

In each of the four gospels that tell of this event of women entering into the tomb of Jesus, there are some differences concerning some of the details of the event. For instance, the gospels differ in terms of which women enter and who they encounter inside the tomb.

In Luke's account, four women, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, Joanna, and an unnamed woman come to the tomb with the spices they had prepared in order to help in a proper burial. In Mark's gospel, there are two women named and Matthew has three. In John's account, there is only one woman who goes to the tomb.

In Luke's account that we just read, he makes it clear in his retelling of the event that these 4 women arrive and find that the rock, which had been covering the entrance, has been rolled away. And seeing that the rock has been rolled away, these four women then enter the tomb.

I want to reflect a little this morning on why it was important for these women to enter the tomb. When we say the word tomb today we are not talking about a happy place. And for good reason. The word tomb connotes a dark place of sadness and grief. Tomb is a place of darkness and death.

And many of us try our best to avoid these tombs. We try to avoid the places of darkness and death because we think that if we just ignore these places then the pain will somehow vanish. And so we spend a lot of time trying to cover up our dark places within ourselves and within our relationships.

Within each of us are sad and lonely places. Maybe that sad place is there because someone you loved is no longer there. The memory of an important person in your life who died or disappeared during an important time in your life. Maybe that sad and lonely place inside of you is a trauma from your past that you have never confronted. Just this week we have been hearing the stories of deaf boys in a religious school who were victimized by the religious authorities.

Maybe that sad place deep down inside of you is the lie that you are hiding from others. That addiction or that part of you that you prevent others from seeing. This week begins the Masters golf tournament and we have heard Tiger Woods talk about living a lie. Maybe you are living some sort of lie.

Or maybe that darkness rests between you and someone important to you. Is there something that you have done that you have not told your spouse or significant other about? Is there some type of brokenness in a relationship that you know is there but you have never confronted it as a couple?

But in the Easter story, these women do not flee from the tomb until they have entered into the tomb. And so maybe they have something to teach us. Maybe we do not need to run away from tombs of our lives but enter into them. Maybe we need to go to the dark places and be willing to name whatever it is that is the deep dark secret within us or that is stuck between our relationships.

Maybe in our relationships we do not need to pretend that everything is wonderful but, instead, name the problem that is there. Because if you aren't willing to name the problem, then it never goes away. We who are native Southerners are notorious for thinking that we can simply ignore a problem away. And if you can't see it, then maybe consulting with someone else like a therapist will allow you to see what you cannot see.

But then there are others of us who do not have problems going to the deep dark tombs. Some of us, though, feel like we are supposed to live inside those tombs. Wallow in self pity. Never seek healing because we think that by wallowing in self pity we can get some sympathy and attention to come our way.

In our gospel lesson, when these women realize the tomb is empty, they leave the tomb and return to the world of the living. For those of us who may be living in the tombs, now may be the time for you to get out of there. To not stay in your places of darkness but to return to the places of life.

To look for healing, to look for new relationships, to look to renew old relationships, to wake up in the morning and say, “this is the day that the Lord has made let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Easter is the day when we proclaim that the tomb is empty. Jesus Christ is risen. If you need to enter the tombs, then enter the tombs. But do not stay in the tombs.

After confronting the darkness in the tombs, then head out and say to the world, Jesus Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. AMEN.

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-Text: Luke 24: 1-12

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