper

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/4-reasons-to-believe-in-the-empty-tomb/>

- Check out this article, which explores four compelling historical and literary reasons why the empty tomb accounts in the Gospels are credible, including the striking fact that women — whose testimony was legally inadmissible in first-century courts — are named as the first witnesses. A great resource for thinking through the evidence for the resurrection or for conversations with skeptical friends.



<https://www.gotquestions.org/resurrection-accounts.html>

- GotQuestions provides a detailed, accessible harmony of all four Gospel resurrection narratives — explaining how Mary Magdalene, the other women, Peter, and John each fit into the sequence of events on that first Sunday morning. This may help you understand why John’s account focuses on different details than the other Gospels and how they all fit together coherently.