

# The Peace Press

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## The Joy of the Empty Tomb

This Easter season, I find myself particularly struck by the women's response to discovering the empty tomb. Matthew tells us in 28:8, that "*the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid and yet filled with joy, and ran to tell His disciples.*" Like the women, how can we be filled with joy because of the empty tomb?

In Matthew 26:32, for example, at the Last Supper, Jesus had told them, "*After I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.*" Even though Jesus had done His best to prepare the disciples for what was about to happen, they were still having trouble grasping everything that He meant. Despite their wonderings and even fear at the fulfillment of His promises, the women were full of joy. They knew God had powerfully moved and they were grateful.

We too are called to trust in Jesus and to worship Him with joy, even in the midst of our doubts and fears. In fact, true discipleship involves following Jesus, even when we doubt or worry. Paul, in Philippians 4:4, 6-7, reminds us, "*Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice...Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*" Prayer and a focus on Christ will lead us to the joy God has in store for us, as one of the promised fruits of His Spirit.

What is it that drains us or robs us of joy? Often, when we wrestle with human desires to be in control or when we have joy wrapped up in worldly things, we can easily lose our hold on lasting joy. I know for me that I lose joy when I lose sight of Jesus, or when I forget His gracious care and presence in my heart and life. I also lose joy when I forget to pray as readily as I should.

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One sure sign of joy in the Lord is when we are willing to share our joy with others. When the women discovered the empty tomb, they immediately and joyfully shared this good news with others. Do you contagiously share joy with others?

Let us in this Easter season recommit ourselves to rejoicing in Jesus and to being embraced by the joy of the Lord. Let us enjoy the spiritual fruit of joy as we enjoy the love of God each day. Wishing you the fullness of His love and joy. Love in Christ, Pastor Brian

