

## He Is Risen !

Series: Encountering Jesus (through the Gospel of Luke)

April 12, 2020 – Brad Bailey

Series #66 / Luke 24:1-9

Intro

I want to **extend my own welcome** to this **Easter celebration** to **each of you**. Whether you're engaging **today** as one **who is connected** to the Westside Vineyard...or is **just exploring for the first time**...I'm really **grateful that we can share** in the **most unique Easter Sunday** that I have ever known.

**We're all living in our own versions of this strange and surreal time.**

**Here we are** in our **various homes**...on the **day that we usually gather** with **crowds of worshippers**...a day that **we associate** with **large gatherings**.

**We might come to this day thinking** that **Easter itself** has been **contained** ...or even **cancelled**.

**So I want us all to take this as a moment to step back from all that we are facing... and get a little wider perspective.**

**Here's a truth for us to grasp:**

**Easter cannot be cancelled. 2000 years ago, all the forces of hell tried that. They failed.**

**On Friday...those that were there thought all was lost...that death had reigned. But they were WRONG.**

And let's not miss this...the **first Easter didn't have a crowd**... it didn't involve a crowd.

**It all began** with the **small group of Jesus' disciples**... hiding in a home in fear of being found and suffering the same fate. (I suppose we could say that they were **practicing their own version of "safer at home."**)

**And it didn't stop God** from doing what God was doing. **God was interrupting their whole existence.** What they discovered... changed their lives.

What they discovered was **like a stone dropped into the center** of a body of still water that **sent ripples out** that **go on forever... rippling into our very lives.**

**Or...and I say this not in a trite way...like something that went viral.**

You may recall that **up until a couple months ago**... we spoke of something "going viral" as something positive...about the nature of **something that spreads in exponential ways...through organic means.**

And that is **what Luke describes** in his Gospel account. It was a moment that something happened...that could not be stopped.

From the text that we heard earlier.... It begins...

### **Luke 24:1**

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.

It was "Sunday...the first day of the week that the women set out.

“Very early in the morning” ... at dawn.

It was the **time of day** in which **things are not clear**.

And that **captures where the events of Easter began**... and where it **often where they begin for us**...when things are not clear.

They were **going to honor their master and friend** who had died before the start of the sabbath.

In him **they had experienced God**...but then the **conflict became climatic**... he was **arrested... beaten... mocked**... and finally **crucified**.

**As they followed him**... he **spoke of a kingdom** that **transcended the pretense and powers of this world**.

A kingdom that **captured the longings** that exist deep within every life.

But now...**disappointment was doing what it does**... **closing off the heart from hope**. Many of us may **be carrying the effects of disappointments** ..... in which our sense of the world becomes smaller... the future more closed.

**They still had the heart of compassion** to provide a more proper wrapping of his body.

It's a testimony of their **courage and care**... the **courage and care** of this group of women who set out that morning.

The men stayed back... in hiding. They would soon get the news...and they would become fearless. But for now...it was the courage of the women.

**And they started...with no expectations**....other than to **re-wrap a body** now on it's third day of death.

But as Luke continues....

#### **Luke 24:2-4**

They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, <sup>3</sup> but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. <sup>4</sup> While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them.

**They found the stone rolled away from the tomb...there was no body inside...and they were wondering.**

They are **struck by something unexpected**.

The guards that had put the stone in place and **sealed the tomb** before guarding it...**are gone**... the **stone rolled away**. **Rome wanted the body to stay put** and there is **no power on earth more powerful than the Roman Empire**.

**It didn't fit.**

That is how many of us have found God interrupt our lives.

**Something doesn't fit our closed expectations**. Something doesn't fit the closed world we presumed we lived in.

**We hear** something that **makes us wonder**.

**We see** something that **makes us wonder**.

**And then God speaks into that moment.**

In this case....

**“suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them.”**

**Not the first time we hear of such visitations** from what are referred to as **angelic beings**.  
They **often appear in moments** when heaven is bringing the good news of heaven on earth.

**God speaks into this moment.**

And what we find... is that **while an angelic visitation** may not be the common means... **God does meet many people in moments they were never expecting ...and speaks in various ways when we were never expecting.**

Over and over in the Scripture we hear of how there was a moment when the human heart had a breakthrough... we read **“and suddenly their eyes were opened”**... and suddenly **“their hearts were quickened.”**

**We have moments in which the reality of God breaks through.**

We may not understand it...or grasp it...or even be fully convinced...but it opens up the potential to see beyond the confines of what we had presumed. us.

It is **God interrupting life as we have known it.**

**...What do we do?**

**{Luke 24:5-6 on screen}**

**Luke 24:5**

In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground

**The women bowed down.**

**Don't pass** over that statement **too quickly**. It may be the most instructive statement in this moment.

**Did they bow in fear?** Perhaps. But **appropriate fear**. The kind of fear that restores a grasp of who we are.

**Verse 5 – 6 :**

**the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!**

Why do you look for the living among the dead?

He is not here... he is not in a grave...he has risen.

Those words were **like the stone as it was falling down** upon the **settled pond**... it would soon **land and send ripples** all the way to us.

This is the **news that would go viral.**

It was **not the news** that **some random person** had died and was alive...it was that Jesus was alive...**the One whom God had foretold** would come to save all life had defeated death... the **one who claimed a kingdom** that transcended this world.

It was a declaration that spoke both to the **breadth of all creation**...and to the **depths of human heart**.

Let me **quickly note three things** which it **spoke to those women**... and now speaks to us...

**1. The powers that oppress will not prevail**

The powers that have oppressed life will not prevail

These women **knew a world of oppression.**

These women were **part of the Jewish people... those once enslaved by Egypt and now living under the reign of Roman oppression.**

**As women...they knew how power in this world was used.**

And they had **just experienced the ultimate cruelty...** religion and Rome and the powers that be... had **just crucified** the only **one who had every brought the force of love against the forces of this world.**

And in this moment... they knew that all the powers that had come against him... could not prevail... and ultimately will not.

**This is what was set off in them as they first discovered he had risen.**

**A regime change** had just been declared.

A kingdom in which **love prevails...**will prevail.

**Kindness is not the mark of fools...**it is **the way of that which will prevail.**

**A courage arose** in these lives... **guided by compassion...** that could not be stopped.

And a **second truth** that **took root in these lives is...**

## **2. Death is not our destiny**

**As women and mothers ...**they had a **profound sense** of what it means to be **life giving.**

Death may be accepted as part of this world's current state of physical entropy... where everything is bound within time...but they knew that there is something about this that is **never the ultimate good.**

There is a **fragileness and a futility** that they **may accept...**but **never affirm.**

**And in this moment...** comes the reality that **death is not our destiny.**

This is what **Jesus was so intent on.** As he said...

**"I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying."**

**John 11:25 (NLT)**

He came to provide **a way beyond death ...** because death is ultimately separation from God ... the source of life.

We declared our separation...our independence...he took the consequence upon himself... and if we turn and receive him...we can live in relationship to God.

**These bodies will die...but we will live. [1]**

## **Death is not our destiny**

Just a few weeks ago...many of us...may have been feeling pretty strong... doing fine on planet earth. Our globally connected world may have felt invulnerable. But now we face the profound fragility and vulnerability of life on this fallen planet.

And thirdly...

## **3. Our hearts have a new home**

**These women had experienced** something **in Jesus** that **nothing in this world's current state could ever bring.**

In him they had experienced the love of God...a love that was stronger than all the hate that had ever been known.

**Their affection ran deep.**

And now he had risen...and would soon ascend to heaven.

And now they knew that he would always be with them...now by the presence of his spirit in them...and then in heaven.

And now **their life was rooted with him in the eternal realm.**

As the Apostle Paul described...

**Colossians 3:1-3 (TEV)**

***You have been raised to life with Christ, so set your hearts on the things that are in heaven, where Christ sits on his throne at the right side of God. Keep your minds fixed on things there, not on things here on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.***

Set your hearts on the things that are in heaven, where Christ sits

Their hearts had a new home.

**Our hearts have a new home**

**Our affections can find a new home.** Our hearts can **be rooted in eternity.**

**To have affections...simply refers to what “affects us.”**

**Some of us** may feel our hearts have **become faint**... even **flat-lined** ... nothing has captured our hearts...our affections.

Here is what those first women realized.

**Everything they had ever longed for...all the love...beauty... the goodness** ever imagined... existed...and they could give their hearts to it.

**Some may think** that if **our affections are for heaven** then we **won't care for this world...or those in it.**

Heaven is **not simply the future**... it exists now... our life with Christ is already in heaven.

**And when we look at Christ**...we see the truth that **he lived as one** whose heart had it's **home in the eternal realm of heaven**...yet **he loved those on earth** more than any other.

It's not a matter of loving others on earth less...in fact... the more our hearts draw from the life with Christ in heaven...the more we can love others more truly for who they are. [2]

**We were created to love God.**

When you know the One who is love...**whose loves you without needing you**...who **loves you knowing you more intimately** than anyone ever has....you will **discover a special form of affections** that **belong only to God.**

**This season in which we may have less contact with others**... is an opportunity to develop **the relationship that is with us wherever we are**.... and with whom we will live forever.

**Over the next two weeks...** we are going to complete the Gospel of Luke... and see how the risen Jesus engages his disciples. We'll see how **Jesus was just beginning a new stage of relationship.**

**In three weeks** we are going to begin a **short Sunday series** on developing our personal relationship with God... learning to pray again... with daily ways to find life with God.

***"Learning to Pray... Again" - Starting May 3rd***

Conclusion:

Today... **God wants to interrupt our lives.**

**Just as those women** came that morning... and **felt that death had won...**that their **world was closed...**  
**three words changed everything. He has risen.**

May the power of those words change us.

**Prayer**

Closing:

**A tradition we have often shared...** "He is risen...indeed."

So I wanted to **take advantage of our online experience...** in which we are **not bound by a single room or location.**

So today... I will offer up that declaration...and then let you hear the affirmation from all over.

Beginning with a few of the **pastors in India...** and then to **pastors of Vineyard churches that launched from the Westside Vineyard ...on to some currently in other cities....to those across the Westside.**

**"He has risen !"**

[VIDEO compilation]

[Worship]

[Brad returns for an additional outward word]

Let me add this call of Easter.

One further verse that follows in Luke...where we are told...

**Luke 24:9 (NIV)**

**When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others.**

They went... to tell others.

It's **not a matter of imposing** anything on other people...but **simply telling what we have experienced.**

**Here we see the beginning of the ripples** being send across the water. Only here it would have to be **compared to a tsunami in it's force.** This little group **could not be stopped.**

And that new force that grew...called the church... provided unstoppable...and an **adaptable organism.**

So lets carry the news to others.

**Notes:**

1. As the missionary-scholar Leslie Newbigin succinctly wrote (commenting on Jesus' raising of Lazarus in John 11):  
Resurrection is no longer a mere doctrine: it has a living face and a name. Jesus is himself the presence of the life which is God's gift beyond death. To be bound to Jesus by faith is to share already now the life which is beyond death. (Leslie Newbigin, *The Light Has Come*, Eerdmans, p. 142)

**2. C.S. LEWIS NOTES THOSE WITH HOPE IN ETERNAL LIFE ACTUALLY DO MOST FOR THE PRESENT WORLD.**

Hope...means...a continual looking forward to the eternal world...It does not mean that we are to leave the present world as it is. If you ready history you will find the Christians who did most for the present world where just those who thought most of the next...It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this. Aim at Heaven and you will get earth "thrown in": aim at earth and you will get neither. -"Mere Christianity," p. 118+

The Scriptures speak of being "dual citizens" but of the focus on the eternal heavenly realm that will last. In John 17:14-18, Jesus declares that His followers are not of this world (vs. 14,16)... but twice Jesus specifically says that God's plan is not to take Christians out of this world, but rather, to send them into the world (vs. 15,18).

Phil. 3:20 - "For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ."

II Tim. 2:4 - "No man that warmth entangled himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."