

Resurrection Life Today: From Fearful Worry to Courageous Witness (Luke 24)

Every Easter season, churches and homes come alive with the beauty of lilies. Their pure white petals and sweet fragrance seem to appear everywhere — on altars, in windows, and on tabletops. But have you ever stopped to ask why lilies?

It is not just because they're pretty. Lilies carry deep meaning in Scripture and tradition. In the Old Testament, they crown the two towering pillars of Solomon's temple (1 Kings 7). These intricate lily blossoms were set high above the crowd — thirty-five feet in the air — and crafted with great care for God's eyes alone.

Jesus Himself pointed to them when He said, "*Consider the lilies of the field... even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these*" (Matthew 6:28–29).

As Jesus said, consider that for a moment. One of the greatest kings that Israel ever knew—dressed in robes of gold and purple and surrounded by splendor—could not match the simple lily in the field. Why? Because the lily does not strive. It does not perform. It does not worry about tomorrow. It simply opens its petals — white and pure — resting completely on heaven's gentle dew and the Father's faithful care. It blooms in quiet trust, offering its splendor freely, even if no human eye ever notices. That is pure beauty, beauty that does not chase applause but rests in the One who made it.

At both funerals and Easter celebrations, lilies are chosen because they beautifully declare what God has done. At funerals, their strong fragrance rises above the scent of decay and loss. At Easter, they burst forth in springtime as living reminders that death is not the final word. Easter lilies stand as silent witnesses. After the long, cold winter, they rise and bloom with new life before the sun. They speak of purity after sin's stain and hope after every season of darkness. They declare with quiet beauty: death is defeated. Christ is risen.

Remember that our larger Gospel of Luke series was titled: "The Upside Down Kingdom". We chose that title because Jesus constantly reverses or turns our worldly values upside down. He taught His disciples that the last shall be first, the meek inherit the earth, and we lose our lives to find them.

In the very first message of that series we learned that Luke wrote his gospel account to bring certainty to Theophilus—and to all of us—concerning the things we have been taught (Luke 1:4). And isn't it the certainty of Jesus—His resurrection, His presence, and His faithfulness—that deepens our hope and enables us to walk through the paralyzing uncertainties of life?

Moreover, that same certainty invites us into the greatest reversal of all, namely living for an Audience of One, the risen Christ. When we know He sees us, loves us, and is with us, everything changes.

Today in Luke 24 we watch that reality unfold as fearful worry gives way to courageous witness.

Sermon in a Sentence

The resurrection of Jesus takes us on an ongoing journey from fearful worry to courageous witness, sustained by His living presence, so we can bloom like lilies for God's eyes alone.

To unfold this theme, let's consider three key movements of resurrection life today in Luke 24.

1. From Fearful Worry to Wonder – The Empty Tomb Meets Us

The first movement takes us from fearful worry to freeing wonder as the empty tomb meets us. Luke records in chapter 24 verses 1–6:

“But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, ‘Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.’”

The women came expecting death. They came with spices to anoint a corpse. Their hearts were heavy with grief and

confusion. Then everything changed. Two glowing messengers from God appeared and said,

“Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee,” Luke 24:5b-6

Suddenly worry gave way to wonder. The impossible happened. The One they loved was alive.

This is where resurrection life begins for every one of us. Life is full of worries, grief, fear, disappointment, failure, and uncertainty about the future. But the certainty of the empty tomb meets us right there in the middle of our deepest worry and declares with heavenly authority: “He is not here. He is risen.”

What looks lost, broken, or hopeless in your life today is not the end of the story. The same power that emptied the tomb is still at work.

Again, Jesus Himself taught us how to overcome worry when He said, *“Consider the lilies of the field... even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these”* (Matthew 6:28–29). As Jonny Ardavanis writes in his book, *Consider the Lilies*:

“Remember our definition of anxiety? It’s the inevitable worry, fear, and unrest that rises in our minds when we direct our gaze to the problems, pressures, and uncertainties of life rather than to God Himself... People who behold the faithful character of God come to find that

He, and He alone, is the one who calms the raging seas of our hearts.”

Beloved, when we fix our eyes on the risen Christ instead of our circumstances, worry begins to lose its grip and wonder takes its place. That is the first movement of resurrection life.

2. From Wonder to Worship – Jesus Opens Our Minds and Hearts

Now, the second movement carries us from freeing wonder to heartfelt worship as Jesus opens our minds and hearts.

Listen again to Luke 24:30–32:

“When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, ‘Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?’”

On the road to Emmaus, two disciples are still stuck in disappointment and confusion. Jesus walks with them (though they do not recognize Him at first), opens the Scriptures, and explains how everything pointed to Him. Their hearts begin to burn within them.

Then at the table He takes bread, blesses it, breaks it, and gives it to them, and their eyes are opened. They’re in

awe. Then they run back to Jerusalem with joy (Luke 24:33-34)

Resurrection life moves us from wonder to worship when Jesus opens our minds to His Word and reveals Himself. He reveals Himself not primarily in earth-shaking events, but in the ordinary moments of the breaking of bread, at the table of intimate communion with Him and His people.

Brothers and sisters, the same risen Jesus who walked with those two disciples walks with you today. He wants to turn your wonder into worship by opening the Scriptures to you and making His presence real — not only in dramatic moments, but at the table of your everyday life, when your heart is fully open to Him.

This is not dry intellectual knowledge. This is a heart encounter. When the risen Christ opens our minds to the Scriptures, the Bible stops being ancient history and becomes a living conversation with Him. Our wonder turns into worship because our hearts have tasted and seen that the Lord is good.

How many of you know, we can be amazed by Jesus without adoring Him. Wonder is the rush of amazement — the “Wow” moment — when we see what God has done, like the empty tomb, Jesus rising from the dead, and the Scriptures suddenly making sense.

But worship is deeper. It is a heart captured by the magnificence of God, seized by awe at His greatness, and overwhelmed by His love demonstrated supremely on the cross. There, Jesus gave His all for us — bearing our sin,

guilt, and separation from the Father—so that we might know God’s worthiness and respond by giving our all to Him and finding our deepest satisfaction in Him alone.

We often speak casually of “going to worship” or attending a “worship service,” as if the act of showing up makes it worship. But the Bible challenges this. Worship does not happen simply because we enter a building, sing songs, or hear a sermon. It is deeper.

Abraham shows us the difference so clearly. On the way to Mount Moriah to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac, Abraham told his servants, *“Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship, and come again to you”* (Genesis 22:5). This is the first use of the word “worship” in the Bible. Abraham wasn’t heading to a gathering with music. He was walking into the costliest obedience of his life — surrendering what he treasured most. Yet he called it worship. True worship is a heart posture of total surrender, where we bow before God’s worthiness, offering all that we are because of who He is.

Many of us have moments of wonder when we hear a powerful Easter story or song or hear the empty tomb proclaimed, but wonder alone can fade. Worship is what sustains us. It is the moment we move from “Wow, Jesus is alive” to “Jesus, You are my Lord and my God.” That shift happens as we let Him open our hearts, not just our heads.

When we humbly and prayerfully sit with Him in His Word and at the table of fellowship, the risen Christ turns our amazement into adoration.

3. From Worship to Witness – Jesus Commissions Us with His Power

Lastly, the third movement leads us from heartfelt worship to bold witness as Jesus commissions us with His power. Luke continues in verses 36:

“As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, ‘Peace to you!’ ... (jumping down to verse 45) Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.’”

Jesus appears to the gathered disciples, calms their fears with “Peace be with you,” shows them His hands and feet, eats with them, opens their minds to the Scriptures, and then gives them the mission: “You are witnesses of these things... You will be clothed with power from on high.”

How many of you know, true worship naturally flows into witness. The same Spirit who raised Jesus now fills us and sends us out. We do not go in our own strength. We go

with His living presence, His living Word, and His living power at work in and through us.

Notice that in the Song of Solomon the Bridegroom declares of His beloved, *“As a lily among brambles, so is my love among the young women”* (Song of Solomon 2:2). What a striking picture for the bride of Christ today!

In a world full of sharp thorns — the brambles of sin, hostility, cynicism, and the lingering curse — we are called to stand out as pure, fragrant lilies, spreading the aroma of Christ. The brambles represent the curse: choking growth, wounding with every touch, spreading decay and death. But the lily pictures the removal of that curse. Through Christ’s resurrection, the thorns of sin have been overcome. Where once there was only barrenness and pain, new life now rises — pure, resilient, and beautiful.

Gentle yet resilient, our beauty and witness through Christ stands in stark contrast with everything around us. The thorns may scratch and wound, but they only make the lily’s purity and fragrance more noticeable. Our heavenly Bridegroom sees us this way. He delights in us, guards us, and sends us not to blend in but to bloom boldly for His glory.

This raises a searching question for every one of us: Which do we most resemble right now — the brambles or the lily? Do our words, attitudes, and hidden choices spread the thorns of bitterness, complaint, self-protection? Or do they release the sweet aroma of Christ — purity, forgiveness, and hope?

Let us examine our hearts today. And where we have grown thorny, let us repent. Where we have been choked by the curse, let us seek the fresh grace of the risen Christ.

Because clothed with resurrection power, we are called to proclaim repentance and the forgiveness of sins to all nations, covering the decay of a broken world with the sweet aroma of new life in Christ.

A powerful picture of this kind of worship overflowing into witness comes from the sinking of the Titanic in 1912. Scottish Baptist pastor John Harper was traveling with his young daughter to preach for several months at Moody Church here in Chicago. As the ship went down, Harper made sure his daughter was safe in a lifeboat, then stayed behind to urge others toward Christ. Later, in the icy waters, clinging to debris, he floated near a man and asked, "Are you saved?" When the man said no, Harper pleaded, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved!" Moments later he floated near again and asked once more, "Are you saved yet?" Still hearing no, Harper took off his own life jacket, gave it to the stranger, and said, "You need this more than I do." Then he slipped beneath the waves.

Four years later, at a survivors' reunion in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, that same man Harper pleaded with stood up and shared this story. Then, with tears in his eyes, he declared, "I am John Harper's last convert." Alone in the night with two miles of water beneath him, he had believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and was saved.

Even facing death, Harper's heart was so captured by the risen Christ that his worship poured out as bold witness. He knew that if he went down into the sea, he would rise again — but the man beside him did not yet have that hope. That is resurrection life made visible: a man who had moved fully from worry to wonder to worship, and whose worship became the ultimate, costly witness.

This is resurrection life today. When we fix our eyes on the risen Christ, worry is replaced by wonder. When we humbly surrender our hearts to Him, wonder turns into heartfelt worship. And when worship takes hold, it pours out as bold, burning witness — all sustained by Jesus Himself.

The disciples were not sent out alone. They were sent out empowered. And the same promise is for us today. The Holy Spirit is the resurrection power that turns our worship into effective witness to a watching world.

Conclusion

This journey from fearful worry to courageous witness is not a one-time event. It is an ongoing way of life sustained by the risen Christ.

And this is exactly the freedom my new book *Lily-Work: Crafting a Beautiful Life for God's Eyes Only* is all about.

The lily teaches us so much about this kind of life. Its pure white petals remind us of the cleansing purity Christ offers through His resurrection. Its trumpet shape calls us to herald the good news with boldness. Even its hidden life

cycle — from something that looks completely dead and buried in the ground to glorious bloom — mirrors our own story. We may feel buried in worry, grief, or darkness for a season, yet the same resurrection power that raised Jesus can bring new life out of what looks like death.

Again, in our larger Gospel of Luke series, we called it “The Upside Down Kingdom” because Jesus constantly calls us to live by the great reversals of His kingdom. But the ultimate reversal of values, and the one that makes the greatest difference in our lives, is living for an Audience of One, the risen Christ.

He’s alive. He sees you and knows everything about you — every hidden tear, every quiet surrender, every secret battle — and He loves you completely.

Regarding this ultimate reversal of values, let me illustrate it again with a story you may remember. A world-renowned violinist had just completed a magnificent performance. The audience leaped to its feet in a thunderous standing ovation, applauding wildly. Bouquets rained down. But the master violinist stood with a strange sadness on his face. When asked why, he pointed to one man still seated in the front row and said, “You see that man down there, the only one not standing and applauding? He is my teacher. And as long as he is not satisfied, I am not satisfied.”

That is the ultimate reversal of values. The loudest crowd can roar, but only the Teacher’s approval matters.

When we live for the Audience of One — the living Christ who sees every hidden tear, every quiet surrender, and

every secret battle — we bloom like lilies among brambles, fragrant with Christ, overcoming decay with resurrection hope, and offering our beauty for His eyes alone.

Final Challenge

So today, let the risen Christ take you on this journey.

Lift your eyes from the uncertainties and worries of life to the certainty of His resurrection.

Let Him move you from fearful worry to freeing wonder, from wonder to heartfelt worship, and from worship to bold witness.

Live as a lily in the field — fully known, fully loved, pure and trusting, blooming for His eyes alone.

Jesus was made a curse for us when He died for our sin and He rose from the dead, so that all who trust Him as Savior and Lord can know resurrection life — not just in the future, but as a present reality today.

So let us go forth as lilies among the brambles of this world, spreading the fragrance of Christ in resurrection power as we die to self in daily surrender and live to the glory of His name.

Beloved, may the living Christ open your eyes to wonder, inflame your heart in worship, and clothe you with power from on high for faithful witness. May His resurrection life sustain you, His fragrance fill you, and His smile rest upon you — today, tomorrow, and forevermore.

