

## **Easter Sunday: Promise Fulfilled**

*Luke 24:1–12*

### **The Weight of Unfinished Stories**

There are few things more unsettling than a promise left hanging.

A story that doesn't resolve. A hope that doesn't come through. A word that isn't kept. That's where the disciples are living as Luke 24 opens.

Friday crushed them. Saturday silenced them. And Sunday morning... they don't yet know what to expect.

They had heard Jesus speak. They had walked the road with Him. They had received promises. But now? All they have is a tomb.

And from their perspective—**the promise appears buried.**

But here is the truth we gather to celebrate today: **What was promised on the road is proven at the empty tomb.**

#### **I. The Faithful Came Expecting Death (vv. 1–3)**

“On the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb...”

These women are not coming with hope. They are coming with spices.

They are not expecting resurrection. They are expecting decay.

There's a certain kind of walk you take when you know how the story ends.

If you've ever walked into a hospital room knowing the person inside is not going to recover—you don't walk in expecting a miracle. You walk in to say goodbye. You bring words you've been rehearsing. You brace yourself for what you already believe is inevitable.

That's how these women are walking. They are not early risers because they're hopeful—they are early because grief doesn't sleep.

They carry spices like we carry flowers to a grave. This is not anticipation. **This is closure.** And yet—God is about to interrupt what they thought was inevitable.

They are not asking, “*Is He alive?*” They are asking, “*How do we honor the dead?*” And that matters.

Because it shows us something deeply human: Even those who loved Jesus most **struggled to believe His promises in the face of death.**

They had heard Him say:

- “The Son of Man must be delivered... and on the third day rise.”  
But grief has a way of drowning out truth. So, they come anyway.

And when they arrive—**the stone is rolled away.** Not to let Jesus out.  
But to let them in.

And when they step inside—“They did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.”

The first Easter moment is not joy. It’s confusion. Because when God begins to fulfill His promises, it often doesn’t look like we expected.

## **II. Heaven Interprets What Earth Cannot (vv. 4–7)**

“While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel...”

When human understanding fails, God provides divine explanation.

The angels ask a question that still echoes today: “Why do you seek the living among the dead?” That question cuts to the heart.

Have you ever walked into the middle of a situation and completely misread what was happening?

You hear part of a conversation—you see part of the picture—and you draw the wrong conclusion.

Later, when someone explains it, you realize: “I thought I knew what was going on...but I didn’t have the whole story.” That’s the women in the tomb.

Empty tomb = stolen body / Missing Jesus = deeper loss

But heaven steps in and says: “You are interpreting this moment with the wrong framework.” “Why do you seek the living among the dead?”

In other words: “You’re reading a resurrection moment with a funeral mindset.”

You’re looking in the wrong place. You’re operating on the wrong assumption. You’re living as if death still has the final word.

And then comes the declaration: “He is not here, but has risen.”

Not *might rise*. Not *will rise someday*. **Has risen.**

And then—this is key—they remind them: “Remember how He told you...”

The resurrection is not a surprise twist. It is a fulfilled promise. Jesus had already said:

- He would suffer
- He would be crucified
- He would rise on the third day

The problem was not that Jesus failed to speak. The problem was that they failed to remember. Church, this is still true for us:

We don’t need some new revelation. We need to remember what God has already said. Because: **The empty tomb only makes sense in light of the spoken promise.**

### III. The Turning Point: They Remembered (v. 8)

“And they remembered His words.”

That is the hinge of the entire passage. Nothing changed externally in that moment. The tomb is still empty. The world is still uncertain.

But everything changes internally—**because they remember.**

Faith is rekindled not by seeing first, but by recalling what God has said.

This is how resurrection hope begins: Not with sight—but with remembrance.

Think about a time someone made you a promise—and in the waiting, you forgot.

Not because they failed—but because time passed...circumstances changed...and your confidence faded.

Then suddenly, something happens and you realize: “They didn’t forget. They meant what they said.” That realization doesn’t just inform you—**it overwhelms you.**

That’s this moment. “They remembered His words.” And when they remember—the entire meaning of the empty tomb flips.

And suddenly: The empty tomb is no longer confusing

- It becomes confirming

What looked like loss becomes proof. What looked like defeat becomes victory. What looked like the end becomes fulfillment.

#### **IV. The First Witnesses: Faith Meets Resistance (vv. 9–11)**

“Returning from the tomb they told all these things...”

They run to tell the others:

“He’s alive!”

“The tomb is empty!”

“The promise is true!”

And what happens?

“These words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.”

Even now—resurrection meets resistance. Even among the disciples. Because resurrection is not just hard to understand—it is hard to accept.

We all have categories for what we think is possible. And then something falls outside that category, we don’t investigate it—we dismiss it.

“It can’t be true.” “That doesn’t happen.” “There must be another explanation.” That’s the disciples.

Not because they’re foolish—but because resurrection doesn’t fit inside **any natural category.** And that’s the point:

If resurrection were easy to believe, it wouldn’t change everything.

And that is the remarkable experience of The Resurrection. It overturns everything:

- Our assumptions about death
- Our expectations of God
- Our control over outcomes

And so, they dismiss it. But notice this: **Their doubt does not undo the resurrection.** Truth is not dependent on any one person's belief. Christ is alive whether they accept it or not.

## V. Peter Runs Toward the Possibility (v. 12)

“But Peter rose and ran to the tomb...”

There's always at least one who says: “I have to see for myself.”

There are moments in life where you have a choice: Dismiss... or lean in.

Peter doesn't have full faith yet. He doesn't have full understanding.

But he has enough curiosity—enough hope—enough “*what if...*” to run toward the tomb. And sometimes that's where faith begins:

Not with certainty—but with refusal to walk away.

Peter runs. He stoops. He looks in. And what does he find?

“The linen cloths by themselves...”

Evidence of absence. Proof of something extraordinary. And he leaves:

“Marveling at what had happened.” Not fully understanding—but no longer dismissing. This is where many people begin: Not with certainty. But with wonder.

## VI. What the Empty Tomb Proves

If the cross is where the promise was made visible, **the empty tomb is where the promise is verified.**

The resurrection proves:

### 1. Jesus' Word is True

Everything He said—about His death, His resurrection, His authority—is validated.

## **2. Sin is Defeated**

The cross paid for sin. The resurrection proves the payment was accepted.

## **3. Death is Not Final**

The grave is no longer the end of the story.

## **4. New Life is Available**

Resurrection is not just something that happened to Jesus—it is something offered to us.

The empty tomb is where the promise of Jesus is verified, it is more than just “strong proof of some experience.”

The empty tomb is not just proof of something—it removes options. It closes doors. It forces a response.

Because if Jesus is still dead, then Christianity is just a memory.

But if Jesus is alive—then you are not living in a neutral world.

You are living in a world where:

- Death has been invaded
- Sin has been confronted
- And God has acted decisively

The empty tomb won't let you reduce Jesus to a teacher, a symbol, or an inspiration. Because even the most impressive teachers and the most inspiring symbols do not walk out of graves.

## **Conclusion: From Road to Tomb to Life**

Earlier in Luke's Gospel, Jesus walked the road with His disciples, speaking promises they didn't fully understand. Now, at the empty tomb—those promises are no longer words. They are reality.

**What was promised on the road is proven at the empty tomb.**

So the question for us today is not: “Did it happen?”

The question is: **What will you do with it?**

Will you: Stand outside in confusion?

- Dismiss it as an idle tale?
- Walk away marveling but unchanged?

Or will you believe—That Jesus is alive. That sin is defeated. That death is conquered. And that new life is available to you today.

## **VII. The Gospel, Reframed: Not Just Rescue—But Reversal**

Most of us have heard the gospel framed like this: “You sinned. Jesus died. You can be forgiven.” That’s true. But it’s not the whole picture.

The resurrection tells us something even bigger:

**God is not just rescuing people from sin—He is reversing everything sin has broken.**

Let’s name it:

- Sin didn’t just make you guilty—it made you *fractured*
- It didn’t just separate you from God—it distorted who you are
- It didn’t just bring death at the end—it brought decay *right now*

And the resurrection is God’s declaration: “I am not leaving any of that in place.”

### **Renovation vs. Demolition**

Sometimes a house is so damaged that you don’t renovate it—you tear it down and rebuild. The resurrection is not God patching up your old life.

It is God saying: **“That version of you—ruled by sin, bound by death—is not the final version.”** Jesus didn’t come just to make you better. He came to make you **new**.

The resurrection is not just something to admire—it is something to enter.

The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is not just proof of life—

it is an offer of life. But here's the tension: You don't experience resurrection without first admitting something has to die.

- Your control
- Your self-sufficiency
- Your attempt to define your own life

And that's why some people resist Easter. Not because it lacks evidence—but because it demands surrender.

### **Letting Go to Be Lifted**

Imagine someone drowning. A rescuer jumps in to save them—but the drowning person keeps fighting, grabbing, thrashing, resisting.

At some point, the rescuer has to say: "I can save you—but not while you're trying to save yourself." That's the gospel. Jesus doesn't meet you halfway.

He meets you at the bottom—and raises you up.

### **The Empty Tomb as a Line in the Sand**

The women had to decide what the empty tomb meant. The disciples had to decide what the empty tomb meant. Peter had to decide what the empty tomb meant. And now—**you do.**

Because: **What was promised on the road is proven at the empty tomb—and now it must be responded to in your life.**

You don't have to have everything figured out. Peter didn't. You don't have to have perfect faith. The women didn't. But you do have to decide: Will you keep looking for life in places that only produce death?

Or will you come to the empty tomb—remember what He said—and believe that Jesus is alive?

Come and see. Come and remember. Come and believe. Because the story of salvation didn't end in the grave—and that means that your story does not have to end that way either.