

Easter Sunday
Reactions to Resurrection
Luke 24:1-34

Sermon

Hobart, April 16, 2017

Launceston, April 30th, 2017

Luke 24:1-34

The Resurrection

But very early on Sunday morning* the women went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared.² They found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance.³ So they went in, but they didn't find the body of the Lord Jesus.⁴ As they stood there puzzled, two men suddenly appeared to them, clothed in dazzling robes.

⁵ The women were terrified and bowed with their faces to the ground. Then the men asked, "Why are you looking among the dead for someone who is alive? ⁶ He isn't here! He is risen from the dead! Remember what he told you back in Galilee,⁷ that the Son of Man* must be betrayed into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and that he would rise again on the third day."

⁸ Then they remembered that he had said this.⁹ So they rushed back from the tomb to tell his eleven disciples—and everyone else—what had happened.¹⁰ It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and several other women who told the apostles what had happened.¹¹ But the story sounded like nonsense to the men, so they didn't believe it.¹² However, Peter jumped up and ran to the tomb to look. Stooping, he peered in and saw the empty linen wrappings; then he went home again, wondering what had happened.

The Walk to Emmaus

¹³ That same day two of Jesus' followers were walking to the village of Emmaus, seven miles* from Jerusalem.¹⁴ As they walked along they were talking about everything that had happened.¹⁵ As they talked and discussed these things, Jesus himself suddenly came and began walking with them.¹⁶ But God kept them from recognizing him.

» 1

* **24:1** Greek *But on the first day of the week, very early in the morning.*

* **24:7** "Son of Man" is a title Jesus used for himself.

* **24:13** Greek *60 stadia* [11.1 kilometers].

¹ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Lk 24:1–34). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

INTRODUCTION:

A. TODAY IS THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

1. We, along with millions of others gather together today to celebrate Jesus' resurrection
2. And the hope we all have for today and eternity

B. LUKE 24

1. Today we are going to spend some time in Luke 24
2. We are going to look at the various reactions of the witnesses to the Resurrection
 - a) And see how they reflect our reactions to difficult life events, as well as to God and his ways
3. And as we observe these reactions to the resurrection, we will find the positive and life giving encouragement Jesus and the amazing events of Easter give us

C. PRAYER

BODY:

I. REACTIONS: SURPRISE

A. WE ARE GOING TO FOCUS ON THREE RELATED REACTIONS TO THE RESURRECTION

1. They are all interrelated and overlapping

B. WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE FIRST REACTION

Luke 24:1-12 The Resurrection

But very early on Sunday morning* the women went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. ²They found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance.

³So they went in, but they didn't find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴As they stood there puzzled, two men suddenly appeared to them, clothed in dazzling robes.

C. V4. "PUZZLED"

1. They had previously had Jesus' body taken from the cross, and moved to the tomb
2. They had made initial preparations of the body
3. And now, after the Sabbath, early on Sunday morning they have come with the embalming spices to complete their work
4. So imagine their reaction when first they find the stone has been rolled away
 - a) Then secondly that Jesus body has done

(1) James eaton describes the situation,

Their only question is how to get to him, how to roll back the heavy stone that imprisons him. So they walk out of the city, sure they know what's coming, certain of where Jesus is. Yet the story tells us that when they came to the tomb, the stone was rolled back already. Like Christians in every age, they were worried about the wrong problem. Now they come near; now they

* 24:1 Greek *But on the first day of the week, very early in the morning.*

see the tomb, now they go in. They discover the tomb is empty. Where's Jesus?

The women are perplexed; it's such a odd, simple word isn't it? Suppose you went to a funeral home to say goodbye to a good friend, signed the book, stood in the greeting line, walked finally to the casket, it's ornate top raised, looked in and saw—nothing. Would you be startled? Would you wonder what happened? Would you gasp? The women are at a tomb, knowing Jesus is there—but he isn't. I wonder what they said, I wonder at the looks between them as they stood in the musky, damp smelling tomb, holding a basket of spices that are now useless, ready to do a job that will never be done. Where's Jesus? Not here: not where they expected, knew he would be.²

(a)

D. SO THE FIRST REACTION IS SURPRISE

1. This is a shock, completely outside their expectations!
2. No wonder Luke describes them as standing there puzzled!
3. Greek work in Luke is *aporeo*

to be in perplexity, with the implication of serious anxiety—'to be at a loss, to be uncertain, to be anxious, to be in doubt, consternation.'³

E. WE HAVE ALL LIVED LONG LIVES

1. We have certain routines, habits that we are used to and comfortable with
2. We have deeply ingrained expectations of ourselves, others, and life and the world around us
3. We have our views about God, Jesus, the Bible, the church and other Christians

F. OFTEN THINGS HAPPEN IN LIFE THAT ARE COMPLETELY UNEXPECTED

² James Eaton, Sermon for the First Congregational Church of Albany, NY, , Easter Sunday/C • March 27, 2016, PRCL

³ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). [*Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains*](#) (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 380). New York: United Bible Societies.

1. Most of us find it hard when things happen that didn't see coming, or couldn't have contemplated beforehand

a) When unexpected things happen, like accidents, or when we lose something

b) Or when people do things we didn't expect

2. This can cause stress, and set us on edge

a) As with the women at the tomb

G. THEY, AND THE OTHER DISCIPLES AND SUPPORTERS OF JESUS HAD ALL SORTS OF EXPECTATIONS OF HIM AND HIS MESSIAHSHIP

1. They are in shock, totally surprised and perplexed over his trial and crucifixion

a) Things just haven't gone as they expected

b) They are in a state of doubt and uncertainty

2. And when yet another unexpected event confronts them, we find them standing there, surprised, shocked, stunned and deeply perplexed and anxious

H. DEALING WITH SURPRISE, SHOCK AND ANXIETY

1. As we are going to see with the two other reactions, Jesus resurrection itself helped them, and helps us with life's unexpected event, shocks and surprises

2. It helps us get a new perspective on life, by seeing them through God's eyes

a) Gaining a resurrection perspective

3. As Jesus taught in the parables, his is an upside down, unexpected Kingdom that is full of surprises and unexpected events

4. God wants us to trust in his surprising ways, to expect the unexpected, and not to be in doubt or perplexed

5. God's way of saving mankind was through the death of his Son, rather than through the expected all conquering Messiah who they believed would destroy all their enemies by force

I. THE RESURRECTION IS COMPLETELY OUTSIDE HUMAN EXPERIENCE AND EXPECTATION

1. At this stage all they have experienced is a dead Messiah on a cross and then in the tomb
2. Now all they see is an empty tomb
3. But unbeknown to them, all that is about to change
 - a) They just need to wait, and trust, and have eyes to see and accept what God has been up to all along
 - b) That he has never abandoned or forsaken them, or Jesus
 - c) That it is all part of who God is, and his eternal plan for the good of us all

J. SO THE BOTTOM LINE IS FAITH

1. Trusting God to be faithful, and to work things out his way, which is often not the way we are comfortable with
 2. In times of surprise, shock, puzzlement, anxiety and grief
 - a) When someone dies, or some other loss, or great perplexity or stressful situation
 - b) When we are in doubt, and can't see how things will work out
 3. It can help to remember the experience of these dutiful, faithful women
 4. And how God was always there, and was about to show them something even more surprising that would truly turn their lives and their understanding on its head
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II. FEAR

A. WHAT IS THE NEXT REACTION WE SEE AT THE TOMB?

Luke 24:1-5

But very early on Sunday morning* the women went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. ²They found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance.

³So they went in, but they didn't find the body of the Lord Jesus.

⁴As they stood there puzzled, two men suddenly appeared to them, clothed in dazzling robes.

⁵The women were terrified and bowed with their faces to the ground.

B. FEAR!

1. Greek, *Emphobos*.

pertaining to being extremely afraid—'very frightened, terrified, very much afraid.'⁴

C. MATTHEW DESCRIBES THE SITUATION SOME MORE

Matthew 28:1-7 The Resurrection

Early on Sunday morning,* as the new day was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went out to visit the tomb.

²Suddenly there was a great earthquake! For an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled aside the stone, and sat on it. ³His face shone like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow. ⁴The guards shook with fear when they saw him, and they fell into a dead faint.

1. The angel quickly seeks to allay this fear

⁵Then the angel spoke to the women. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified.

* **24:1** Greek *But on the first day of the week, very early in the morning.*

⁴ Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). [*Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains*](#) (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1, p. 315). New York: United Bible Societies.

* **28:1** Greek *After the Sabbath, on the first day of the week.*

2. God knows our emotions, our fears

a) He understands our mortality, because as Jesus he has experienced our bewilderments, our losses and our fears

b) Particularly at the cross

3. So the angel shows understanding of their situation and goes on to reveal the true reality that they couldn't see

a) He shows them the unexpected truth about what God was doing to solve their problems and ours, no matter how perplexed or fearful we may be

⁶ He isn't here! He is risen from the dead, just as he said would happen.

4. If they had listened, and truly trusted and believed they would have known and expected what was really going on

a) But we don't listen, and even more often fail to understand what God says and how he works

5. The resurrection that we celebrate each Easter, and every Sunday, has huge ramifications for every day and moment

a) It is the greatest surprise and the most life changing and transforming act and event ever

6b Come, see where his body was lying. ⁷ And now, go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and he is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there. Remember what I have told you." ⁵

6. In all of our lives ups and downs, this is so important

Remember what I have told you!

7. They hadn't remembered what Jesus had repeatedly told them. They were stuck in their old, ingrained expectations and way of thinking

⁵ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Mt 28:1-7). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

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- a) Now they needed to move forward with new expectations based on what God had revealed to them

Luke 24:5

⁵ The women were terrified and bowed with their faces to the ground.

Then the men asked, “Why are you looking among the dead for someone who is alive? ⁶ He isn’t here! He is risen from the dead! Remember what he told you back in Galilee, ⁷ that the Son of Man* must be betrayed into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and that he would rise again on the third day.”

D. WE TO CAN MOVE FORWARD WITH NEW EXPECTATIONS BECAUSE OF JESUS’ DEATH AND RESURRECTION

1. Instead of looking down among the dead, we can look up to our living resurrected Saviour
2. We can share in his new life that lifts us above and beyond all those things that make us afraid, particularly sin and death

III. DISBELIEF

A. THE NEXT THING WE OBSERVE IS DISBELIEF

1. As we just read, they haven’t remembered or believed what Jesus had told them before

Luke 24:8-12

⁸ Then they remembered that he had said this. ⁹ So they rushed back from the tomb to tell his eleven disciples—and everyone else—what had happened.

¹⁰ It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and several other women who told the apostles what had happened. ¹¹ But the story sounded like nonsense to the men, so they didn’t believe it. ¹² However, Peter jumped up and ran to the tomb to look. Stooping, he peered in and saw the empty linen wrappings; then he went home again, wondering what had happened.

* 24:7 “Son of Man” is a title Jesus used for himself.

2. Philip Yancey, in his book, *Rumors of Another World: What on Earth Are We Missing?*, talks about something he learned about Tierra del Fuego, ("land of fire") at the very southern tip of South America, which is part of Argentina.

a) He writes about how it was,

discovered by Magellan's sailors in 1528. They noticed fires burning on the shore. The natives tending the fires however, paid no attention to the great ships as they sailed through the straits. Later they explained that they had considered the ships an apparition, so different were they from anything seen before. They lacked the experience, even the imagination, to decode evidence passing right before their eyes." ⁶

3. In his book Yancey is asking us to think about what we are missing in the true reality of God and his kingdom and what is truly going on around us.

a) We see this plainly at the time of Jesus' resurrection

4. The women and the disciples are surprised and bewildered, doubting and fearful because they haven't listened, or believed and trusted

a) They neglected the information Jesus had given them which would have allowed them to see and understand what was passing right before their eyes

b) When the very one she is grieving comes up to Mary, she doesn't really see him

c) Later when the disciples are on the road to Emmaus and bewildered and upset, they fail to recognize Jesus as he walks with them

d) When the fearful disciples who have hidden in an upper room are told that Jesus is alive and has appeared to Mary and Peter, they disbelieve

5. John Sumwalt describes the situation with Mary,

⁶ Philip Yancey, *Rumors of Another World: What on Earth Are We Missing?*,

Mary thought Jesus was the gardener. She implores him, "Sir, if you have taken him away tell me where you have laid him...". She sees him but she doesn't see him.

What Mary could not see was her closest friend standing right in front of her. Her mind could not comprehend that Jesus was alive when she knew he was dead. She had seen him die. She had watched them take his body down from the cross. Jesus had told her and the others that he would rise again. It didn't sink in. Who could believe it? It wasn't possible.

Mary's mind could not register that Jesus was alive until she heard him speak her name: "Mary."

What would it be like to hear your name spoken by someone you knew to be dead? Through the fog of sorrow and the drowning darkness of death, Mary heard her beloved teacher speak her name.

What can we not see? What is it that God is doing right in front of us that we cannot or will not see, that our cultural assumptions, and our basic understanding of reality in this age of science, does not allow us to see?

Fredrick Buechner suggests that "We have seen more than we let on, even to ourselves. Through some moment of beauty or pain, some subtle turning of our lives, we catch glimmers at least of what saints are blinded by; only then, unlike the saints we go on as if nothing has happened..."⁷

B. THE RESURRECTION GIVES US INSIGHT INTO THE GREATER REALITIES OF GOD

1. Through Jesus' life, death, resurrection and ascension and the presence of the Spirit we are given new eyes, new minds, new life
2. God gives us faith and sight to know him better, and to be able to trust in him, and walk with him and appreciate more deeply who he is, and the new life we have been given

⁷ John Sumwalt is a retired pastor and the author of "Shining Moments: Visions of the Holy in Ordinary Lives." He is collecting personal accounts of angels, visions and near death experiences for another book. johnsumwalt@gmail.com, 608-986-5103.

C. THE WALK TO EMMAUS

1. Luke 24:13-34

¹³ That same day two of Jesus' followers were walking to the village of Emmaus, seven miles* from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ As they walked along they were talking about everything that had happened. ¹⁵ As they talked and discussed these things, Jesus himself suddenly came and began walking with them. ¹⁶ But God kept them from recognizing him.

¹⁷ He asked them, "What are you discussing so intently as you walk along?"

They stopped short, sadness written across their faces. ¹⁸ Then one of them, Cleopas, replied, "You must be the only person in Jerusalem who hasn't heard about all the things that have happened there the last few days."

¹⁹ "What things?" Jesus asked.

"The things that happened to Jesus, the man from Nazareth," they said. "He was a prophet who did powerful miracles, and he was a mighty teacher in the eyes of God and all the people. ²⁰ But our leading priests and other religious leaders handed him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified him. ²¹ We had hoped he was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel. This all happened three days ago.

²² "Then some women from our group of his followers were at his tomb early this morning, and they came back with an amazing report. ²³ They said his body was missing, and they had seen angels who told them Jesus is alive! ²⁴ Some of our men ran out to see, and sure enough, his body was gone, just as the women had said." ⁸

²⁵ Then Jesus said to them, "You foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures. ²⁶ Wasn't it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his glory?" ²⁷ Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

²⁸ By this time they were nearing Emmaus and the end of their journey. Jesus acted as if he were going on, ²⁹ but they begged him, "Stay the night with us, since it is getting late." So he went home with them. ³⁰ As they sat down to eat,* he took the

* **24:13** Greek *60 stadia* [11.1 kilometers].

⁸ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Lk 24:13–24). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

* **24:30** Or *As they reclined*.

bread and blessed it. Then he broke it and gave it to them. ³¹ Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And at that moment he disappeared!

³² They said to each other, "Didn't our hearts burn within us as he talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?" ³³ And within the hour they were on their way back to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven disciples and the others who had gathered with them, ³⁴ who said, "The Lord has really risen! He appeared to Peter.*" ⁹

D. FINALLY THEY SAW, THEY BELIEVED

1. And from then on they lived their lives based on the reality of the resurrection

2. No longer bewildered, afraid or disbelieving

a) But some of the other disciples had yet to go through the same transformation

Appearance to the Disciples

³⁵ Then the two from Emmaus told their story of how Jesus had appeared to them as they were walking along the road, and how they had recognized him as he was breaking the bread. ³⁶ And just as they were telling about it, Jesus himself was suddenly standing there among them. "Peace be with you," he said. ³⁷ But the whole group was startled and frightened, thinking they were seeing a ghost!

³⁸ "Why are you frightened?" he asked. "Why are your hearts filled with doubt? ³⁹ Look at my hands. Look at my feet. You can see that it's really me. Touch me and make sure that I am not a ghost, because ghosts don't have bodies, as you see that I do."

⁴⁰ As he spoke, he showed them his hands and his feet.

⁴¹ Still they stood there in disbelief, filled with joy and wonder. Then he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" ⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³ and he ate it as they watched.

⁴⁴ Then he said, "When I was with you before, I told you that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and in the Psalms must be fulfilled." ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ And he said, "Yes, it was written long ago that the Messiah would suffer and die and rise from the dead on the third day. ⁴⁷ It was also written that this message would be proclaimed in the authority

* **24:34** Greek *Simon*.

⁹ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Lk 24:25–34). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

of his name to all the nations,* beginning in Jerusalem: 'There is forgiveness of sins for all who repent.' ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of all these things.

⁴⁹ "And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as my Father promised. But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven." ¹⁰

IV. SUMMARY

A. SO WE SEE THE WOMEN, PETER, THE TWO DISCIPLES ON THEIR WAY TO EMMAUS, AND THE OTHER DISCIPLES GO THROUGH THESE HUMAN REACTIONS

1. Of surprise and perplexity, fear and disbelief
2. But Jesus' resurrection, his presence and his words resurrect their hearts and lives
3. He helps change their expectations, by teaching them the amazing ways of God, the way of resurrection and new life through Jesus and the Spirit of God that was coming soon to transform and lead them forward in faith

B. SO, WHENEVER WE ARE

1. Surprised or perplexed, feeling bewildered and anxious
2. Whenever we are afraid, or in grief
3. Whenever we are in doubt and lacking faith
 - a) Let's remember the wonderful reassurances of the Scriptures, and of the Resurrection, that Jesus is among the living, he is with us, always
 - b) He is risen!

C. PRAYER

* 24:47 Or *all peoples*.

¹⁰ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Lk 24:35–49). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.