

LESSON 5

April 2, 2023

Unit II: Experiencing the Resurrection

Amazing Encounters

DEVOTIONAL READING: Psalm 22:20-31

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Luke 24:1-12

PRINT PASSAGE: Luke 24:1-12

KEY VERSES

Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen. (Luke 24:5b-6a, KJV)

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“Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!”
(Luke 24:5b-6a, NIV)

LESSON AIMS

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do these things:

- Compare and contrast the various reactions that persons had to hearing of Jesus' resurrection.
- Confess areas of your life where you look for Jesus and do not find Him.
- Identify one aspect of congregational life that most embodies the significance of the Resurrection.

*KEY TERMS

Behold (verse 4, KJV)—Greek: *idou* (id-oo'): look; see; “Lo!”

Found (verse 3)—Greek: *heuriskó* (hyoo-ris'-ko): learned; discovered, especially after searching; proved; regarded; “did . . . find” (NIV).

Perplexed (verse 4)—Greek: *aporeó* (ap-or-eh'-o): to be at a loss; was in doubt; “were wondering” (NIV).

Seek (verse 5)—Greek: *zéteó* (dzay-teh'-o): to search for, desire, require; inquire; “look for” (NIV).

Stone (verse 2)—Greek: *lithos* (lee'-thos): a rock of indeterminate size or shape; metaphorically, of Jesus as the chief stone in a building.

Tomb (verse 1)—Greek: *mnéma* (mnay'-mah): a memorial; a sepulcher; a monument; “sepulchre” (KJV).

*(Word Study Supplement—Refer to page 2)



The Biblical Context

Although the Gospels refer to different times of arrival and women who arrived at the tomb, Christ's resurrection is an infallible reality. Each writer reported from a particular place and in their unique style and perspective. The narrative may vary, but the order of events and how they occurred is precisely the same. Each writer tells us that (1) He died and was buried; (2) several women came early in the morning; (3) they found the stone rolled away and an empty tomb; (4) they were addressed by an angel; (5) the women fled the tomb; and (6) His disciples were not prepared for His death and were confused regarding the announcement of His resurrection. It is clear that none of His followers internalized and believed His instructions about His death and resurrection nor matured spiritually enough to recognize its significance. Luke's account of the Resurrection is unique because it is more than a presentation of detailed facts. His primary goal was to present Jesus as the innocent Son of Man whose resurrection changed the lives of His followers and turned the world upside down. Our celebration of His resurrection should likewise move us to commit to demonstrating changed lives through our thinking, conversation, and conduct as well.

INTRODUCTION

According to biographyonline.net, ten events from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries significantly changed the world. These events started wars and revolutions that affected the lives of millions across this planet. During these events, others were by-products of them that had broad-spread effects on this nation's and the world's populations. For example, World War I cost the lives of millions of men and women from all corners of the world. Then, there was the bombing of Pearl Harbor and America's entrance into World War II, dropping the atomic bomb that revealed the potential devastation a third world war could bring. Two of the ten world-changing events cited in this source occurred in this country: the assassination of John F. Kennedy and the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The most recent event mentioned is the COVID-19 Pandemic 2020, currently running rampant and costing 6.9 million lives at this writing, serious illnesses, mental anguish, and economic and political stress. Interestingly, this list does not include the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King and the recent deaths of African Americans at the hands of some policemen and intensifying cries for social change and equality for all humanity. More importantly for the faith community is the failure to recognize and acknowledge the omission of the most significant and profound world-changing event in all humanity's history—the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He accomplished what no other human being or religion could or will ever do. He conquered death, humankind's greatest enemy, and lives today as irrefutable proof. Although skeptics

and critics have attempted to refute its validity, faith in its reality has impacted and changed millions of lives for the better. Initially, however, among those who physically interacted with Him, experienced His many miracles, and heard His predictions concerning His death and subsequent resurrection were some who responded with cynicism and doubt when they heard the good news, "He is risen." As we compare and contrast the various reactions of each person hearing of His resurrection in this lesson, let us reflect on the difference it has made in our lives, renew our commitment to proclaiming it, and celebrate its reality with praise and thanksgiving.

Searching the Wrong Place *(Luke 24:1-9)*

KJV

NOW UPON the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.

2 And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.

3 And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

4 And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:

5 And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

6 He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee,

7 Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

8 And they remembered his words,

9 And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.

NIV

ON THE first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb.

2 They found the stone rolled away from the tomb,

3 but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

4 While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them.

5 In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead?

6 "He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee:

7 "'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'"

8 Then they remembered his words.

9 When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others.

The final chapter of Luke's gospel reveals the varied experiences of those encountering the risen Savior. The first group to learn about His promised resurrection were faithful women from Galilee who followed Him. Their devotion to Him did not end because they believed He was physically dead. Luke does not name these women, but Matthew and Mark report that the group included Mary Magdalene, Mary, James's and Joseph's mother, Salome, the mother of James and

John, and many others. After Jesus' death and observing where and how His body was laid (Luke 23:55), these women returned to the tomb to complete anointing His body (**verse 1**). The "first day of the week" refers to Sunday, the day after the Sabbath, setting the precedent for believers' special meeting day. "Early in the morning" or "early dawn" is literally "at deep dawn." Apparently, the women left where they were staying in Jerusalem while still dark and arrived at the tomb after sunrise. Luke reports that they found the stone rolled away from the tomb's mouth, went in, but did not find Jesus' body (**verses 2-3**). Mark tells us that they had discussed their inability to move this stone on the way there (see Mark 16:3). Unhesitatingly, they went in expecting to find Jesus' physical body. Instead, they saw two men (angels) in shining garments standing near them, adding to their dismay (**verse 4**). The women's reaction to their presence was fear, respect, and awe (**verse 5a**). The angels asked them why they were seeking the living (or the Living One) among the dead (**verse 5b**). In reality, they were chastising these women for looking for Jesus in the wrong place. Jesus was not dead as they supposed but alive and not to be sought among the physically dead.

Their subsequent declaration is the central pillar of the Christian faith: "He is not here, but is risen!" (**verse 6a**). It was an unmistakable reference to Jesus' resurrection without which our faith is in vain (see 1 Corinthians 15:17). So, then, supernaturally aware that the women had heard Jesus predict His crucifixion and resurrection, the angels challenged them to recall His previous instructions about it (**verses 6b-7**). Had they remembered and believed His words, they would not have gone to the tomb expecting a lifeless body to anoint for permanent burial. To their credit, they remembered His words to them (**verse 8**). It only took a review lesson to convict their hearts, rekindle their faith, and transform them from helpless mourners to enthusiastic messengers to the eleven disciples and other followers of Christ (**verse 9**). What about us? We've heard about the Resurrection countless times. Has the message become so familiar that we fail to appreciate its significance to our faith? Are we "returning to the tomb," looking for Him among perfunctory worship and lifeless ministries? On the contrary; God desires that we be transformed by the Resurrection's reality, access the Holy Spirit's power, live obedient lives, and proclaim its message to the lost among humanity.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Why does it appear challenging to remember the spiritual things that are critical to spiritual growth?

Failing to Believe (Luke 24:10-12)

KJV

10 It was Mary Magdalene and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles.

11 And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.

12 Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.

NIV

10 It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles.

11 But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.

12 Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

The women left the tomb and gave the message to the eleven apostles, who refused to believe the women (**verses 10-11**). The tense of the phrase “they would not believe the women” (**verse 11**, NASB) suggests that the women repeatedly told the disciples, but their message was dismissed as pure nonsense and hysteria. It is ironic that Jesus’ enemies, the Sanhedrin, took His resurrection predictions seriously and posted a guard, but His disciples were surprised beyond belief. Also, according to Graeco-Roman cultural norms, the response of the Eleven is culturally understandable. A woman’s testimony was considered unreliable and could not be used to settle legal disputes. However, it is challenging to justify these men’s cynical reaction after having witnessed His supernatural power to resurrect the dead Himself regardless of the source of this incredible news. The Crucifixion’s stunning impact on Jesus’ followers dulled their memories and caused them to forget Jesus’ prophecies. They were unable to internalize them with any conviction comprehensibly. Despite his disbelief of the women’s testimony, Peter listened and was motivated to investigate its validity (**verse 12**). He ran to the tomb—not alone, but with John (see John 20:1-10). They both saw the linen clothes in which Christ’s body had been wrapped, lying by themselves. It was visible proof that His body was gone; and the fact that His burial clothes remained refuted the possibility that grave robbers took His body away. Perplexed, Peter left the tomb and returned home with no notion of a bodily resurrection and wondering what could have possibly happened to Christ’s body. Lest we criticize the disciples’ initial cynicism, doubt, and failure to remember the Master’s teaching, let us examine our readiness to demonstrating that we believe His Word with unquestioning obedience. Knowledge and understanding of the fundamental scriptural truths about the Resurrection should motivate renewed hope and commitment to celebrating its significance through obedient service and Christ-centered worship. The Resurrection must become a daily reminder that because He lives, we can face life’s uncertainties with steadfast confidence and commit to living righteously in anticipation of our inheritance in Him.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What hope does the Resurrection provide for daily life, and how should it affect how believers live?

A CLOSING THOUGHT

Jesus’ resurrection is traditionally the theme of sermons, cantatas, musicals, plays, “children’s speeches,” and other forms of celebration during this season. The challenge to and responsibility of every believer is to move beyond knowledge and comprehension of

this spiritually transforming reality and commit to walking circumspectly in the world, proclaiming the gift of salvation it offers through Christ and using His indwelling power to minister to the needs of the faith community and the unsaved.

YOUR LIFE

This week, reflect and evaluate what the Resurrection means in your life. How often do you think about it outside a religious setting? Has it produced an evident change in how you live your life as a believer? How does it affect your worship? What changes will you commit to making?

YOUR WORLD!

The impact of the good news of the Resurrection was initially one of surprise, cynicism, and disbelief among Christ's followers before they were convinced that it was a reality. Afterward, it transformed their lives into bold, courageous witnesses willing to give their lives to share it with others. Today, we have His infallible Word and our experiences as believers as proof that He did rise. As a result, the faith community is called to proclaim this same message vocally and visibly to validate its power to transform lives into His image.

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear God, help us renew our zeal in proclaiming the power of our Lord's resurrection to those He came seeking to save. We pray that our lives will become visible proof that He did rise and now lives in us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

CONCLUSION

(Preparing for Next Week's Lesson)

We all struggle to believe things we cannot explain. Next week, we will explore Jesus' first followers' struggle to believe in His resurrection (Luke 24:13-27, 30-31).

Home Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY, April 3	"I Have Seen the Lord!"	(John 20:11-18)
TUESDAY, April 4	"Blessed Are Those Who Believe"	(John 20:19-31)
WEDNESDAY, April 5	"The Lord Is My Strength"	(Psalm 118:1-14)
THURSDAY, April 6	"I Shall Not Die, but Live"	(Psalm 118:15-29)
FRIDAY, April 7	"Jesus Meets Two Disciples"	(Luke 24:13-24)
SATURDAY, April 8	"Jesus Opens the Disciples' Eyes"	(Luke 24:25-35)
SUNDAY, April 9	"You Are Witnesses of These Things"	(Luke 24:36-49)