

passage: John 1:1-18	date: 14th of May 2006
title: God in the world	key verse: 1:10
big idea: <i>God has come into the world in the man Jesus Christ. How have you responded?</i>	

- Australian's are generally obsessed with crime shows
 - city homicide, csi, law and order, ncis, underbelly
 - even desperate housewives and home and away have these
 - who dunnit sub plot crime/mysteries running through them

We love the idea of being able to work out exactly what happened before anyone else does

Which brings me to one of the things I want to talk about today

- Easter eggs... did you get any easter eggs this morning?
- if you did – can I counsel you to guard them well
- because if you don't – someone may steal them... and you will be left with nothing
- ***but a crime... a mystery... to solve of your own***

At least in our house... there is an easter egg thief

- I always make sure I eat my eggs first thing... so no-one can get to them
- But Cath... she likes to keep hers... and *in the past... they've gone missing*

I wonder if this morning you couldn't help us to work out who stole the eggs?

... no doubt some of you... already have your ideas

- But that's only one of the crimes we need to solve today
 - because Easter... isn't all about eggs... the eggs were an after thought
 - Easter's all about Jesus

And there's another... far greater mystery we need to solve this morning

- than who stole the eggs...

The mystery for us... for me... and for you... to work out is

- What happened to Jesus's body... what happened to Jesus body on Easter Sunday?
- No doubt some of you already have your ideas about that

▼ **Can I challenge you this morning... to work hard... to find out what happnd to Jesus's body**

- Because if you solve this mystery RIGHT
- It will be worth far more than a basket of Easter eggs for you

If we can get the right solution to the case of Jesus missing body

- John tells us in his gospel... **it will mean Eternal life...**

Let's step back together now to that first Easter Sunday morning.....

● **Firstly** we need to **set the scene... and as we will see... it was a big morning... listen to Jn 20:1**

John 20:1 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance.

For starters... this verse says it's **the first day** of the Jewish week... the day after the Jewish Sabbath

- you couldn't do anything on a Saturday back then if you were a Jew
- so all the stuff you had left to do on Friday at sun down
- had to wait until Sunday morning
- Sunday morning is the time to get back to what you were doing on Friday

And Mary... and the ladies that were with her... they had a big Friday

- because the Friday just gone... the one they thought was the messiah
- the one they thought was God's chosen king
- the one they thought would save the world... Jesus... died... he was crucified

Jesus was crucified... and he was quickly stuck in the tomb by the Jews

- before the Sabbath came...
- it wasn't good form to have bodies hanging around on crosses on the holy day
- **So the quickly stuck him out of the way in a tomb**

And obviously, Mary was a good law abiding Jew... and **she waits**

- till early Sunday morning... til she goes to the tomb to grieve...
- to tend to Jesus burial sight... and... **she goes while it's still dark**
- It is certainly going to be a big morning for her

So the scene is... Jesus was crucified on Friday... laid in the tomb... left all day

- and Here's Mary... first thing Sunday morning... off to tend to Jesus burial site

▼ Any ideas yet... what the solution to this mystery is?

- **any hints at what might have happened to Jesus body?**

- we can't really say yet... from this verse...

other than the body was definitely there two days ago

- and the stone was rolled away when Mary got there first thing Sunday morn

That's the scene... for all we know at this stage... Jesus deceased body may still be lying there

Let's see what happens next...

● We don't get to far into the morning before **something unexpected happens... v2 says**

² [Mary] came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "**They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!**"

If Sunday morning was big before... it's just got even bigger

- **the body of Jesus has gone... it's been taken!**

Listen to what Mary says as she runs to tell John and Peter in verse 2

- *'they have taken the body out of the tomb and we don't know where they've put him'*

What Mary is telling the other disciples of Jesus is

- that either the Roman's or the Jewish authorities, or grave robbers have taken Jesus body
- **because it's gone... 'they've taken it' she says**

Of course... she can't know they've taken it for sure... that's just what she thinks

- she certainly didn't expect an empty tomb
 - This is something **completely unexpected**... and clearly a bit alarming

The one Mary and Peter and John loved so dearly... the one they grieved so heavily for

- The one who had been crucified only two days ago
- his body was gone... what happened to it? ...
 - **have you got any ideas... about where Jesus body had gone?**

▼ Let me tell you the case of who stole the eggs at my house is a lot simpler

- there's no Romans... no Jews... no grave robbers... nobody comin in and out of the house
- Just, Cath, me, my two boys Arthur and Billy, and my mum... and dad who are visiting
- I wonder which one of them you think stole the eggs?

It's not that big a thing to unexpectedly find your ester eggs missing

- **but who would take someone's body?**

Was it **the Romans**... why would they want Jesus body... *they were happy he was gone*

- **the Jews**... why would they take it... to stop the disciples from taking it...
 - and making claims that Jesus had risen from the dead?
 - If that's so... *why didn't they come out and say they did that?*

What about **Mary and the girls... and the other disciples**... did they smuggle it out?

- **that just wouldn't make sense**... cause most of them end up getting killed
 - because they refuse to deny that Jesus rose from the dead?
 - *Why would you die for something you knew wasn't true?*

Maybe **grave robbers**... hurried and took the body... to get the expensive linen and cloth

- as they often did... maybe that happened... and the disciples were just conned...

Something unexpected has happened... Jesus body has gone

- **and Mary's solution... rationally enough... is that someone has taken Jesus body**

▪ **what do you think?**

A quick look at the evidence should help... just look from verse 5

⁵ [John] bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, ⁷ as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen.

You've got picture these tombs... there's not much space in them

- it's probably a horizontal cave a about 3 foot high...
- you'd still need a pretty big rock to cover it... but you've gotta bend over to see in there
- a bit spooky I reckon

But this is the odd bit... when we do bend over and have a look in... what do we see...?

- We see the expensive linen strips Jesus was buried in laying there where his body was
- And the burial cloth... that was to hold his Jaw together... laying as though it was folded
- Or rolled in a pile... but not on top of the body cloths
- Separate...

IT was like the body had just vanished from inside the cloths

- and they remained where they were...

This is bizarre... no grave robber in their right mind would leave the cloths there

- that's part of the booty
- no-one wanting to steal the body without the Roman guards knowing
- *would have time to crawl around and arrange the cloths so well*

The evidence suggests... that the best possible solution is

- this is **a radical hoax** by the Roman government of the time
 - they moved the body on the Sabbath... and spent the time re-arranging the cloths
 - **but... that doesn't make any sense either**
 - because the Romans quickly began to hate the Christians
 - and they could've blown the resurrection myth out of the water at any stage
 - if they took Jesus body

What happened to the body? What do you think?

- Where does the evidence point... how do we solve this mystery?

Can I tell you I have some foil here... I found it in my pocket

- what does that tell you about who stole the eggs?

The answers obvious isn't it... **the evidence has solved it for us**... there is only one conclusion

- I'm the greatest Easter Egg thief this side of the blue mountains
 - o That's the solution... that's the truth... that mystery solved

▼ What happened to Jesus body... **the answer's obvious** to John... in verse 8 it says

⁸ Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. **He saw and believed.**

John looks at the evidence... square in the face

- like you're looking at this foil in my hands

He looks at the empty grave clothes lying there

- and he believes... the answer to the mystery is obvious to him
- Jesus had said he would rise from the dead... and now John believes
- The evidence points to **ONLY ONE SOLUTION**
 - o **Just as Jesus said... Jesus has risen from the dead... Jesus is alive**

● John and the other disciples weren't expecting this to happen... they weren't looking out for it

- even though the Old Testament... and Jesus himself
- had said time and time again... he would rise from the dead

None of the disciples ever understood what that meant... they didn't get it

They were grieving as though they'd never see him again

But now... confronted with the cold... hard... facts... there is only one solution for John

He saw... and he believed... Jesus is alive.

● What do you think happened to Jesus body?

- John says at the end of this chapter... that he wrote this book down... this gospel
 - so that you might **see and believe JESUS IS ALIVE**
 - ...THE RISEN SON OF GOD

And that by believing... **you would have eternal life**

You know... if you worked out... that it was me who stole the eggs all along

- good onya... *but you wont get anything for it...* not even the eggs
 - o cause I ate em!

But if you can **see and believe**... like John... what happened to Jesus Body

- on that first Easter Sunday morning...
 - o – if you believe that **JESUS IS ALIVE**
 - That he is **THE RISEN SON OF GOD**
 - Then you walk away from this morning with the most amazing thing

John and the rest of the Bible tells us... that if our conclusion... is Jesus is alive

- we will have eternal life... like Jesus
 - o even though we die... we will live forever
 - we cross over from death to life

▼ You might think... that's impossible... nobody can beat death...

- BUT remember... the evidence tells us... that... Jesus did

And Jesus wasn't just... anybody... he was the Son of God

- sent by God... in order to die... in order to defeat death for men

In order to bear the one thing that separates us from God

- he died to take the punishment for our sin **bringing forgiveness**
 - o and he rose to **bring us eternal life**

If you believe Jesus is alive... if your solution to the mystery of his missing body is **he lives**

- if you see the evidence and believe
- then right now... you have **NEW LIFE... ETERNAL LIFE WITH GOD**

● I don't mind if at Easter

- you... say easter eggs represent new life
- or the easter bunny... represents hopping over from death to life
 - **just so you can get lots of chocolate to eat once a year**

But don't forget the most obvious thing about easter

- The tomb was empty... the grave clothes were there
 - o **See it... and believe it...** Jesus is alive
 - *And more than chocolate...* **if you see and believe**
 - **you have eternal life with God**

Let's pray