



“Hear the Angel Voices”

Luke 24:1-12

April 21st, 2019

As we continue celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ, I have a message that I would like to share with you out of Luke Chapter 24. Please join me there. We are going to go through a story in our passage together.

I have titled this message *Hear the Angel Voices*. Somebody might be thinking, *Pastor, you’ve got the wrong holiday*. Some of you Christmas enthusiasts might remember that phrase from the wonderful Christmas song *O Holy Night*. Indeed, that song has the word, *Fall to your knees, hear the angel voices. O night divine. O night that Christ was born*. In fact, there was a whole chorus of angels there on that glorious night at the birth of the Messiah.

However, this morning we go to the other end of Jesus’ earthly life, thirty-three-years later and two angels were there again. They came bringing the message of glory and hope. It is the greatest message that has ever been proclaimed in human history. The message is that Jesus Christ rose from death and came out of the grave victorious.

But what is very interesting as we get into the passage of Scripture that is before us, even though these angels came once again pronouncing good news of great joy, they came and had to set some of the followers of Jesus straight. They needed to come and get some of the closest devoted followers of Christ back up on their feet again.

What was happening that morning of the resurrection is that the followers of Jesus Christ, they were confused. They were perplexed. They did not know what was happening and their hearts were heavy. So, these angels were sent by God to remind them of the glory of what took place on that morning.

This morning as we look into Luke Chapter 24, the story opens with a handful of women, some of His closest followers going to the tomb early that Sunday morning. These women, they were there when Jesus was on the cross. They saw Him as He suffered, and they watched Him die. Then they wanted to come and complete the anointing of the body. This anointing was left undone because of the Sabbath they were entering into.

That Sunday morning, they went to the tomb fully expecting the body of the Lord Jesus to be there but when they came to the tomb, they found that it was open. Not only that, they found that it was empty. For them, it was not a resurrection to be celebrated. It was a great mystery to be solved—a mystery that led them into great confusion.

However, the angelic messengers came to pick them up and set them on their feet and to get them on the right path and to fill their hearts with the joy of that occasion that was taking place that very morning.

I wonder if these words need to speak into our hearts as well. I wonder if, even we in Christ, ever face times in life where our hearts are perplexed and weighed down. That is what they were experiencing on that morning, and God sent His Word to speak into the situation.

I will read Luke Chapter 24 and Verses 1 through 12. Please follow along with me.

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 them 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 tale, 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.

Luke, carried by the Holy Spirit, gave us the story of the empty tomb. Again, it began with a group of women. They went to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus with spices. Yes, it is in fact the case that these were the original Spice Girls. There they are right before your very eyes.

They arrived early on that beautiful Spring morning. They saw the stone rolled away from the tomb. They stooped and entered in searching, and they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. Finding the tomb empty, they did not declare, *Hallelujah, He is risen!*

Instead, those women came out of the tomb wondering what had happened and where the body of Jesus was. They fully expected to find His body. However, the body was not there and the word that is used in Verse 4 is that they were *perplexed*.

The New Testament was originally written in Koine Greek, a very picturesque and vivid language. The word *perplexed* in the original Greek is so interesting. *aporea* means to lose one's way. The Greek word is *aporeo*. *Poros*, is the word for path. *Pareo*, to walk a path. A prefix of negation. *Aporeo*, to lose your path; to lose your way; to not know where you are.

So, losing your path became a figure of speech for losing your mind. That was their condition at the grave site. Those women were bewildered, befuddle, distraught, totally confused. And into

the midst of this perplexities, God sent forth the light of His Word. This time using angelic messengers.

It says in Verse 4:

⁴While they were perplexed about this, behold,

Behold is a great biblical word to draw our attention to magnificent supernatural realities.

⁴...behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel.

We read in the other Gospels and later in this very chapter in Verses 22 through 24 that these men were in fact angels, angels from the realm of glory. These angels came and they appeared seemingly out of nowhere, but they didn't come from nowhere. They came from somewhere and their appearance gives us an indication of where they came from.

They were there in dazzling apparel. Dazzling is not a word that described their sense of fashion. Instead, once again, that is a Greek word that has a nuance of illumination, even strikes of lightening were used with this same word. The angels were there with gleaming and bright apparel, giving us an indication of the glory of the God before whom they stood.

As important as their appearance was, what is even more important for us at this moment is their message. These angels came speaking truth. These women, like the other disciples, they had lost their way. Their hearts were sunk. They were discouraged on a morning of great victory.

So these truths were intended to pick them up and get them back on track and back in step with the things of the Lord. What we find at the end of the story is that these truths did in fact energize them. They ran off said they had to believe it, even though the disciples originally didn't. I pray that these words from these angels will speak truth and hope and joy into our hearts as well.

Even genuine Christians can sometimes become perplexed. Sometimes we can become perplexed in the midst circumstances that are bewildering. And in the midst of such times of life, what is first and foremost and the most important thing is for us to be standing upon the rock of our salvation—that Jesus Christ came to redeem us eternally and to walk with us through all the things that we face in this life.

We are going hear the angel voices even though it is not Christmas, but it is Resurrection Sunday morning. I want us to notice three parts of this angelic message. They speak into our lives too. First, I wonder if you noticed that there was:

1. An Admonishment

These women were admonished by the two angels particularly the more prominent, the spokesman of the two. It was a gentle rebuke, but it was a rebuke no less with a question mark at the end of it. It was reproof.

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

What are you doing here? It is interesting because the angels did not approach these women saying, *I can totally relate to what your going through right now. I would be so confused too. Where is His body?*

No, the angel didn't cut them much slack. Rather, he asked her, *Why do you seek the living among the dead? Don't you remember what He told you?* Those angles came on pretty strong with the force of this question—*what are you doing right now? Why are you so perplexed and confused?*

Understanding the uniqueness of that setting and that question, I wonder if, given the opportunity, an angel might ask similar questions to those among us today. We learn in Scriptures that angels are real. They inhabit this realm. They are unseen. We are not supposed to get fixated on them or overly interested in them. We are certainly not to worship them or try to invoke them.

Rather, we are to worship God, but angels are here and are watching everything that we do. I wonder if an angel might send a question of reproof anybody else's way? *Why are you seeking life and fulfillment and satisfaction by things that are dead and bring death?* I wonder if the angels look upon anybody's life here and they are scratching their heads with their wings.

What are you doing? Why are you going to those places? Why are you engaging in those forms of behavior? Why are you attending those meetings? Why aren't you among the family of the Living God, worshiping the Lord and having the truths of His Living Word fill your heart? What are you doing???

I wonder if there might be a word of reproof that might be fitting for anybody here? Yes, Scripture does that, by the way. Sometimes Scripture is very comforting and consoling. Other times Scripture gets in our face. We need to ask ourselves what these angels would say to us.

Here is a word from the Risen Lord in John 11:25:

²⁵I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.

He who believes in Jesus will live, even though some day he will physically die. Jesus is the life. Not only is He the source of everlasting life, but He is the source of newness of life. Is your life centered on the Messiah, the Risen Lord?

If they were given the chance by God, your friends the angels might say, *Hey, come on!* There was an admonition, wasn't there?

We continue, and we see there is a second part of the angel's message. Not only was there an admonition, but there was a:

2. A Proclamation

A glorious proclamation. This was the first statement of the epic victory that Jesus provided once He was risen from the grave. After asking the question,

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

The angel asked this question and then made this statement

⁶**He is not here, but has risen.**

This is a statement of the victory of Jesus Christ.

In my years as a pastor, I have had the privilege of coming along side of many families on many occasions at the time of bereavement for funerals. I have been a part of lots of Memorial Services.

It is getting to the point where it is debatable if I am still a young pastor or not. Maybe it depends on who you ask. At the ripe young age of forty-five, I have been a part of more Memorials Services than a great number of pastors do throughout the entire span of their ministry.

I have been a part of Memorial Services for young people where I have said, *They should not have to make caskets this small.* I have been a part of services for people old and full of years. I have been a part of services for people who are a part of the church and not a part of the church, people that I knew intimately, people that I did not know at all.

In all the Memorials I have done, I have never ever, ever once sought to give grieving families perspective by saying, *Death in the end is part of the normal cycle of life. There is an ebb. There is a flow. There is an ebb. There is a flow. Nature must take its course, and it is an experience we must all go through. We must acquiesce and we must be at peace for this natural part of existence.*

I have never said that. I hope to God that I never ever do. One reason is because I think that comes across as insensitive. The other reason is because I think that that is absolute rubbish. Death is not normal. Death is an intruder. The decline of the body and the experience of pain, the pain of death and separation was not a part of what God originally created when He made this world and life and declared it good.

Death entered into the world as a judgment for sin, as a judgment for rebellion against God. Now, death has been unleashed and it is described in the pages of Scripture as an enemy. Enemies inflict pain. It is harsh. It is serious. And physical death is an ongoing reminder of the

even more serious pain of spiritual death which is eternal separation from God in judgment for sin. That is serious.

I won't call death normal, but what I will say is this: Praise God, praise God, praise God for the word of victory that rings forth, shouting across the ages that Jesus Christ has conquered death; that Jesus Christ is risen and the grave had no hold on Him. Jesus has conquered this enemy death. He did so by bearing our sin within Himself, taking it to the cross where He was nailed and pierced for our transgressions, and where He paid the price in full for His people.

Jesus experienced death on our behalf, not simply on the physical level but on the more serious spiritual level when He was judged as the sinner on our behalf, having paid the price for sin. Praise the Lord! Hallelujah! Glory to His Name! Death could no longer keep its hold on Him. He paid its penalty, and on the third day He was raised up in victory over this fearsome enemy with the promise that all who trust in Him will share in His life and, in the end, the grave will not have victory over them.

On the day of faith, the sinful soul is cleansed and eternally joined to the life of the Everlasting God in love and in perfect peace. On the day of faith, we are born again into an eternal hope that will never fade away. On the day of His return, Jesus Christ is going to reunite the soul and the remains of the body. He is going to resurrect that matter into a resurrection body. We are going to be raised up like Christ with power and glory in perfection and vitality of life.

In the same way that the grave did not keep its hold on Jesus, it will not keep its hold on those who belong to Jesus. Jesus has claimed the victory over the grave. Death does not win. Death is not normal. It is an enemy that needs to be defeated, and it has been in Christ. He is risen, brothers and sisters! Amen, He is risen indeed! He is the Victor! He has conquered death.

This is a wonderful and glorious proclamation. He is risen. Finally,

3. An Instruction

I wonder if you noticed the instruction here in this text as well. Verses 6 and 7:

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.”

The crucial word that is given there is the word *remember*. Notice once again these angels were coming on strong. They did not come and use that word *remember* in question form. No, they said it with strength. Call it to mind! Think about what He said. Bring it back into your thinking. Remember what Jesus said!

This word *remember* is so vital in the Christian life because, like these sisters and brothers in Luke 24, there will be times when you are absolutely bewildered by the circumstances of life. Things will happen to you that will make your head spin. If you have not experienced that, just wait, your time is coming. When those times come, you need to remember the life-giving words

of Jesus Christ. You need to stand upon the promises of God and remember the Living Word of God.

A pastor originally from the Cayman Islands by the name of Thabiti Anyabwile said:

Never underestimate how remembering God's Word will change and steady your emotions when the most tragic surprising things happen. We most need that redirection from feeling to Scripture when our feelings are so strong, and our experiences are so surprising. That is when we need to be tuned in to God's Word because that is when our feeble hearts and minds are so vulnerable.

Sometimes it is during our times of trouble and stress that we don't go to God's Word. Instead of meditating on God's Word, we meditate on our trials. To meditate is to chew the cud, to keep thinking and thinking about it.

I don't know about you but my tendency in the midst of stressful times is to just keep thinking about the problem. I am good at meditating on problems. In meditating on the problems, we tend to not be filling our minds by consuming God's Word. So, this angel was telling the women to remember. Remember. Remember what Jesus said.

With this, we are reminded of the very epicenter of the Christian faith. Verses 6 and 7:

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."

Remember this. Think about this. Notice those words *must be*. Once again going into the Greek, *must be* is *dei*. I remember that little word as clear as day from my Greek vocabulary flash cards: *dei*—must; it is necessary; it is required. This is the nuance of the word *remember*

We must think about the fact that Christ came into the world to carry out the plan of redemption, preordained by the Triune God. It was necessary that Jesus died because it was the wise eternal and loving decree of the Living God.

It was necessary that Jesus died on the cross for our sin because it was the prophesized promise of Scripture given throughout the history of the earth. It was necessary that Jesus die because that was the one way that sinners like us can have our sin paid for and for God's righteousness to be satisfied so that we might be forgiven by this God who is a righteous and Holy Judge. Jesus came with grace and love and He died for our sin because it was necessary for these reasons.

Beyond that, it was necessary not only that He die but that He rise on the third day. His resurrection would be the great seal of approval that God stamped over His death for our sin. It was necessary that He rise because this would be the great vindication of the Son of the Living God. The resurrection would be the display that He is the Son of God who has power.

It was necessary that He rise because this would be demonstration that death could not hold Him back and it would be the demonstration in history that, in Christ, there is life beyond the grave. In the same way telling them to recall the words of Jesus, these angels said, *Remember how the Son of Man said that He must be crucified. The Son of Man must rise from the grave.*

There is also a must that applies to us too. You must, you must recognize that there is Living God who created you. You must recognize that throughout your life, though created in the image of God, you are fallen in sin, and your transgressions have violated the holiness of God.

You must recognize that in Christ and in Christ alone there is a Savior. You must recognize that in Jesus the price of our sin has been paid in full. You must recognize that the way that you enter into that life is that you have a heart that is contrite before the Living God that says, *I confess my sin and I rest in Jesus. I put my faith in Him.* Trust in Jesus. You must believe in Jesus.

If you are here and you are not a Christian, having not come to faith in Christ, we are so glad you are here. I want you to know that someday you are going to face your Maker. If you don't enter into Christ through faith by trusting in Him, when you face your Maker you will do so with your sin still attached to you. You will face judgment and it is eternal. It is in hell. This is what the Bible teaches.

For those of you who have confessed your sin before the Living God and turned to Christ for forgiveness, you will stand before the Living God with your sin having been washed away by His blood. You will stand before the Living God with your heart pounding saying that is God!

You will stand before Him as one clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ who came to live a perfect life in your place. You stand before God as one redeemed, cleansed, made righteous, and one fully accepted into God's Kingdom of Light. This is the center of the Christian faith.

Put your trust in Jesus. Trust in Him. For those of you who do trust Him, you celebrate Him. You walk with Him. You worship Him every single day, because He is worthy of your praise.

Those women had some truths that they received, then they remembered, and they were activated and off they went to tell the disciples. The disciples did not believe them. These disciples were off track too. Later in Luke Chapter 24, we will read how Jesus appeared to them.

In their perplexity, they received an appearance of Jesus. They saw Him and they could not believe it was Him. Jesus then told them He was Jesus and asked for some fish. So how else can we celebrate that moment than by eating fish tacos in Southern California? That is what we are going to be doing next week. You are all invited. We would love to have you here.

In the meantime, walk with Him. Rejoice in Him. He has conquered death. He is risen! Let's close in a word of prayer. Then will sing the glory of the Risen Lord Jesus Christ.