

THE LINEN CLOTHES

JOHN 20:1-10

Text:

Introduction:

There are many aspects of the resurrection that we could consider. All of them are important and are a blessing and an encouragement to the children of God.

This evening, I want to look at the message that is contained in the graveclothes left in that tomb by Jesus.

I want us to see that the Lord left His grave clothes behind for a reason. He left them behind so that they could preach a message to all those who saw them early on that Sunday morning.

Note the truth about this message:

1. IT'S A PEACFUL MESSAGE (VS 5-7)

John 20:5-7

And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. [6] Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, [7] And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

- After they placed His body in the tomb, the Jewish leaders asked Pontius Pilate to seal the tomb and place a detachment of Roman soldiers at the tomb to prevent the Disciples from stealing the body, Matt. 27:62-66.

Matthew 27:62-66

Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, [63] Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. [64] Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. [65] Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. [66] So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

Now, when Mary finds the tomb in this condition, she runs to tell the Disciples and Peter and John race to the tomb. Surely Mary went to the wrong tomb. Surely, there must be some mistake! Yet, when they arrive at the scene, it is the right tomb. But, the tomb is empty! All that they see when they look in are the graveclothes of the Lord Jesus either collapsed in a pile as if His body came right through them, or having been hardened by the chemicals used by Joseph and Nicodemus, in the shape of His body, resembling a cocoon that He had merely exited. Either way, it paints quite a picture! Then they see, in a place by itself, the napkin Joseph and Nicodemus had used to wrap Christ's face and head.

The tomb is a perfect picture of absolute order!

A. The importance of this is that no one stole the body of the Lord.

B. After the news of the resurrection the leaders concocted a story to attempt to cover up that Jesus was alive.

Matthew 28:11-15

Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. [12] And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, [13] Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole

him away while we slept. [14] And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. [15] So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

- If the disciple had removed the body, how did they do it with it without disturbing the grave clothes?
- Would they have taken time to be orderly?
- If someone had robbed the grave, would they have folded the napkin that was about His head?

C. The only logical conclusion to the matter is that the tomb was a scene of order and calm because Jesus had merely passed through His graveclothes. He had folded His own napkin and laid it aside. He left a scene of peace so that all those who look in and believe might have peace in their hearts that He is alive and well.

2. IT'S A POWERFUL MESSAGE (VS 5)

John 20:5

And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

These clothes preached a powerful message.

- A. The message of a risen Savior.
- B. It's powerful in that it gives hope to all who come to Him for salvation.
- C. It's powerful because it tells us that the Father accepted His death on the cross as the payment for the sin debt of man.

3. IT'S A PROMISING MESSAGE (VS 7)

John 20:7

And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

- A. John calls our attention to the fact that the napkin that was used to cover His blessed face in death was folded neatly and laid to one side. There is a message in this action that we do not want to miss.

Illustration:

The oriental custom of the napkin. When a man with servants was eating a meal, he would often use his napkin to signal them during the course of the meal. If he left the table and wadded his napkin up, it meant

that he was finished and would not be back. If, however, he neatly folded the napkin, it told his servants that he was stepping away for a moment, but he would be back! Jesus was telling His disciples, "I may be out of your sight right now, but I'll be right back!"

When Peter and John arrived at the tomb, they feared the worst. Perhaps they thought robbers had come, or that the Jews had taken His body away. Even Mary missed the napkin and supposed the gardener had moved the body of the Lord. Yet, John, who had been raised with servants, knew this custom and quickly grasped its meaning.

B. That napkin is still preaching that message today, reminding us though we don't see Him right now, He's coming right back and we'll see Him then.

Rev. 22:20

He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

C. Don't lose hope He is coming back and will take His children to be with Him in His Father's House.

John 14:1-3

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. [2] In my Father's house are many

mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. [3] And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

4. IT'S A PERSUASIVE MESSAGE (VS 5-8)

John 20:5-8

And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. [6] Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, [7] And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. [8] Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.

These verses tell us about what Peter and John did when they arrived at the tomb. It is interesting to dig into the words used here just a little. Note three thoughts:

A. The word saw in verse 5 means to take a glance. It refers to a brief, fleeting glimpse. This is what John did when he got there. He took a quick glance in the tomb and saw that Jesus was gone, but that the graveclothes were still there.

B. The word seeth in verses 6-7 means to scrutinize. It carries the idea of looking around with a keen eye to catch all the facts. It brings to mind the eye of the investigator. This is what Peter did. He saw the graveclothes and the napkin lying by itself.

C. The word saw in verse 8 means to look with understanding. It carries the idea of grasping what you see. When John took the time to take a closer look, he saw the truth in the graveclothes and understood that Jesus was alive!

When an honest heart takes the time to scrutinize the evidence they will come to the place John came to. The resurrection must be real. There is no other logical explanation.

5. IT'S A PERSONAL MESSAGE (VS 1-29)

Close:

I dare say that no other suit of grave clothes in history has preached such a glorious, timeless message as did the grave clothes of Jesus. I am thankful that He lives this morning and that He left perfect, indisputable evidence in His tomb that He lives! Is His resurrection real in your heart this morning? Have you experienced the power of His resurrection in your life?