

MARCH 31: BELIEVE!

Focal Passage: John 20:1-17



Surprises can be fun! When my youngest son was 16, my wife and I found a very large, tanklike, very old car for him for Christmas. He really had no idea it was coming. We purchased it. We had it worked on. Then we hid it for a few days until Christmas. His siblings hinted about it.

Christmas morning came. He opened his gift – a beautiful model car replica of a Ford Mustang. We all whooped and hollered! It took a while, but he finally found a key underneath the model. He looked at it for a long time. The look of wonder, shock, and surprise when he stepped into the garage that morning will stay with me always.

That car served its purpose for him getting back and forth to high school and for a year or so of college and then it was gone. But on that Christmas morning, the surprise was priceless.

I have often wondered how Mary felt, when she nervously stepped into the tomb that Easter morning. What was she expecting? The stone had been removed but surely the body of Jesus would be there.

Expecting one thing but found nothing but rags. Then Peter and John entered the tomb expecting to find the body of Jesus and they found nothing.



Lloyd

While I suspect they all went through many emotions at that moment, I can't help but think that the first emotion that went through their body was of complete surprise. Expecting one thing but receiving something completely different. And that moment stayed with them always.

When Jesus was alive, He often taught with a surprise twist to His story. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus repeated that phrase “you have heard it said, but I say unto you” that gave His listeners a surprise – a new lesson on life. The woman caught in adultery was expecting to be stoned to death, but Jesus calmly wrote in the sand.

When the woman looked up, she surprisingly found no accusers with stones in their hands, just Jesus. When the young rich ruler went to Jesus looking for salvation, he surprisingly found that the cost was too high to pay. What a surprise!

The greatest surprise did come on that Easter Sunday when Jesus walked out of that tomb and back into that upper room full of disciples and believers.

It would be impossible to capture that look of awe, shock and surprise of that moment on their faces. Joy, celebration and transformation would follow that first moment of surprise.

The final surprise will come on our day of judgment. Our life will be reviewed. We will be held in the balance. The reality of our sins will point to the verdict of guilt and a judgment of eternal separation. Just as judgment is about to be rendered, our Savior, the Resurrected Jesus will stand and step into our place.

The cross paid the price and the resurrected transformed our lives. I wonder what our faces will look like expecting eternal death yet receiving eternal joy. I suspect our faces will be full of awe, shock and surprise. I pray that none of us will ever live even one day without that awe, wonder and surprise of the great love that Jesus has for us. **B&R**