

Holy Week in Biblical Perspective
Resurrection Sabbath

“The Resurrection Day Ministry of Christ—3 Encounters—1 Lesson”

Luke 24

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We will be looking at most of Luke 24 in this study and we'll start by looking at the opening verses. This is God's Word and God's Word is the truth. Luke 24:1–12 says [1] *But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. [2] And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, [3] but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. [4] While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. [5] 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? [6] He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, [7] that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.” [8] And they remembered his words, [9] and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. [10] Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, [11] but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. [12] But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened.*

The grass withers, the flower fade, the Word of God abides forever and by His grace and mercy may it now be preached for you.

Normally of course these services are filled with many people on resurrection Lord's Day, but not so due to the current pandemic hitting our country so we only have ten bringing this service to you. I am believing that many are participating through live stream but Jesus is here. I do know that but interestingly on the first Lord's Day when they went to the tomb they also had about ten show up. There was Mary the mother of James, Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna who were of the Herodian palace and had been followers of Jesus, with some other women. Peter and John run to the tomb. There were a couple of angels there in appearance as men. Jesus is not there for He is risen.

The Gospel writers intrigue me because of how the Holy Spirit led them yet they consciously work their way through their writing about the life and ministry of Jesus from His birth until His ascension with the exception of Mark. There are many things that overlap but each one is absorbed by the leading of the Spirit and their own interest that the Spirit of God is using to emphasize certain things and to arrange it a certain way. Of all the Gospel writers I am most intrigued by Luke then secondly Matthew.

Luke is a doctor, historian, journalist, an author and he does what every other author does which is research. That is one of our problems today with “fake news” because they don't do the research. In fact, Luke has put together an apologetic, a defense of the faith, a proclamation of the Gospel. He is writing to Theophilus and Theophilus is either an actual individual or it could possibly be a name Luke has established because of his desire. Luke wants all of his readers to love God and Theophilus means a lover (phileo) of God (theo). He arranges his entire Gospel very interestingly and he does not stop at Luke 24.

Luke 24 is really focused on the first day of the resurrection. Unlike the other writers, Luke does not get involved in the 40 days of the life and ministry of Jesus after the resurrection. Luke 24 gives us the first day of the resurrection and at the end of the chapter it gives us the Ascension Day which is 40 days later. The days in between are handled by the other writers and we know Jesus makes 15 appearances and teaches many. John says in his Gospel that if he was to record everything Jesus said and did the world couldn't contain the books.

Luke is not only diligent in his content but he is diligent in his design. In Luke 24 he takes the first day of the resurrection and he is very selective about the day. My guess is that while Paul is in prison for two years at Caesarea Philippi that Luke is going around interviewing all these people he talks about in Luke 24. So Luke knows what all was taking place in those 40 days after the resurrection. He doesn't give us everything on the first day of the resurrection due to what we know from the other Gospel writers but he focuses on three events – one in the morning, one in the afternoon and one in the evening. He focuses on three encounters and the risen Christ but there is one lesson. There are many more sub lessons in this chapter as well but there is one unmistakable lesson that these three encounters are communicating which is a central truth to us about our relationship with the risen Christ as Savior and then the implications of His Lordship in our lives.

We have just read the morning encounter in Luke 24:1–12 and we know of four women and some others were there. We also know they have come to anoint the body of Jesus. They are convinced He is dead because why would the spices be brought if they didn't think He was dead? They are coming to anoint His body in the place of the dead – a garden tomb. According to the other Gospel writers, something the women wondered was who would move the stone for them when they got there. We know from the other writers that there was an earthquake, angelic happenings and the stone was moved away. So when the women get there and realize the stone has been moved they run into the tomb and see that it is empty. They don't remember what Jesus had been telling them for the Scripture says they are perplexed and confused.

Mary Magdalene wants to know who took His body. Then two angels appearing as men drive the point home. I have often wondered how to emphasize this question; why do you seek the living among the dead? It would seem if the 'you' is greatly emphasized in this question it implies they should know that they shouldn't seek the living among the dead. They are seeking Jesus among the dead because they're convinced He is dead and they didn't finish putting the spices on His body so they came to finish the job.

No one admires these women more than me for they are the last ones at the cross and the first ones at the tomb. Their strength is amazing. That is whole other discussion of how these big strong men are fleeing and these women show up. I have my own idea of the strength of women that shows up under emotional duress. I admire them for being there but the fact is they don't believe in the resurrection.

There are some interesting things to note about these three encounters given in Luke 24. In the first encounter Jesus is risen but not there and they don't believe. In the second encounter He is risen, He is there but they don't believe and don't recognize Him. In the third encounter, He is risen, He is there, they recognize Him but they are still not believing. The thing that is common in all of these is that no one is believing. Then the angels drive the point home as they say 'why do you seek the living among the dead?' Did He not tell you in Galilee?

You can search the Scriptures on your own for what I'm about to tell you. The one thing Jesus taught that He repeated the most was that He was going to Jerusalem to be delivered up by the Scribes and Pharisees to be crucified and He would rise on the third day. So why would the

women be at the tomb on the third day as the angels asked them? They had heard God's Word. Then it does say they remembered and they make their way to the Disciples to tell them. We don't know how the women recounted what they saw to the Disciples but the Disciples dismissed what they said as an idle tale. They figured the gathering of their data must be wrong and there's no way it could be true.

Luke emphasizes Peter having to go see for himself but we know John went with him and outran Peter. As Bruce Stallings pointed out in an earlier study we know two things here. John was faster than Peter but Peter was bolder than John for Peter went first to look in the tomb. Peter wants to know for he is carrying a lot of shame and guilt after denying Jesus three times. Peter goes to find out. So in this first encounter Jesus has risen, He is not present but the women don't believe and the Disciples dismiss their story, don't believe either.

Now we fast forward to the afternoon encounter on the same day on the Emmaus Road and we find that in Luke 24:13–35 which says [13] *That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, [14] and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. [15] While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. [16] But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. [17] And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. [18] Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" [19] And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, [20] and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. [21] But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. [22] Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, [23] and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. [24] Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." [25] And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe **all that the prophets have spoken!** (Please not Jesus didn't say 'slow of heart to believe the women...') [26] Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" [27] And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.*

[28] So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, [29] but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them. (Jesus now takes over as the host.) [30] When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. [31] And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. [32] 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?" [33] And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, [34] saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" [35] Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

So in this encounter Jesus is risen, He is present but they do not recognize Him. Interestingly, it says their eyes were kept from recognizing Him. They thought He was the Redeemer, it's the third day and it's ringing in their minds what they have heard from the women and their encounter with angels yet they still don't understand it all. We see by Jesus' diagnosis

of them they have a depressed, downcast or slow of heart disposition. Perhaps the reason they don't recognize Him is they aren't looking for Him and their heart is not being informed by the Word of God. It is being informed by others and in experiences but not the Word of God. They are trying to understand all this but they are not sorting through it from the Scriptures. They are sorting through it from their imagination instead of Divine revelation.

Jesus cuts to the quick and says 'foolish ones' and what is His remedy? Jesus doesn't take them to the witness of the women or even the angels appearing or even the experience, although they are reliable and it's true, but He takes them to the Word – beginning with Moses and all the Prophets they are slow to believe the Word of God, their Bible at that time – the Old Testament, which was filled with prophetic words of the Redeemer, His atoning death and His third day resurrection. They had dismissed that and had not believed the Word.

I believed they loved Him and believed in Him, just like the women did but they were not captivated in their relationship with Christ by the Word of God. They were captivated by their imagination through experiences, therefore they were lost in this maze of this report, tales and everything that is taking place at the time. Jesus tells them this is foolish to look at things like this and then opened the Scriptures up to them and they said later 'did not that slow heart burn while He spoke to us from the Scriptures for explained Himself in all the Scriptures.'

The second thing that opened their eyes was when Jesus broke the bread, He gave it to them and there they partake of it together. Their hearts were not only burning but the road to Jerusalem from Emmaus was burning as they immediately left there to travel seven miles to tell the Disciples for they had seen Jesus and couldn't wait to tell them. They had heard He had risen but now they say 'He is risen indeed!' This where we come to a third encounter in Luke 24 in an enclosed room where the Disciples are.

Luke 24:36–49 says [36] *As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you!"* [37] *But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit (an apparition, they're not believing).* [38] *And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?"* [39] *See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."* [40] *And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.* [41] *And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?"* [42] *They gave him a piece of broiled fish, [43] and he took it and ate before them.*

[44] *Then he 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 of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."* [45] *Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, [46] and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, [47] and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. [48] You are witnesses of these things. [49] 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."* Then fast forward to the 40th day which is the ascension and that's what Luke covers in the last few verses of this chapter.

So here in the third encounter they see Jesus, Jesus is there, they recognize Him but they still don't believe. I love how it says they disbelieve with joy but they still don't believe. Jesus does the same thing with His Disciples that He did with the two on the road to Emmaus. He began to explain to them the Scriptures. Jesus didn't go back to those He had just appeared to, the women or the two on the road or even to the accounts they heard from Peter and John. He

knows the issue isn't what they will do with their imagination from the experiences and witnesses of others but it's what they do with Divine revelation. That's the key.

I don't want to be misunderstood here. I believe in the rational explanation of the Gospel. I believe in reasoning with people. I believe these witnesses experiences this historical experience. Yet I want you to understand that no one will ever believe in Jesus through anyone else other than Jesus sending the Spirit of God to use the Word of God to bring them from death unto life. Until you get eyes to see and ears to hear you will always with imagination disbelieve and explain it away.

Here is the life takeaway. Unless the Spirit of God opens the heart by the grace of God, no one can respond to the Word of God for salvation or sanctification (walk with Christ). We are utterly dependent upon Him. I believe these witnesses in Luke 24 were saved but they are still doubting the Word of God. They are putting their imagination and experiences above the Word instead of the Word interpreting experiences. That is what so many are doing today.

I meet Christian after Christian who says to me 'let me tell you who my Jesus is.' I want your Jesus to be the Jesus the Bible reveals. He is not the Jesus of our imagination. He is the Jesus of Divine revelation. We don't believe in the doctrine of the resurrection because of the witnesses but we believe in it because God said it would happen. And it happened – did I not tell you? The witnesses are affirmation not foundation. The rational is affirmation not foundation. It is Divine revelation.

Jesus had to die on the cross for our sins for there was no other way which is why the answer to His prayer request to the Father – if there's another way, let there be another way – was 'no.' When they said to Him 'If You're the Christ come down' they didn't realize because of what the Word of God had revealed, because He was the Christ He must not come down. He is fulfilling the Scripture. He took sour wine, because He was thirsty? No, but I'm sure He was thirsty yet that's not why He took it for it says in the Bible that He took the wine so that the Scripture might be fulfilled (John 19:28). They parted His garments that the Scripture might be fulfilled. He died and was raised because the Scripture revealed that this would happen. That's why there are witnesses and why it makes sense. That's why the truth of God's grace is embrace when the Spirit of God opens our hearts and minds.

I attempt to reason and persuade people but all the while I'm sharing the Gospel with people, I know that unless the Spirit of God opens their hearts and minds they will dismiss what I say not matter how affluent, attractive or persuasive it may sound. I know good and well that I can't talk them into the Kingdom. Only Jesus can bring them. I am going to be persuasive because God works through persuasion but it's the Spirit of God that has to accomplish it. We plant, we water but only God can give the increase.

The women, as much as I admire them and believe they were saved, they didn't believe what the Word of God said about the resurrection. The Disciples disbelieved along with those on the road to Emmaus. They did not believe in what the Scriptures had said. They were still trying to sort through it by witnesses, their own reasons and their own processings. That is why I do not say 'God said it, I believe it, that settles it.' I like to say it this way; God said it and that settles it. I believe it. We can't believe it without the Spirit of God.

Jesus sends them to proclaim Him and there is a clear, unmistakable lesson in these three encounters. You cannot be sent by God to go forth for Christ until Christ with the Word of God and the Spirit of God comes to you to bring you to Himself. That's why we have the preaching of the Word and prayer. That's why we give out Bibles and encourage small group discipleship.

God has to come to you through the Word of God and we pray by the power of the Spirit of God. The dead bones can't live.

What kept those in Luke 24 from recognizing Him? It was their hearts. He is supposed to be with the dead. What changed their hearts? It was the Word of God with the Spirit of God. He opened their hearts which opened their minds which opened their eyes when He opened the Scriptures. We can't open hearts, minds and eyes but we can open the Scriptures and pray for the Spirit of God to move among men and women to make them the people of God. Jesus doesn't appeal to the witnesses or the angels but He appeals to the Word of God. Then He opened it. The angels didn't appeal to their senses but they appealed to what Jesus said, what He Word said.

Christianity makes sense. Christianity has witnesses. Christianity brings experiences but Christianity is true because the Word of God is true and when the Spirit of God gives you a heart for the Word of God then the witnesses make sense, then the experiences flow, because the heart, then the mind and the eyes are opened. Our lives are opened. It's true in conversion so today I am telling you Jesus died and was raised for you according to the Scriptures. There were witnesses to this historical event and it all makes sense, but I'm praying the Spirit of God gives you the sensibilities to come to Christ.

You have sin, guilt, shame and hopelessness and the world will offer you more possessions, power, entertainment, amusement, therapy, and behavior management. Jesus offers you a new heart, a new mind, a new family, a new home, a new record and you're alive because He lives. I invite you to Him today. Perhaps you're already a believer then I'd like to say, do not live your life by imagination, live it by Divine revelation and everyday surrender to the Spirit of God, come under the preaching of the Word, the study of the Word, but always seek the Spirit of God. Because whether it's coming to Christ in salvation or walking with Christ in sanctification, unless He comes to you, you can't follow Him and tell others about Him. He comes to you through the Word of God and the Spirit of God and Luke has brought the lesson home. Now you come home to Him who gives life evermore. He is risen. He is risen indeed! Let's pray.

Prayer:

Let the Spirit of God speak to your heart and do His work in your very soul. Lord, I praise You and thank You that while sin and self would keep us from recognizing You, Your grace is greater than our sin. Your grace comes to us through the Word of God and the Spirit of God so Spirit of God take this the Word of God and come to the hearts and lives of each and every person who is reading this today around the throne of grace. Come and do Your work I pray. Speak in Your Word O Savior and by Your Spirit give us a hunger and thirst for that Word and eyes to see and ears to hear. I pray that each one reading this has come to Christ and those who have come to Christ will follow Christ. We will not build our lives upon the frail, faulty works and thoughts of our imagination but upon the Word of God – Divine revelation – have You not said, and Your Word is unbreakable. Thank You Jesus, Risen Savior, Amen.

Power Point

Christ's Resurrection Lord's Day Ministry
The Morning Encounter
An Empty Tomb

The Afternoon Encounter
An Emmaus Road

The Evening Encounter
An Enclosed Room

LIFE TAKEAWAY

Unless the Spirit of God opens the heart by the Grace of God, no one can respond to the Word of God.