



“Jesus Is Alive”

Luke 24:1-12

April 4th, 2021

We are here to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ together, and to rejoice in the life that we have in Him by God’s grace through faith. It is good to be together. Welcome to each and every person here and welcome to all of you who are joining us online. We have prayed that the Lord would speak into each heart this morning.

Now we are going to dig into the Gospel of Luke and Chapter 24. I am very excited to open this chapter of Scripture with you this morning. Right now we come to the final and culminating chapter of a book that we have been studying for several years here at Bethel Grace.

This is just an awesome moment as the author of this book, a man by the name of Luke carried by the Spirit, brings us to the tomb of Jesus Christ three days after He had died on the cross. As we enter into this final chapter of Luke’s Gospel, I want to begin by reminding everybody of how Luke opened up in the first chapter of this book.

The opening paragraph of the Gospel of Luke is the doorway by which we enter into this book. There Luke stated his purpose. He let us know why he was writing all this and he wrote so that we could know the facts about the life and death and even resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Here is how Luke opened the book. Luke Chapter 1 and Verses 1-4:

¹Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, ²just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, ³it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.

Luke was connected to this man, Theophilus, and he wrote this book that Theophilus might have certainty and, by the way, that anybody else reading this book might have certainty as well about the things spoken about Jesus from those who were eyewitnesses of His life and ministry.

Understand, we find out in the book of Colossians that a good friend of Luke spoke about him saying, Luke, the beloved physician, greets you. Luke was a physician of the First Century world. He was a medical doctor, and he knew a thing or two about research.

So here in this wonderful book in the Bible, we have the fruit of Luke’s investigation of the things pertaining to Christ after tracking down eyewitnesses, and after speaking to disciples and apostles. He recorded it all for us because he wanted us to have the story straight and to have certainty about the things that had been passed on about Jesus.

So Luke passed this on to Theophilus. We don't know much about who this Theophilus was. Evidently he was a prominent man and he was wondering what the actual story about Jesus was that they were hearing so much about in the Roman Empire.

Had the things in that three-year ministry of Christ taken place in our time—the claim of resurrection from the dead with people having seen Him after being brought back from actual death—it would be headline news everywhere.

It would be all your Facebook and Twitter feeds. People would be talking about it. And we have this man, Theophilus, who was wondering what the actual story was. He might have asked, Is this real news or fake news? What's going on?

This scholarly man Luke dug in and spoke to the people closest to Christ, and so recorded this book. He put it on paper so that we might know the facts. With those things being the foundation of why Luke wrote, now we come to the great exclamation point of the life of Christ, the resurrection.

As we dig into what is here, Luke takes us to the tomb of Jesus on the third morning afterward the crucifixion. The story opens with a handful of women who approached the tomb early that Sunday morning. These women were there when Jesus was crucified. They were watching and they saw Him die. They also carefully observed when the body of Jesus was taken down and when it was placed in a tomb.

Because the Sabbath Day was approaching as Jesus died, things had to be rushed. So the women wanted to go back and honor the memory of their Lord by properly anointing His body for burial. They approached the tomb, but they were not approaching the tomb expecting a Living Savior. When they saw that the tomb was opened and began looking around, it was not the place of triumph and joy and celebration that we are experiencing here today. It was a place of bewilderment and perplexity and troublesome wonder.

But in the same way that the Lord sent angels from Heaven to proclaim the birth of the Messiah, angels were dispatched from Heaven to proclaim the resurrection. We have the record of this when we get into Luke Chapter 24 and Verses 1 through 12. Let's take in what is recorded here for our good.

¹But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. ²And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. ⁵And 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? ⁶He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, ⁷that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise?" ⁸And they remembered his words, ⁹and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰Now 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, ¹¹but these words seemed to them an idle take, and they did not believe them. ¹²But 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.

Here we have the story passed on to us of the empty grave of Jesus. As we have read, it began with a group of women going to the tomb and expecting to find His body that they might anoint it. However, they did not find the body! They found the tomb empty and the body gone.

When the women went in and looked around, they did not declare to one another that He has risen. Instead, they looked at each other and said, What is happening? Where is He? Did they take the body? They certainly were not expecting a resurrection. They were perplexed!

Notice in Verse 4 the word “perplexed.” The Greek word used carries the imagery of losing one’s way. It’s the Greek word *aporeo*. *Poros* is the word for path. *A* is a prefix of negation. *Aporea* is losing your path, or your mind. Getting lost along the way. These women were lost, puzzled, bewildered. They didn’t know what to think or what to do.

This becomes a figure of speech for having your bell rung by somebody. I wonder if anybody can relate? I wonder if anybody has ever had circumstances in life that unfold and say, What in the world is going on? I didn’t see this coming.

So many circumstances in life can bring us to that. Those women were experiencing that, and God in His grace has a story to tell. God sent His truth to those women. God sends His truth through this record to all of us. He sent His truths that time through angelic messengers.

The women were perplexed. They did not know what was going on. Then Luke used a great biblical word. He said *behold*. That word *behold* in Scripture is used repeatedly to tip us off to the fact that there is something awesome and supernatural that is taking place.

The angelic beings seemingly appeared from nowhere but they did not appear from nowhere, they appeared from somewhere. The somewhere that they appeared from was evident in how they looked. They were in dazzling apparel. This is not talking about their sense of fashion. This is tipping us off to where they came from. That is a word of luminosity. Those beings had been in the glorious presence of Almighty God and His radiance was still reflected off of their clothing.

They came with a message. They came to orient the women and to tell them of something awesome that took place. I love how we have this twelve verse portion of Scripture and that angelic message is right smack dab in the middle of the twelve verses that we just read. I think there is something poetic about that because this is such a central message that those angels have brought to us.

I think that God wants to speak to us through the message that was given here, and that rings forth into our day as well. So we are going to focus in on what the angels said; the truth that they brought. We will say that they brought a three-part message to keep us on track. When we get all bewildered and confused, let us recenter ourselves and fix our eyes on Jesus the Risen Lord.

There is a three-part message here that begins with a strong admonition. Then it continues with a glorious proclamation, and the message from the angels concludes with a crucial, crucial instruction. First we see:

1. A Strong Admonition

This was an admonition. It was a strong admonition. I don't think it was an upbraiding or a rebuke. I think those angels had some joy in their hearts and on their faces bringing this. But still it was a reproof. It was a correction. What did they say? Verse 5:

⁵...“Why do you seek the living among the dead?”

What are you doing!?! What are you doing looking for a dead body? You shouldn't be looking for a dead body right now! Why are you seeking the living among the dead?

The angels were being direct with these ladies. They did not come along side of them, saying, I know. I totally get what you are going through right now. It is so crazy. No! They were saying, What are you doing here? Why are you looking for a dead body? You remember what He said! I think this was a strong and joyous admonition that was given to those women by angelic beings.

I got to thinking about this. Brothers and sisters, angels exist. Scripture says that angels are ministering spirits that help those who will inherit salvation. There are angels. Mostly they are unseen, but there are angels all around. How often do you think about the fact that angels are observing your life?

Angels are an unseen presence. I wonder if there are times when angels would not mind if granted permission by God to manifest themselves and say, What are you doing? Why are you seeking the living among the dead? Why are you trying to find life and fulfillment and happiness in things that ultimately bring death, or in things that are just fluffy like cotton candy?

As we go and do things that we know are damaging, I wonder if angels might say, Why are you looking at what is on that screen? That is not helping you. Why are you going to that place on Friday nights? That is not giving you life. Why are you reading that? Why are you indiscriminately taking that in? Is that giving you life?

You catch my drift here? Why are you doing what you are doing? Jesus has come to bring us into the things that give life. Not only has the Risen Lord Jesus Christ come to bring His people everlasting life, but newness of life as well.

Christ has come to bring you into the things that minister and nourish your soul. He has come to give life to you while you are living in that mortal body that you have right now that gets worn down. Listen to how Paul put it in Romans 8 and Verses 10 and 11. Here is another aspect of resurrection truth.

¹⁰But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

The good Lord, the Living Lord, desires to fill your heart and life with things that heal. We just go astray. Even followers of Jesus Christ, we go drifting off into things that are no good for us.

Christ has come, the Good Shepherd of His flock, to bring us into life through the study of Living Scripture, through vulnerable and honest fellowship with people that we love and who love us, through reducing ourselves by serving. The Spirit leads us into these things to give us life.

I am a pastor. My life is emersed in the things of the Lord, yet there is still something within me that wants to walk away from the things that give me life, and to walk into the things that deflate me and ultimately bring death. We need God's grace!

If I as a pastor can say that I struggle with sin and temptation every day, I am heartened because Paul the Apostle was being comparably vulnerable in Romans Chapter 7, saying, I don't know why I do the things I do. The things I hate, I do. The things I want to do, I don't do.

So we still have this pull towards sin and Jesus the Risen Lord gives the gift of His Spirit to make us alive in the things that bring us life. Even in the experience of those things, we need God and His grace to activate us.

I wonder if anybody on this Resurrection Sunday, you know that you have been pulled into things and are doing the things that are not good. If so, you just need to say, Lord, humbly I come, because I need You to redirect me from those things and fill me with Your Spirit and give me the fullness of life and mission and growth that You intend for me.

Speaking to the followers of Christ right now, you need the grace of God to active inside of you to overcome sin, because it never ends in this life. I think Resurrection Sunday is a good day for us. I appreciated how Pastor Chris said, We need for Him to orient our lives to Christ. We come before Him and say, Lord, I need You to activate me.

And here it is in this text. God gives you the Spirit for this very purpose. So we pray, Lord, get me out of the way and let the Holy Spirit reign. I pray that the Spirit of God is speaking into your hearts, giving you a desire that is alien to you. Him producing it in you—a desire to walk in the fullness of the ways of the Lord.

When you do, it will not be the end of all your problems. He fills these mortal and fallen bodies. You are still going to have hard things in this world. You are still going to have things like toothaches, root canals, colonoscopies, cancer diagnoses, student loans and mortgages that feel overwhelming.

But you face these things with the life of God inside of you, lifting you, helping you, and even raising life to a higher plane as He lives through you. Your part is to say, Lord, I come into Your light asking You to work Your grace in me.

The angels came with an admonition—why are you seeking the living among the dead. I wonder if there might be a timely word for those of us who know the struggle, where we still want to have so much involvement in things that do not bring life, but death. God in His grace desires to help us to overcome that.

We continue and get back to the tomb. What else happened there? There was that admonition that came. After the admonition came, there was a:

2. A Glorious Proclamation

⁵...“**Why do you seek the living among the dead? ⁶He is not here, but has risen.**

What a statement of victory that is. He is not in a tomb. He is alive. He is risen from the grave! That is an epic statement of the victory of the Son of God over death.

On Friday, Christ died. His heart stopped beating. Blood stopped going through His veins. His body stiffened in death. He died. On Saturday He was dead. On Sunday He rose from death. He came to life bodily. He was resurrected in complete human newness as the God-man.

He is still God, but is now in a resurrection body. He has overcome death. He was raised from the grave in a tangible body that is described in Scripture with the words powerful, glorious, imperishable, and spiritual. Spiritual not meaning that it is intangible, but spiritual meaning that it is absolutely filled and saturated with the life of the Spirit of God.

Jesus was raised up in a new body to everlasting life. He was raised up with an authority that is absolutely unique. Christ and Christ alone is the One who has authority over life and death, and Christ has the ability to bring life where there was death.

Christ is the One who raises up the soul as a person comes to faith and new life in Jesus. Then, eventually, Christ is going to raise up our bodies. He is the first fruits of the resurrection. Those in Christ are going to be raised up in the same bodily condition as Him.

Then there will be no colonoscopies. There won't be anymore twisted ankles or sicknesses. We will be raised up in everlasting life, and Jesus is the One who has authority over life and death. Apart from Christ, there is death. In Christ, there is life.

Jesus said, I am the way. I am the truth. I am the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. Jesus is the life. His resurrection is a demonstration of the life that He has and that He brings to His people who come to Him in faith.

In order to appreciate the life that Jesus brings, we must talk about death. Guess what is going to happen, unless Jesus comes back first? You are going to die. Your body will wear out. It will get diseased. It is going to die of something, unless the return of Christ comes first.

Scripture teaches us that death was introduced into the human experience as a judgment for sin. We have all like sheep have gone astray, each one turning his own way. This is the statement in Scripture in Isaiah Chapter 53, about how we all spurn the authority of the Living, Almighty, Loving, Holy God.

But we say we will be our own authority, and do things our way. Scripture teaches that the wages of sin is death. We have all sinned, you and I included. There is physical death, which is the separation of the soul from the body. There is spiritual death, which is the separation from of the soul from God in judgment.

There is bad news. We have all sinned and we have accrued a price before the holiness of God for our sin. He is holy, holy, holy. His eyes are too pure to even look upon sin, and we have all sinned in a whole variety of ways every single day. Yet Christ came into the world to save sinners. How is He the authority of life? How is He the author of life?

First of all, He tasted death. He was on the cross and on the cross, our sins were imputed to Him. Our sins were placed upon Him. Even the language of Scripture say that our sins were within Him, and He paid the just price for sin. Then having been placed in the tomb, on the third day He rose from the grave, having given Himself for sin and having paid the price.

Death could no longer keep its hold on Him. He paid its penalty. And on the third day He was raised up with victory over this fearsome enemy, with the promise of life for all of those who will confess their sin and with contrite hearts saying, Lord, it is true. You are the God that made me. You sustain me and I have sinned in so many ways. I need a Savior. I need a cleansing. I need to be washed.

That is the good news, brothers and sisters. Guess what? When you are in Christ, when you come to faith in Christ, it is like the belief button has been pushed on your sin. It is not in your account anymore. Jesus took it away. Then you are clothed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Jesus does not leave those who come to Him in a neutral position. It is not that just our sins are taken away, but His righteousness covers us so that when we appear before the holiness of God, there we are in the perfection of Christ, robed in glory.

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead proved the truth that that sacrifice was accepted and that there is life in Christ forevermore. All of these things are there in the substance. He is not here. He is risen!

Finally, there was another part of the angelic statement to those gathered there at the tomb. There was also:

3. A Crucial Instruction

⁶...Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, ⁷that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise?”

There is this word of instruction. This angel told the sisters, and all of us who listen in, to remember these things. Remember! Call them to mind. The angel did not say it as a question mark. The question mark came a couple earlier—why are you seeking the living among the dead?

This is an imperative. Remember! Remember what Jesus said—that the Son of Man must be delivered over; that He must die; that He must be raised from death. With this, we are reminded that the Son of God came to carry out the plan of redemption, foreordained by the Triune God. It was necessary that He die and be raised from death because this is the loving decree of the Three-In-One.

That word *must* is that little Greek word *dei*. I remember it as clear as day from Introductory Greek in seminary. It is necessary. It is necessary. It was necessary because this was the only way for sinners to be saved and the righteousness of God to be satisfied. Jesus paid the price. Sin was judged. And the grace of God was released into the lives of those who will come with contrition, seeking His grace in salvation.

Now as we finish, that word *must* is important. These things come in the imperative in Scripture. For anybody who is not a Christian, you have never come to faith in Christ, you must put your faith in Him. You must! If you don't, you will stand before the Throne of God someday with your sin attached to you. Then you will face the just condemnation for your sin.

However, if you put your faith in Christ, you will appear before the Throne of God with your sin washed away; with your soul cleansed and with righteousness adorning you as a gift. Scripture commands all people everywhere to repent and turn to Jesus. You must turn to Jesus.

Christians, you must abide in Jesus. Do you want the life of Christ dwelling in and rising in you? Then you must abide in Jesus. Guess what? Because we are men and women who have desires gone awry, we must have God working these things out in us.

It may be that your heart says, What's wrong with me. I don't want to abide in the Lord. That still happens. Does anybody else here find that sometimes it is a struggle to read Scripture in the morning? We would rather do something else.

Our inward inclinations and desires are going to lead us all over the place. The world says that there is authority in inward desires. Rubbish! The heart is deceitful. It is going to lead you straight to death.

So one of the most important prayers in the Christian life is this. This became so clear to me early on in my walk with Jesus. That prayer is, Change my heart O God. Change my heart. I need You to change me and if You don't change me, I am going to be going all over the place, instead of into the loving arms of the Savior.

So if you are here and you are not a Christian and you are hearing about these things about sin, righteousness, judgment, and forgiveness in Christ, and your heart is pulling away from that, my challenge for you is to say, Lord, change my heart. If you are here and for the first time your heart is believing, rejoice because the Spirit is at work in you and changing your heart.

If you are a Christian and you resist the things that give you life and you are lukewarm about the things that give you life, guess what, you are going to be that way because there is still the remnant of sin in you, so pray, Change my heart O God. I need for You to be active in me and I cast myself upon Your grace. I pray that the life of the Messiah will rise up within me for newness of life now and for everlasting life to come.

Jesus is risen from the grave, and I have done my best to provide some sobering and honest truths from the Bible for you, and also to point you to the One who died for our sin and who rose from the grave.

Brothers and sisters, He has risen! The Lord be glorified. Let us go to the Lord in prayer and then let us sing a song of celebration as we conclude.