



WHERE LIFE & PURPOSE CONNECT

Grow, Pray, Study for the Week of April 5, 2026

Prayer for the Week:

Resurrecting God, the tomb is empty! Christ lives! Easter news is good news! I am glad to be alive and grateful for your love that will never fail me. I am listening intently for your voice. Fill me with incredible joy, everlasting peace, and unquenchable hope this day and always. Amen.

Monday, April 6

Scripture: Luke 24:1-12

Very early in the morning on the first day of the week, the women went to the tomb, bringing the fragrant spices they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they didn't find the body of the Lord Jesus. They didn't know what to make of this. Suddenly, two men were standing beside them in gleaming bright clothing. The women were frightened and bowed their faces toward the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He isn't here, but has been raised. Remember what he told you while he was still in Galilee, that the Human One must be handed over to sinners, be crucified, and on the third day rise again." Then they remembered his words. When they returned from the tomb, they reported all these things to the eleven and all the others. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles. Their words struck the apostles as nonsense, and they didn't believe the women. But Peter ran to the tomb. When he bent over to look inside, he saw only the linen cloth. Then he returned home, wondering what had happened.

Observation

"Early in the morning on the first day of the week" the loyal women went back to where Jesus' body was laid (Luke 23:55). They went to get his dead body ready for lasting burial, but found no body. Two men in gleaming clothes asked, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He isn't here but has been raised." The women shared that, but "their words struck the apostles as nonsense" (true to form for that day). No one expected the Easter event, though Jesus had foretold it (cf. Luke 9:22).

Application

When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, Lazarus' body was wrapped in typical grave

cloths. “Jesus said to them, ‘Untie him’” (John 11:44). As Peter peered into Jesus’ empty tomb, “he saw only the linen cloth.” Grave robbers would never have taken time to unwrap the body and leave the cloth. One sign that Jesus’ resurrection was qualitatively unique was that no one had to untie him. That resurrection changed everything for Peter. What effect has it had on you?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, there was nothing predictable about that stunning, world-changing day when, against all odds, you rose from the dead. Help me take in, and live out, all the ways that day changed everything about how I see the world. Amen.

Tuesday, April 7

Scripture: Luke 24:13-24

On that same day, two disciples were traveling to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking to each other about everything that had happened. While they were discussing these things, Jesus himself arrived and joined them on their journey. They were prevented from recognizing him.

He said to them, “What are you talking about as you walk along?” They stopped, their faces downcast.

The one named Cleopas replied, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who is unaware of the things that have taken place there over the last few days?”

He said to them, “What things?”

They said to him, “The things about Jesus of Nazareth. Because of his powerful deeds and words, he was recognized by God and all the people as a prophet. But our chief priests and our leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him. We had hoped he was the one who would redeem Israel. All these things happened three days ago. But there’s more: Some women from our group have left us stunned. They went to the tomb early this morning and didn’t find his body. They came to us saying that they had even seen a vision of angels who told them he is alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women said. They didn’t see him.”

Observation

Luke shared details about Jesus’ birth that no other gospel included, and his research found this unique story about the resurrection day. Jesus, unrecognized, walked with two disciples discussing recent events. They felt disillusioned (“we had hoped”—verse 21), sad about the crucifixion, and stunned that some women said Jesus’ body was not in the tomb. Note that these two followers gave no sign that they believed the report—just that it puzzled them.

Application

Scholar N. T. Wright noted, “It wasn’t simply...that they couldn’t recognize him. This is a strange feature of the resurrection stories, in Matthew (28:17) and John (20:14; 21:4, 12) as well as here Jesus’ body, emerging from the tomb, had been transformed. It was the same, yet different—a mystery we shall perhaps never unravel until we ourselves share

the same risen life." * Do you long to share the gift of that risen life, even the aspects that for now remain puzzling to us?

Prayer

Loving Lord, when I feel discouraged, disillusioned, or disbelieving, please come and join me on the road. It is at those times that I need your living, loving presence with me. Amen.

* Wright, N. T., Luke for Everyone (New Testament for Everyone) (p. 295). SPCK. Kindle Edition. Puzzled eyes opened

Wednesday, April 8

Scripture: Luke 24:25-32

Then Jesus said to them, "You foolish people! Your dull minds keep you from believing all that the prophets talked about. Wasn't it necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" Then he interpreted for them the things written about himself in all the scriptures, starting with Moses and going through all the Prophets.

When they came to Emmaus, he acted as if he was going on ahead. But they urged him, saying, "Stay with us. It's nearly evening, and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. After he took his seat at the table with them, he took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he disappeared from their sight. They said to each other, "Weren't our hearts on fire when he spoke to us along the road and when he explained the scriptures for us?"

Observation

On the road to Emmaus, Jesus interpreted for his dispirited followers "the things written about himself in all the scriptures, starting with Moses and going through all the Prophets" (verse 27). As he broke and blessed bread for them, they recognized him in a flash of insight and memory. His transformed body disappeared, but they joyfully realized that their hearts were "on fire" as Jesus explained the deep message of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Application

Scholar William Barclay said this story "tells us of the ability of Jesus to make sense of things.... Jesus came and talked with them, and the meaning of life became clear, and the darkness became light.... It is only in Jesus that, even in the bewildering times, we learn what life means." Can you recall any moments when something painful and puzzling suddenly made more sense in the light of Jesus' love and grace?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, I want you, I need you, to be with me at home and everywhere I go. Like those early disciples, I invite you to join me and stay with me at every meal, and every moment. Amen.

* William Barclay, The Gospel of Luke (Revised Edition). Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1975, p. 295. You are witnesses: "It's really me!"

Thursday, April 9

Scripture: Luke 24:33-49

They got up right then and returned to Jerusalem. They found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying to each other, "The Lord really has risen! He appeared to Simon!" Then the two disciples described what had happened along the road and how Jesus was made known to them as he broke the bread.

While they were saying these things, Jesus himself stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" They were terrified and afraid. They thought they were seeing a ghost.

He said to them, "Why are you startled? Why are doubts arising in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet. It's really me! Touch me and see, for a ghost doesn't have flesh and bones like you see I have." As he said this, he showed them his hands and feet. Because they were wondering and questioning in the midst of their happiness, he said to them, "Do you have anything to eat?" They gave him a piece of baked fish. Taking it, he ate it in front of them.

Jesus said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the Law from Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures. He said to them, "This is what is written: the Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and a change of heart and life for the forgiveness of sins must be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. Look, I'm sending to you what my Father promised, but you are to stay in the city until you have been furnished with heavenly power."

Observation

After recognizing Jesus alive, the two disciples rushed to tell the news. As they spoke, Jesus stood in the room. Luke, a first-century physician (Colossians 4:14), noted details showing Jesus was no ghost, but alive in the flesh. "[H]e took it and ate it. Many Jewish sources doubted that angels ate human food." * Jesus clarified the Scriptures to all the disciples and appointed them to share his life-changing forgiveness. "You are witnesses," he said. God would empower them for their mission.

Application

Jesus' summary of his message in verse 47 was "the Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and a change of heart and life for the forgiveness of sins must be preached in his name to all nations." In what ways does believing that Jesus rose from the dead change your heart and life? How does the resurrection make credible for you Jesus' claim to have the divine authority to forgive your sins?

Prayer

King Jesus, I am so grateful that you conquered death and offer me the hope of resurrection! Help me rejoice in that hope and be your witness to share that hope with others. Amen.

* Zondervan, NIV, Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible, eBook (Kindle Locations 234651-234653). Jesus' story, continued

Friday, April 10

Scriptures: Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:1-8

He led them out as far as Bethany, where he lifted his hands and blessed them. As he blessed them, he left them and was taken up to heaven. They worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem overwhelmed with joy. And they were continuously in the temple praising God.

Theophilus, the first scroll I wrote concerned everything Jesus did and taught from the beginning, right up to the day when he was taken up into heaven. Before he was taken up, working in the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus instructed the apostles he had chosen. After his suffering, he showed them that he was alive with many convincing proofs. He appeared to them over a period of forty days, speaking to them about God's kingdom. While they were eating together, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait for what the Father had promised. He said, "This is what you heard from me: John baptized with water, but in only a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

As a result, those who had gathered together asked Jesus, "Lord, are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel now?"

Jesus replied, "It isn't for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has set by his own authority. Rather, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Observation

Luke wrote not one book, but two. Jesus' story went on directly into "volume 2," the book of Acts. Jesus charged his followers to witness to him, but not just with their own courage or cleverness. They were to wait for the Holy Spirit's power. Jesus' "marching orders" were clear, but they must have felt breathtaking and daunting to the small group of disciples (about 120—cf. Acts 1:15). They're still our orders, and still breathtaking: "make disciples of all nations....to the end of the earth."

Application

Surely God could have written Jesus' story in the clouds or spoken it from the skies. But God's divine wisdom made people (us!) the main means to carry out the mission: "You will be my witnesses." How did Jesus' vision make it central for his family of believers to always keep a mission-driven, outward focus for their life together? Whose witness has shaped your life? In what ways can/could you live out Jesus' commission to be one of his witnesses?

Prayer

Jesus, I love your audacity in telling 120 people in a small Roman province to reach "to the end of the earth." I love the Holy Spirit's power that goes with that mission. Fill me with that vision and that Spirit. Amen. Not an end, but a beginning

Saturday, April 11

Scripture: Acts 1:9-14

After Jesus said these things, as they were watching, he was lifted up and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going away and as they were staring toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood next to them. They said, “Galileans, why are you standing here, looking toward heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way that you saw him go into heaven.”

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, which is near Jerusalem—a sabbath day’s journey away. When they entered the city, they went to the upstairs room where they were staying. Peter, John, James, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James, Alphaeus’ son; Simon the zealot; and Judas, James’ son— all were united in their devotion to prayer, along with some women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

Observation

Luke wanted Theophilus (Luke 1:1-4) and all future readers to know that Jesus’ story didn’t end in Jerusalem with the cross, the resurrection, or even the ascension. The risen Jesus told his followers his saving work would keep right on going through the rest of human history. As the risen Lord left earth, two men in white (like the heavenly messengers who announced his resurrection—cf. Luke 24:4) said this was not the end of Jesus’ story—he would return. His followers (including Mary, Jesus’ mother—this is the last passage in the Bible that mentions her) devoted themselves to prayer to prepare for the huge task that now lay before them.

Application

Verse 14 introduces a theme that runs through the whole story of Acts: “The spirit of unity and the practice of prayer are major features of community life (cf. Acts 2:1, 42-44; 3:1; 4:23-32; 6:6; 13:1- 3; 16:13, 16; 20:36-37; 21:5).”^{*} Some of this group had argued at the Last Supper about which of them would be the greatest (cf. Luke 22:24), and they would disagree at times in the years ahead (e.g. Acts 11:1-3, 15:1-2, 7). What united them in Acts 1? What do you imagine Mary, the eleven apostles (sadly, Judas was no longer with them), Jesus’ brothers, and the others prayed about? We need that prayerful, worshipful unity to carry out the mission Jesus gave us as much or more than they did. In what ways can you cultivate an overarching spirit of unity with those who join you in serving God, even when there are differences of opinion or approach?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, I get so busy, “devoted” to so many things. Remind me, at least five times a day, how important it is that I devote myself to prayer. Help me keep my connection with you living and active. Amen.

^{*} F. Scott Spencer, *study note on Acts 1:14 in The CEB Study Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013, p. 218NT