

Luke 24:1-12
October 18, 2020

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Q: If Jesus had not been resurrected from the dead, how do you think your life would be different? [Let people engage]

Transition: The Christian faith is unique to all of the world's major religions in that it is founded on the living person of Jesus Christ, who was raised bodily from the dead. It is not primarily a system of moral or doctrinal beliefs, although it has definite moral standards and doctrinal truths. Christianity is founded on the living Lord Jesus Christ, crucified for our sins, risen from the dead, ascended into heaven, and returning soon in power and glory.

Think about it:

- If Jesus Christ is not risen from the dead, then He Himself was a liar, since He predicted His own death and resurrection on numerous occasions. Why believe in and follow a liar?
- If Christ is not risen from the dead, then His death on the cross did not secure the forgiveness of our sins. The resurrection was God's seal of approval on the sacrifice that Christ offered for His people, so that Paul could rightly say, "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins" (1 Cor. 15:17).
- The resurrection declared Jesus to be "the Son of God with power" (Rom. 1:4). It substantiated that Jesus is the son of David, the Messiah, of whom David prophesied when he wrote, "You will not abandon my soul to Hades, nor allow Your Holy One to undergo decay" (Acts 2:27; cf. Ps. 16:10).
- The resurrection guarantees us that Jesus conquered sin, death, and hell, and that He will make good on His promise to come again and take us to be with Him eternally in heaven. A dead man could not do that, but the risen Savior can! A dead Savior is no Savior at all. ***So everything in Christianity rests on the historical fact that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead.***

Let's read the Scripture to see the discovery of the empty tomb and the reactions the women and disciples had. And we will also cross-reference in Matt 28:1-10, Mark 16:1-8, John 20:1-9. But let's lead off with Luke 24:1-12 before we read the others.

BOOK:

The Resurrection

24 On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. ² They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. ⁵ In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead?" ⁶ He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ⁷ 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of

sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’”⁸ Then they remembered his words.

⁹ When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. ¹⁰ It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. ¹¹ But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. ¹² Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

Process Observations/Questions:

Q: What did you most like about this passage? What resonated with you? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you least like about this passage? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you find in this passage that you didn’t understand? [Let people engage]

Q: What do we learn about Jesus in this passage? [Let people engage]

LOOK:

The resurrection of Jesus Christ affirms to us that He is indeed the Son of God, just as He claimed to be (Rom. 1:4). It also proves that His sacrifice for sin has been accepted and that the work of salvation is completed (Rom. 4:24–25). Those who trust Him can “walk in newness of life” because He is alive and imparts His power to them (Rom. 6:4; Gal. 2:20). Our Lord’s resurrection also declares to us that He is the Judge who will come one day and judge the world (Acts 17:30–31).

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). The Bible Exposition Commentary (Vol. 1, pp. 277-278). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Christianity is in its very essence a resurrection religion,” says Dr. John Stott. “The concept of resurrection lies at its heart. If you remove it, Christianity is destroyed.”

The resurrection of Jesus Christ affirms to us that He is indeed the Son of God, just as He claimed to be (Rom. 1:4). It also proves that His sacrifice for sin has been accepted and that the work of salvation is completed (Rom. 4:24–25). Those who trust Him can “walk in newness of life” because He is alive and imparts His power to them (Rom. 6:4; Gal. 2:20). Our Lord’s resurrection also declares to us that He is the Judge who will come one day and judge the world (Acts 17:30–31).

It is no surprise, then, that Satan has attacked the truth of the Resurrection. The first lie that he spawned was that the disciples came and stole Christ’s body (Matt. 28:11–15), but it is difficult to imagine how they could have done this. To begin with, the tomb was carefully guarded (Matt. 27:61–66); and it would have been next to impossible for the frightened Apostles to overpower the soldiers, open the tomb, and secure the body. But the biggest obstacle is the fact that the Apostles themselves *did not believe that He would be resurrected!* Why, then, would they steal His body and try to perpetrate a hoax?

A second lie is that Jesus did not really die on the cross but only swooned, and when He was put into the cool tomb, He revived. But Pilate carefully checked with the centurion to see whether Jesus was dead (Mark 15:44), and the Roman soldiers who broke the legs of the two thieves knew that Jesus had died (John 19:31–34). Furthermore, how could a “cool tomb” transform Christ’s body so that He could appear and disappear and walk through closed doors?

The message of the Gospel rests on the death of Jesus Christ *and His resurrection* (1 Cor. 15:1–8). The Apostles were sent out as witnesses of His resurrection (Acts 1:22), and the emphasis in the Book of Acts is on the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

This explains why Luke climaxed his book with a report of some of the appearances of Jesus after He had been raised from the dead. He first appeared to Mary Magdalene (John 20:11–18), then to the “other women” (Matt. 28:9–10), and then to the two men on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24:13–22). At some time, He also appeared to Peter (Luke 24:34) and to His half brother James (1 Cor. 15:7).

That evening, He appeared to the Apostles (Luke 24:36–43), but Thomas was not with them (John 20:19–25). A week later, He appeared to the Apostles again, especially for the sake of Thomas (John 20:26–31). He appeared to seven of the Apostles when they were fishing at the Sea of Galilee (John 21). He appeared several times to the Apostles before His ascension, teaching them and preparing them for their ministry (Acts 1:1–12).

When the believers discovered that Jesus was alive, it made a tremendous difference in their lives.

Perplexed Hearts: He Opens the Tomb (Luke 24:1–12)

We do not know at what time Jesus arose from the dead on the first day of the week, but it must have been very early. The earthquake and the angel (Matt. 28:2–4) opened the tomb, not to let Jesus out but to let the witnesses in. “Come and see, go and tell!” is the Easter mandate for the church.

Mary Magdalene had been especially helped by Jesus and was devoted to Him (Luke 8:2). She had lingered at the cross (Mark 15:47), and then she was first at the tomb. With her were Mary the mother of James; Joanna; and other devout women (Luke 24:10), hoping to finish preparing their Lord's body for burial. It was a sad labor of love that was transformed into gladness when they discovered that Jesus was alive.

"Who will roll the stone away?" was their main concern. The Roman soldiers would not break the Roman seal, especially for a group of mourning Jewish women. But God had solved the problem for them; the tomb was open *and there was no body to prepare!*

At this point two angels appeared on the scene. Matthew 28:2 and Mark 16:5 mention only one of the two, the one who gave the message to the women. There was a kind rebuke in his message as he reminded them of their bad memories! More than once, Jesus had told His followers that He would suffer and die and be raised from the dead (Matt. 16:21; 17:22–23; 20:17–19; Luke 9:22, 44; 18:31–34). How sad it is when God's people forget His Word and live defeated lives. Today, the Spirit of God assists us to remember His Word (John 14:26).

Obedient to their commission, the women ran to tell the disciples the good news, but the men did not believe them! (According to Mark 16:14, Jesus later rebuked them for their unbelief.) Mary Magdalene asked Peter and John to come to examine the tomb (John 20:1–10), and they too saw the proof that Jesus was not there. However, all that the evidence said was that the body was gone and that apparently there had been no violence.

As Mary lingered by the tomb weeping, Jesus Himself appeared to her (John 20:11–18). It is one thing to see the empty tomb and the empty graveclothes, but quite something else to meet the risen Christ. We today cannot see the evidence in the tomb, but we do have the testimony of the witnesses found in the inspired Word of God. And we can live out our faith in Jesus Christ and know *personally* that He is alive in us (Gal. 2:20).

Keep in mind that these women did not expect to see Jesus alive. They had forgotten His resurrection promises and went to the tomb only to finish anointing His body. To say that they had hallucinations and only thought they saw Jesus is to fly in the face of the evidence. And would this many people hallucinate about the same thing at the same time? Not likely. They became excited witnesses, even to their leaders, that Jesus Christ is alive!

Martin, J. A. (1985). Isaiah. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 263)

B. The resurrection and appearances of Jesus (chap. 24)

The final chapter of Luke records the experiences of a number of people who had firsthand experiences with the risen Messiah. In each case the people were depressed because of Jesus' death. But after meeting with Him, they were joyful and praised God. (See the list of Jesus' post-resurrection events at Matt. 28:1–4.)

1. THE WOMEN AND THE APOSTLES (24:1–12) (Matt. 28:1–10; Mark 16:1–8; John 20:1–10).

24:1–9. The first people to learn of the resurrection of Jesus were **the women** who had been faithful in following Him. They found out about the Resurrection first because of their devotion to Him. For after His death they brought more **spices** for His burial **on the first day of the week** (cf. 23:55–56). **They did not find the body** they were looking for. Instead they saw **two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning**, an obvious reference to angelic beings. These **men**

reminded them of the words Jesus had spoken about His crucifixion and resurrection (9:31; 18:31–34). The women went to report to the apostles and **others** what they had seen (24:9).

24:10–12. The apostles **did not believe** the report **the women** brought them **because their words seemed ... like nonsense**. This was because they had seen Jesus' death and had seen His body placed in the grave. But **Peter ran to the tomb** and found what the women had described. Still he did not understand **what had happened**.

Butler, T. C. (2000). Luke (Vol. 3, pp. 414–416). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

A. Christ Is Risen as Promised (24:1–8)

SUPPORTING IDEA: *The gospel stands or falls on the reality that Christ rose from the dead according to the Scriptures.*

24:1. The world's worst Sabbath finally dragged to a close. Sundown brought a new day, the first day of the week. Now the women could fulfill their duty to Jesus and do something concrete to express their grief. But sundown brought darkness, when they could not venture outside their homes, so again they had to wait. The first rays of morning sun gave them opportunity to accomplish their task. They hurried off to the tomb where they had seen Joseph of Arimathea place Christ's body.

24:2–3. The stone was rolled from the tomb. Yes, the large stone that resembled a millstone that donkeys might pull did not have to be moved. They could enter the tomb immediately. As they did, they saw that the tomb was empty.

24:4–5. What had happened? What could they do? How could they stand the loss of his body in addition to losing him to death? From out of nowhere two men in glistening garments appeared. Dazzled by it all, the women fell face down to the ground, afraid to look up. Then those angelic voices addressed them: Why do you look for the living among the dead?

24:6–8. Again the voices. He is not here. He is risen! The angels reminded the women of what Jesus had said in Galilee. Then they remembered!

B. Telling the Resurrection Story (24:9–12)

SUPPORTING IDEA: *Qualified witnesses told the resurrection story with mixed initial reactions.*

24:9. The women had followed Jesus and supported his ministry in Galilee (8:1–3). They had faithfully watched at the cross (23:49). They were certainly qualified witnesses to recognize and tell the story of Jesus. In Luke the women believed the resurrection and told about it without even encountering the resurrected Lord. Here the disciples, with Judas missing, of course, must learn the central theme of the faith from the faithful women.

24:10. Luke carefully documents the women involved. Mary Magdalene and Joanna were listed in chapter 8, as supporting Jesus in his ministry in Galilee. Here Luke adds one prominent name—Mary, the mother of James—and does not include Susanna from chapter 8. Mark 15:40 identifies the second Mary as the mother of James-the-less. This is usually taken to mean he is the same as the apostle James the son of Alphaeus, as distinct from the apostle James the son of Zebedee and the brother of John. It is quite striking, however, that James and Joseph were also names of Jesus' brothers (Mark 6:3). This James became a strong leader in the Jerusalem church and probably is the author of the Epistle of James. Could it be that the early tradition of the

church quietly identified Jesus' mother as the mother of their leaders James and Joses rather than as the mother of Jesus in a humble effort not to pay too much homage to Mary? Is it not reasonable that Jesus' mother would have been among those first women seeking to pay honor to the dead son and to fulfill the ritual requirements of burial? This view is seldom espoused in scholarship but should not be totally dismissed. Present-day respect for Mary does not demand that the early church would always identify her as the mother of Jesus.

24:11. The apostles knew the women well and had traveled long miles and hours with them. Still, the men did not believe the women. This may show the chauvinistic, patriarchal bent of their society and times. It may show how totally separated the disciples were at this time from Jesus. They played a very minor role at the cross. (Luke has not mentioned them specifically since Jesus' arrest.) The disciples, like the women, had ignored Jesus' passion predictions. They had no expectations of resurrection. The disciples had not seen or heard the "men" in the tomb. Resurrection and renewed fellowship with Jesus were something they did not even think about. They gathered for comfort in grief, not to find Jesus again. This apostolic skepticism is a major evidence for the truth of the resurrection. The apostles would not have invented the resurrection story. They had lost hope and sunk into despair at the arrest and death of Jesus.

24:12. Denying Peter was also impulsive, inquisitive Peter. The women's story pricked his conscience and challenged him to take a look for himself. Here the open tomb is taken for granted in the narrative. Peter easily entered the tomb. His response to such easy access was not recorded. The two "men" did not appear to Peter. All the evidence he had to go on were the cloths that had wrapped Jesus' body. They set him wondering. No one would remove the wrappings and then steal the body. Only a person needing to walk away would remove the cloths. Could the women's story be true?

The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). (Lk 24:1-12). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.