

He Was Resurrected
Luke 24:1-12

The blessed "Gospel" of our Lord Jesus truly is vast and cannot be limited in its power and scope as it brings about the salvation of untold millions of souls. But in the book of 1 Corinthians chapter 15, the Holy Spirit has chosen to concentrate its most blessed provisions into three events within the life and mission of the Lord Jesus, His Death, His Burial and His Resurrection.

We have studied about His "Death" and His "Burial", and now today, here in the Book of Luke chapter 24, we will begin our study of His blessed "Resurrection". Listen carefully as I read . . .

¹ 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 into the hands of sinful men, 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. 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. (Luke 24:1-12)

Oh dear Christian, there are so many, many mysteries within the word of God, and so many, many blessings within the "Gospel". But for me the "Resurrection" is by far the most profound of those mysteries and the most gratifying within the "Gospel". The resurrection of our Lord has meaning and purpose beyond any human comprehension, beyond our reasoning it out.

And yes, the miracle of His blessed resurrection extends on out from our Lord even to you and to me, to our own resurrection that will take place later on after we also pass from this life. And oh what a blessing that will be!

And how pitiable it is for the untold millions of people all around us who choose to believe that there will not be such a thing as a resurrection, that there will not be any form of life after we pass from this one. The choices they make in this life will be at a cost that they cannot imagine.

But again, we who have Christ as our Savior and Lord do believe in life that goes beyond this present earthly life, An eternal life. And it offers a most pleasant future for us.

And while in our study today we will consider and rejoice in the “Resurrection” of the Lord Jesus, and then also, the future resurrection of our own bodies, I want us to also keep in mind some very profound words that the Lord Jesus spoke to Martha on the occasion when she was mourning the death of her brother Lazarus. There in John chapter 11,

²³ Jesus said to her (to Martha), “Your brother will rise again.”

²⁴ Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; ²⁶ and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” (John 11:23-26)

Folks, these are very mysterious words to our rational minds. Here, Jesus was speaking about the “Resurrection” of our bodies, but He was also revealing something else that is of enormous importance and meaning.

Did you take note of those other words that Jesus said to Martha. His words added another very special element of mystery, and a delightful joy-filled promise to what is otherwise a very fearful event of dying.

Jesus said that “He Himself is the Resurrection”. And that we who believe in Him will live, even though we die. And then He said, “whoever lives and believes in Him will never die.”

Oh dear friends, this is a promise that exceeds all others. Here, Jesus is saying that for those of us who believe in Him, though we breathe our last in this earthly

life, and our earthly body dies, we, our soul, our spirit doesn't die with it. Did you hear that? "Though we breathe our last in this earthly life, we don't really die." We never really die! Those words of the Lord Jesus again,

²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; ²⁶ and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" (John 11:25-26)

And no, we don't comprehend these words right now. They are so far beyond our human rationale, we'll never, in this life comprehend them. But folks, they are true. Jesus said those words! We'll never die. Yes, we'll breathe our last breath in this worldly life, but we will immediately breathe our next breath in our heavenly life. And that is an absolute "truth".

Wow! Wow!

With that being said, may we pause and return to the study at hand . . . the "Resurrection" of the Lord Jesus. Because it was within all that Jesus accomplished in those three days that would then enable the most incomprehensible miracles of life to come to those of us who believe in Him.

I'll read these words of scripture again for us, and listen carefully! This is Luke chapter 24,

¹ 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 into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' " ⁸ Then they remembered his words.

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Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened. (Luke 24:1-12)

Here in these words, we find the ever-faithful women disciples doing as they had always done. For much of His three and a half years of ministry, they had lovingly followed after the Lord Jesus and cared for his needs, and now in His death, they were continuing their loving service to Him.

May I again remind us that these scriptures are filled with this same kind of witness of the faithfulness of the women of the church! Beginning from the first days of Jesus' ministry, devout women have been the stalwarts, the very foundational blocks on which the church began and even now continues its ministry.

And here in these words we are again able to witness their dedication and fearless loyalty to the Lord Jesus. Undaunted by the potential of mistreatment from their synagogue leaders and from the Roman soldiers, these faithful women came to the tomb to give their last service to their Lord, the preparation of His body for final burial.

And oh, what a reward they would receive for their faithfulness! I am immediately reminded of the words of Hebrews 11:6 where we read,

6 . . . without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (Hebrews 11:6)

God rewards those who diligently seek Him, and what a reward these women were receiving right at that moment! Here, these dear ones received one of the greatest honors God could have ever bestowed upon anyone, to be first to witness the resurrection of His dearly beloved Son.

It was not Peter or John or some the other disciples, though Peter and John would soon be honored in the same way. No, it was the faithful women who were honored first with the most precious revelation that mankind could ever enjoy. Praise be to God, the Lord Jesus had risen from the dead.

And note in these words how God is so gracious and kind to us in our weakness of unbelief. Although these women had some measure of faith within their souls, it was not enough faith to remember and to believe the things that Jesus had

been saying to them, about how He would have to die and then arise again on the third day. And so, as evidenced by these words, they came to the tomb expecting only to find His dead body and then to prepare it for final burial.

But God was kind to them in their unbelief and did not give them a scolding for it. He instead gave them a gentle rebuke. Through these words of His angels, God simply asked the question, "Why do you seek the living among the dead?"

I'm reminded that angels, and especially these angels, are "angels of the Lord". And as Hebrews chapter 1 reminds us,

¹⁴ Are they (the angels) not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation? (Hebrews 1:14)

These angels, here said to be in the form of men, were sent by the Lord Jesus to minister to these women and to give the message of His resurrection to them. And here, we can know also that these are words uniquely from the Lord Jesus Himself, because Jesus so often presented His truths in the form of a question, provoking the minds of those listening on to a deeper consideration. Here He asked, "Why do you seek the living among the dead?"

And then, the angels reminded them of all those times that Jesus had told them that these very things would take place. They said . . . "Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.'"

So yes, it was a gentle rebuke. And please know that the rebuke was not just for those women. These words were intended for you and me also, because our faith is also often weak, and our expectations are small and limited.

Just as Jesus had on an earlier occasion warned Peter about, we think earthly thoughts with our earthly minds.

We want to always reduce the spiritual things of God down to earthly rationale so that we can better understand Him. And as we do that, our seeking often goes astray, causing us to seek the Living Lord among the dead things of this world.

Consider this for a moment . . . what does that kind of errant seeking look like in our daily lives? For me, it often begins simply as I first open up my bible each day. What are my expectations? Do I excitedly anticipate finding my vibrant and powerful "Living Lord" within those pages, or do I expect only to find some good teachings that will make my daily life better for me.

And as you and I attend church each Sunday, do we come with an excitement, expecting to lovingly worship and adore our Lord and Savior, only then to find ourselves singing the usual hymns and perhaps hearing what we might hopefully call a "good sermon", and then returning home not having truly enjoyed the presence of the "Living Lord".

May I carry this thought one step further and ask, "Are we seeking Jesus within our church traditions, and man-made doctrines? Do we seek Him within worldly rationale and scholarly wisdom? Do we seek Him within human behavior patterns, hoping in each pursuit to find Him?"

Folks, the Living Lord Jesus Christ is not in any of those dead involvements. Yes, we can be fully saved and we can be earnestly involved in what appears to be good efforts, but if His Spirit does not set our souls ablaze, then we must turn and flee to where He truly is alive and ministering.

And may I take these words one other step further and ask, "What might be the problem, both within our souls and within those pursuits?" I believe the answer is as simple as it sounds.

The Living Lord Jesus is not among the dead, but neither is He simply "among the living". He is far more than those words imply. He is actually "life itself".

And any pursuit of Him that falls short of that expectation will surely lead us astray. We have to want "life itself". Yes, church is good, and fellowship with other believers is good and enjoyable. But those are only accompanying blessings to the real purpose of what God is calling us into.

Jesus is life! He is life itself! And He wants you and me to have His life . . . within us. But that can only take place if and when we seek Him personally and intimately, and not just hope to find Him in a church or in our good behavior or in some other such effort.

It is a subtle, but profound difference, and as I have said often in these studies, I do fear that most of us fall victim to those lesser pursuits. We become convinced that if we can just learn enough about the principles and the teachings and the examples of Christianity and then follow all those carefully, we will be the “Christian” we are supposed to be.

But the reality is, such pursuit is not very different from the failed religious efforts of the Scribes and the Pharisees whom Jesus rebuked for the error of their ways.

No, Jesus is really not there in among our dead efforts at being a “good Christian”. He is alive only unto Himself and we must join with Him in who He is.

And here, in these very simple, but very profound words, “why do you seek the living among the dead, He is risen”, Jesus is proclaiming to us a whole new and different faith and condition of life that is available to you and me and to anyone who would receive Him as Savior and Lord.

These simple words, “He is risen”, bring with them meaning that we might never have realized before.

Consider again what has just taken place over the past three days. Jesus has suffered and He has died and He has been buried. In His death, Jesus has taken the sins of all men upon Himself, yours and mine. He has literally “become sin” for all who will receive Him. He has removed both our sin and the control of sin from within our souls. We have been washed clean, completely clean and free from every vestige of sin that we have ever fallen victim too throughout our whole lives. And we have been set completely free from them.

In other words, He has taken our sins upon Himself and carried all of them into hell and left them there.

Folks, let me say again, and with certainty, that it is only as all three parts of this gospel work together that it is complete. It takes all three, the death, the burial and the resurrection to free our soul from its bondage to sin. One part does not work without the others.

And here in these words about the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, God is declaring to us that His blessed provision does not end with His death there on that cross. And we must not keep our Lord Jesus hanging there. No! No! He has

risen! And His resurrection is that sure and “certain proof” that His promise to us of eternal life is true, absolutely true.

Praise be to God, all of the sufferings that the Lord Jesus endured and then His death on that cross were not the end of the story of His provision for us. His blessed “Resurrection” from the death He suffered was the crowning provision. His blessed resurrection was God’s declaration to the world that He had accepted the “Propitiation”, the “Payment in full”, that Jesus had made for us. And praise be to God for all that He did for us!

And now here, as He has risen from the dead, sin with all of its power and control, and in all of its forms and conditions has been completely defeated.

The provision has been made. The Lord Jesus has done His part. All that is left now is for us to accept and to receive all that He has done and to make it ours within our individual souls. That is our part.

Yes, God’s Holy Spirit will be present within us and will guide us and encourage us and enable us as we do our part, but this next part truly requires our personal efforts.

This is what God calls “our Sanctification”! As He declares to us in 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, “this is the will of God, your sanctification”. And then as we join our hearts with His, the Holy Spirit will work within us, making us Holy as He is Holy, perfect as He is perfect.

As we receive the Living Lord Jesus as our Savior, we must begin a process that God explains for us in Romans chapter 6. And yes, the process will most likely be a very painful one, but it is absolutely necessary, else our seeking of the Living Lord will be futile and will leave our souls wanting.

In those words of Romans chapter 6, we see that we must receive His death on the cross as our own death. We must “reckon” ourselves actually to be crucified with Him and then risen with Him.

Those words of Romans 6 . . . Listen, verse 3

³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead

by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:3-4)

And then in Romans 6, verse 11, we read

¹¹ Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:11)

Note in these words that God is describing for us the full purpose and effect of the "Gospel". Here, we are being told that we must join with the Lord Jesus in His crucifixion and death, His burial and also His resurrection.

And yes, the crucifixion and death part will be horribly difficult and painful for us. It was for the Lord Jesus, so it must also be for us. But we really must take up our cross and follow Him. It is absolutely necessary that we be crucified with Christ, else we will never be able to be resurrected with Him.

And again, look what our joining with Him in His death has gained for us. We become completely new! Those words in 2 Corinthians 5:17,

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

And folks, please know that these are not just figurative words, analogies, examples. These are real truths that are who we now are. Because Jesus has risen from the dead, we too have risen with Him and we now have a brand new life in Him.

We have been washed completely clean of all our past sins. And the power of sin within us has been completely "killed out" in us by all the things Jesus did on our behalf.

But again, our part is to "reckon" ourselves dead to those past sins and that past sinful behavior and then to "reckon" ourselves alive in Christ.

This word "reckon" has been especially meaningful to me as I have sought to understand God's purpose in these words. To "reckon" on something is no small thing.

To "reckon" on something is to put your full faith and trust in it. "Reckoning" is that thing a person must do when there is no clear visual or intellectual answer

to a question or dilemma. Simply put, "Reckoning" means that we must rely on something that we cannot see, just as if it were "certain".

And that kind of "Reckoning" is the purest definition of "Faith", "Faith". Those words in Hebrews chapter 11,

¹ Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1)

Though Jesus had just taken all the sins of the world upon His shoulders as He died there on that cross, in His resurrection, He arose completely free and cleansed from all of sin's penalties and control. And dear Christian, in the same way, in our salvation we are to "reckon" ourselves also completely free and cleansed from sin with all of its past penalties and especially its control.

We are assured of that in Romans chapter 8, "there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." And also, "if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed." And we are to "reckon" ourselves completely free indeed. And within that freedom, all that will remain for us to do is to seek the Living Lord Jesus with all of our hearts.

We'll close with these words from Philippians chapter 3 . . .

¹⁰ I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. (Philippians 3:10-11)

Pray with me.