

Resurrection Power!

Printed Text · LUKE 24:1-12, 30-35

Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will: DECIDE that the account of the Resurrection binds us to Christ and to one another; VALUE the promise that Christ is with us as we celebrate communion; and REJOICE in the knowledge of Christ's resurrection and presence among us.

In Focus

"If you've seen this 70 year-old woman, please contact your local police station," the television newscaster pleaded. Breana couldn't believe her mother's picture was staring back at her from the television screen. Three days ago, her mother left for the Beauty Shop, promising that she'd be right back. Even then, Breana had doubted her words.

Over the past few months, Breana's mom's memory had been deteriorating. Her mom knew her way around her hometown, but other communities were starting to pose a challenge. Before Breana could say, "Mom, let me take you," she had driven down the driveway.

Now, seated on the sofa surrounded by relatives, Breana allowed her tears to flow. She said a quiet prayer, and at that moment, she felt an overwhelming sense of peace. It was almost as if Christ Himself had come into the room and touched her on the shoulder with His resurrection power to let Breana know everything would be all right.

Just then, the phone rang, and Brandon answered it. "Breana! They found your mom!" he screamed. "She drove inside the abandoned warehouse near the hospital, where she used to work before she retired, and she's been there ever since. A security guard found her an hour ago. She's fine! She's alive!" Breana ran from the house, praising God and shouting, "Mom's alive! She's alive!"

The joy of learning that someone we love is well and we will see them again turns sorrow into rejoicing. How can you experience the reality of Christ's resurrection today?

Keep In Mind

"Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." (Luke 24:34, KJV)

Words You Should Know

A. Sepulchre (Luke 24:1) mnema (Gk.) — A grave; a small compartment carved out of rock or built with stone in which a dead person is buried

B. Perplexed (v. 4) diaporeo (Gk.) — To be confused, puzzled, or filled with uncertainty

Say It Correctly

Magdalene. mag-DUH-len

Sepulchre. se-PUL-kur

KJV

LUKE 24:1 Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.
2 And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.
3 And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.
4 And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:
5 And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?
6 He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee,
7 Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.
8 And they remembered his words,
9 And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.
10 It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles.
11 And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.
12 Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.
30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them.
31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.
32 And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?
33 And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them,
34 Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.
35 And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

NLT

LUKE 24:1 But very early on Sunday morning the women went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared.
2 They found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance.
3 So they went in, but they didn't find the body of the Lord Jesus.
4 As they stood there puzzled, two men suddenly appeared to them, clothed in dazzling robes.
5 The women were terrified and bowed with their faces to the ground. Then the men asked, "Why are you looking among the dead for someone who is alive?
6 He isn't here! He is risen from the dead! Remember what he told you back in Galilee,
7 that the Son of Man must be betrayed into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and that he would rise again on the third day."
8 Then they remembered that he had said this.
9 So they rushed back from the tomb to tell his eleven disciples—and everyone else—what had happened.
10 It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and several other women who told the apostles what had happened.
11 But the story sounded like nonsense to the men, so they didn't believe it.
12 However, Peter jumped up and ran to the tomb to look. Stooping, he peered in and saw the empty linen wrappings; then he went home again, wondering what had happened.

30 As they sat down to eat, he took the bread and blessed it. Then he broke it and gave it to them.

31 Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And at that moment he disappeared!

32 They said to each other, “Didn’t our hearts burn within us as he talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?”

33 And within the hour they were on their way back to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven disciples and the others who had gathered with them,

34 who said, “The Lord has really risen! He appeared to Peter.”

35 Then the two from Emmaus told their story of how Jesus had appeared to them as they were walking along the road, and how they had recognized him as he was breaking the bread.

The People, Places, and Times

Passover. The Jewish festival of Passover, related to the Feast of Unleavened Bread, was taking place during the time of Christ’s crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection.

Passover, a time of remembrance and thanksgiving, commemorates God’s miraculous deliverance of the Children of Israel from bondage in Egypt (Exodus 12). The firstborn sons of the people of Israel were “passed over” or spared from death by killing a lamb without blemish and placing its blood on the doorposts of their houses.

Preparation for Burial. Jewish custom at the time of Christ’s death called for a dead body to be prepared for burial within a day. This requirement might have been established because of sanitation problems and fear of religious defilement from touching a decaying body (Numbers 9:10–14). The bodies of the dead were washed and wrapped in a shroud filled with sweet-smelling spices. Relatives often added more spices several days later to mask the increasing odor. Once the body was decomposed, the dried bones were placed in a stone chest called an ossuary.

How do modern-day burial rituals compare and/or contrast to the burial rituals of Jesus’ time?

Background

In the beginning, God made a promise to humanity (Genesis 3:15). Adam’s sin had brought death to humanity and God promised that He would send someone whose death would restore eternal life (Romans 5:12–21). As His plan of redemption started its journey through history, God continually provided glimpses into how the promise would unfold. Zechariah 11:12–13 says that this redeemer would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver; Isaiah 53:5–12 tells us that He would be a sacrifice for sin and crucified with criminals; Psalm 16:10 revealed that He would be resurrected from the dead; and Psalm 68:18 pointed to His ascension into heaven.

Old Testament writers recorded more than 300 promises or prophecies concerning God’s plan to restore a righteous relationship with His creation. As Jesus walked with His disciples, He shared many of these promises with them, but they didn’t fully understand His words. His miracles made them think that Jesus could be the promised Messiah, but witnessing His agonizing death on the Cross caused many of them to lose hope.

On a walk to the city of Emmaus, two of Jesus’ disciples were discussing what they had heard earlier that day—that Jesus had been resurrected from the dead. They asked each other about how this could have happened. Jesus, a compassionate teacher, joined their journey and

discussion. Referencing the Old Testament Scriptures, He explained the events that puzzled them. In the intimacy of a meal, these disciples realized that the person who had been foretold in Scripture was now breaking bread with them. Their hope returned. Jesus was alive. God's promise had been fulfilled.

How can a personal encounter with God create transformation in our lives?

At-A-Glance

1. Breaking Free from Death (Luke 24:1–10)
2. Breaking Through Unbelief (vv. 11–12)
3. Breaking Bread (vv. 30–35)

In Depth

1. Breaking Free from Death (Luke 24:1–10)

The women who went to anoint Jesus' body with fragrant spices probably thought that their greatest challenge would be removing the stone that blocked access to the chamber where His body had been placed. When they arrived, however, the stone had already been removed, and to their bewilderment, Jesus' body was missing.

The only possible answer, they concluded, was that someone had taken His body. But angels who were at Jesus' tomb offered the explanation. Jesus had risen, just as He had promised!

This puzzling news was also good news, and the women, who were the first ones to tell it, ran to inform the disciples. Throughout His life and in His death and resurrection, Jesus irrefutably proves that He is the promised Messiah.

Why do we sometimes assume the worst reason for something happening instead of hoping the best?

2. Breaking Through Unbelief (vv. 11–12)

"Too good to be true" is perhaps what the disciples said when the women reported that Jesus was alive. Some of the disciples had witnessed His trial, others His crucifixion, and they all knew the finality of death.

After a short while, Peter, wanting to investigate for himself, ran to the burial place and entered the tomb. Just as the women had said, the grave clothes were there, but Jesus' body was not. Perplexed, Peter walked away, trying to imagine all the possible scenarios that could have caused the disappearance of Jesus' body. The idea that Jesus had actually risen from the dead was still too amazing to believe. God often invites us to trust His word before we understand the way in which He will fulfill it.

How can we convince others to develop a greater trust in the promises of God?

3. Breaking Bread (vv. 30–35)

The account advances to a different setting a little while later. Two disciples invited a “stranger” into their home for a meal. They had met this traveler on their walk to Emmaus, a city about seven miles from Jerusalem. This stranger wanted to know why they were sad and inquired about the topic of their conversation as He walked with them.

The two disciples were surprised by the question. As far as they were concerned, everyone was talking about the events that had happened in Jerusalem over the past few days. They told the stranger that many people had thought that a man named Jesus was the promised deliverer of Israel, but His crucifixion had dashed their hopes. Then they told the stranger that a recent report was circulating that Jesus was alive. That news caused even more questions.

At that point, the stranger explained the Scriptures to them to show that it had been prophesied that the promised deliverer would suffer many hardships, including death. By now, they arrived at the village and were heading inside the home. But they were so intrigued with the conversation that they wanted to hear more from Him. So naturally, they extended hospitality to this lone traveler by inviting the stranger into their home for a meal.

Once inside, the stranger took the bread, blessed it, and broke it. In that moment, the eyes of the two disciples were opened. They realized that the very One of whom the Scriptures spoke was seated at the table with them. Jesus was the promised deliverer!

Overtaken with this realization, the disciples hurried back to Jerusalem to tell the other disciples that they had seen the risen Christ. Imagine their amazement. When we experience the reality of Christ’s resurrection, we too are to go tell it on the mountains, over the hills and everywhere! Jesus is risen!

How can fellowship with others help us develop fresh insight into the nature and ways of God?

Search the Scriptures

1. The angels asked the women, “Why do you seek the living among the dead?” Where have you expected to find God, but didn’t (Luke 24:5)?
2. Two disciples walking along a road didn’t expect to meet Jesus, but did. Where has Jesus unexpectedly shown up in your life (v. 32)?

Discuss The Meaning

Without Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection, humanity would have remained in bondage to sin (1 Corinthians 15:16–17). People who lack the life-changing knowledge of a risen Savior find themselves either living lives of hopelessness or still waiting for the promised deliverer.

How might we do a better job of teaching from Scripture that Jesus is not a dead historical figure but a living Lord and Savior?

Liberating Lesson

The disappointments of life can sometimes cause believers to lose hope in the promises of God. Nothing short of a miracle will help them find a job when the economy is down, restore a marriage shattered by betrayal or indifference, find healing when the doctors have given up, or pay debts that have kept them in bondage for decades. Desperate prayers seem to have gone unanswered, and God’s presence no longer appears to be in the places where they used to find Him.

The Good News of Easter—Resurrection Sunday—is not fancy clothes or a new hat. It is not just the tradition some people have. The Good News of the Easter account is the truth that Jesus will find us, join us in our journey, and show us that His plan for us is still good, even in the most difficult moments of our lives.

Application For Activation

Write in your journal about the ways the Resurrection has personally changed your life.

Search the Scriptures and meditate on the prophecies concerning the Resurrection.

Make it your goal to explain your hope in the Resurrection to at least one person in the next five days.

Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

More Light on the Text

Luke 24: 1–12, 30–35

1 Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.

The previous chapter, Luke 23, ended at the lowest point of human history. Thanks be to God, Luke’s account, along with the other Gospel records, does not end with those unthinkable words about the Son of God: that He “gave up the ghost.”

Instead, Luke immediately begins to offer hope that prepares us for the glorious resurrection account. First, Luke tells us about a Roman centurion who, unlike his mocking counterparts whom we encountered in the last chapter, saw Jesus’ death with the eyes of

faith. He said, “Certainly this was a righteous man.” Luke also shows us that many who witnessed the Crucifixion were filled with so much horror and regret that they “smote their breasts” at what they had just seen.

Another faithful light, shining in the darkness of Luke 23, is Joseph of Arimathea. He was a member of the council who had condemned Jesus, but he had not agreed to the condemnation. Luke tells us that Joseph asked Pilate for Jesus’ body and sought to bury Him with the honor He deserved. Finally, Luke once again focuses on the faithful women followers of Christ, telling us first that these women had followed Him from Galilee (23:49). And, they followed Joseph to the tomb, prepared spices to lovingly anoint Jesus’ body, and then further demonstrated their obedience to God by resting on the Sabbath. This brings us to the Resurrection account as Luke begins it here.

2 And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.

3 And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

Luke is a master storyteller. He details that the women prepared spices to bring to the tomb, and now he sets up only one possible expectation: They would find a dead body inside when they returned! Only if we truly strive to put ourselves in the account to feel what they felt—instead of yawning because we know how the story ends—will we begin to experience even a shadow of the wonder, fear, confusion, and excitement the women felt at the tomb.

Jesus’ words to them during His life assured that He would die and then rise on the third day. But the rest of this passage shows that they had not understood what He meant. Instead, they were totally confused about what their eyes were seeing. Luke inserts here a little detail with enormous significance.

Rather than simply talking about the “body of Jesus,” he refers to Him as “the Lord Jesus.” Such an appellation probably does not surprise us, but it would have been a very strange way to speak about a man who had just suffered the shameful death of a criminal.

4 And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:

When they couldn’t find the body, the women were “much perplexed” (Gk. diaporeo, dee-ah-pour-EH-oh). This word only appears in the New Testament in Luke’s writings, and it means to be completely at a loss about what to think. The next time that people were this confused was the extraordinary event at Pentecost (Acts 2:12), and later, Peter’s vision of unclean animals to eat (Acts 10:17). The women at the tomb could not fathom the new thing that God was doing on Resurrection morning.

Though the women had been told that this would take place (vv. 6–8), God sent His Word to them in their confusion. It came in this case through divine messengers, probably angels (v. 23), bringing God’s merciful message to His people. The Greek word meaning “behold” (idou, ee-DOO) draws attention to something happening suddenly and often surprisingly.

While these women still had their minds on earthly explanations of Jesus’ disappeared body, the angels represented a shocking and glorious appearance from heaven. Their “shining garments” added a source of fear as the women’s reaction in the next verse makes clear. The message, however, ultimately would not bring fear and trepidation, but overwhelming joy and relief.

5 And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

This terrified reaction to an angelic appearance seems universal in the Bible, as Luke shows by recording the reactions of Zechariah (Luke 1:12) and Mary (v. 29). While the angels' message was ultimately joyous and merciful, their initial question matched their fearsome demeanor in its sternness: "Why seek ye the living among the dead?"

This mild rebuke calls to mind what Jesus had to say to the Sadducees who did not believe in the resurrection (Luke 20:38): "For He is not a God of the dead, but of the living." Indeed, despite the fact that most Jews at the time (Sadducees aside) believed in the resurrection in theory, not even Jesus' most faithful disciples believed He would rise from the cruel death of Calvary.

6 He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee.

Here is the incontrovertible proof of the resurrection—the empty tomb. The angels announced the joyful news with the simple words, "He is not here." They also introduced the problem that has troubled, and continues to trouble, those who deny the truth of the bodily resurrection. Where did the body go? Did the Romans take it? Did the Jewish leaders hide Him?

Neither group would have wanted to have anyone believe that Jesus had risen from the dead, so they simply would have produced the body! Obviously they did not possess it—nor did anyone else. These faithful women were about to be reminded by the angels about a truth that the church continues to proclaim every Easter: "He is not here; He is risen!"

7 Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

The angelic reminder calls to mind two warnings that Jesus gave to His disciples. In Luke 9:22, just after Peter confessed Jesus' true identity, the Savior says: "The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day."

Later, just before the disciples' argument about who was the greatest, Luke again reports Jesus' prediction of His suffering, though this time without the specific resurrection promise: "Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men" (v. 44). From this passage, it is clear enough that none of the disciples had ears of faith, such that Jesus' promise about His great work of death and resurrection could "sink down into their ears." Were we alive at that time, would we have believed?

8 And they remembered his words.

With their memory restored by the angelic presence, the women are now ready to explain the empty tomb in terms of the Gospel message of the Resurrection. The empty tomb, the presence of angels, the angels' words in and of themselves could not have erased the sorrow from their hearts. Only His words could change and cheer!

9 And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.

The scriptural pattern is that those transformed by the Word and work of Christ go forth and tell others of His kindness and glory. These women adhered to that glorious tradition, except that they were... women!

Their first witness was to the rest of the disciples to share the news. Those who received the women's message were all of "the eleven." Eight times Luke referred to the core of the disciples as "the twelve," but here in chapter 24, Luke speaks of the "eleven"; Judas Iscariot, who betrayed the Lord Jesus, had hung himself.

The women spoke to the remaining eleven. Speaking to all the rest is a reference to the many other disciples who were present.

10 It was Mary Magdalene and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles.

Luke now identifies the women who had gone to the tomb and beheld the angelic vision and the absence of Jesus' body from the tomb. We might wonder, why mention their names now and not earlier in chapter 24 or in chapter 23, when they were first spoken of as preparing spices to anoint Jesus' dead body?

The answer probably has to do with the importance of eyewitness testimony in the Bible. The Bible consistently shows that an account of the truth must be established and verified on the testimony of "two or three witnesses" (Deuteronomy 17:6; Matthew 18:16). Luke produces three witnesses here.

Also, it would have been important that these witnesses were trustworthy, because what they were reporting would have been astonishing and unbelievable. To this end, Luke mentions two women whom he commended for their ministry to and support of Jesus—Mary Magdalene and Joanna (Luke 8:1–3). By adding "Mary the mother of James," Luke not only introduces a third witness, but also mentions that she is a relative of one of the apostles. She was trusted because of her relationship to James.

11 And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.

Despite the women's excitement, the apostles refused to believe their testimony. In fact, to the apostles, it seemed as if the women told "idle tales," a phrase that translates the Greek word *leros* (LAY-ros). Simply put, the apostles thought these women were babbling nonsense, or were insane.

Why did they fail to receive the message? Throughout the book of Luke, these men had consistently shown a failure to understand Jesus' mission. They simply could not grasp the picture of a Messiah who would suffer and die for His people. Even the fact that the women claimed angels had confirmed Jesus' message did not change the apostles' minds. They probably assumed the women were hallucinating in their great grief over Jesus' death.

But another factor probably weighed in as well. This culture distrusted female testimony. In the first century, women were not regarded as authoritative or held in any significant value. Perhaps these apostles were deeply tainted by cultural prejudice as they listened to the women's eyewitness testimony. That Luke includes the women's testimony supports that his Gospel is that of the marginalized.

12 Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.

Peter went to verify the story for himself. Like the women, he entered all the way into the tomb. Luke makes it clear that no one who witnessed the empty tomb could have possibly been mistaken about Jesus' absence. Jesus, unmistakably, was not there! Peter's reaction was not quite the same as the women's. He left "wondering in himself at that which was come to pass," which suggests that Peter was puzzled because the linen clothes were neatly laying on the side.

The word for "wondering" (Gk. *thaumazo*, thow-MOD-zo) means not so much doubting as just marveling in amazement. The event is too amazing to sink in right away, so that you might exclaim, "Unbelievable!" The Resurrection is filled with hope, longing, the graciousness of God, and also with hesitation and unbelief from those who followed Christ.

30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them.

While on the Emmaus Road, the disciples fail to recognize Jesus. Even His explanation from the Scripture and verbal rebuke could not help them. For this reason, once they got indoors and were about to eat, Jesus took the responsibility of sharing the bread, usually taken by the host, not the guest.

It's possible that Jesus chose to break bread as a reminder of His previous act of doing so (Luke 22:19), and in this way, He confirmed His identity. It could also be that when Jesus was handing the bread to them, they saw the scars from the nails in His hands.

31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

Their eyes were opened as Jesus broke the bread with them. The truthfulness of the women's or Peter's testimony was now beyond a shadow of doubt. However, they did not enjoy His presence for long because He quickly disappeared from their sight.

This disappearance does not make Jesus' resurrected body immaterial. Had it been so, He could not have eaten with them. Furthermore, the record of Jesus' different appearances and sudden disappearances testifies that it was supernatural and might be a characteristic of the resurrected body.

32 And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?

Now that the disciples have recognized Him, they analyze their journey with a stranger who talked to them. Their hearts burned within them because Jesus had explained and made plain the Scriptures.

Jesus probably referred to the prophecies and symbols of the Old Testament that related to His life and ministry as He taught the two disciples. The breaking of bread was the climax of the lesson to the surprise of His incredulous disciples.

33 And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them.

Whatever their reason for coming back to Emmaus, it became less important in comparison to their encounter with the risen Christ. They could not keep the news to themselves. They returned to Jerusalem to share the Good News with the remaining eleven apostles where they were gathered.

34 Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. 35 And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

The two disciples came back and testified saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon (Peter)." The disciples now recognize Jesus for who He claimed to be: the Christ, the Messiah. In overcoming death, Jesus proves to be the Lord of lords and the King of kings.

The two disciples reported their own encounter with Jesus with particular emphasis on the breaking of bread. That Jesus is risen indeed is an expression of victory and hope then, and now!

Daily Bible Readings

Monday

Jesus Foretells His Suffering and Death
(Mark 8:31–9:1)

Tuesday

Do This in Remembrance of Me
(1 Corinthians 11:23–26)

Wednesday

First Examine Yourselves, Then Eat
(1 Corinthians 11:27–34)

Thursday

Wash One Another's Feet
(John 13:1–5, 12–17)

Friday

Women First Witnesses to Empty Tomb
(Luke 24:22–24)

Saturday

Jesus Meets Disciples on Emmaus Road
(Luke 24:13–21)

Sunday

Jesus Lives Again
(Luke 24:1–12, 30–35)