

Resurrection Sunday

March 31, 2024

Lesson Summary

Main Passages

Luke 24:1-12

Session Outline

1. Discovery (Luke 24:1-3)
2. Announcement (Luke 24:4-8)
3. Proclamation (Luke 24:9-12)

Theological Theme

Jesus was raised from the dead and left an empty tomb. Angels told the women He was not there because He had risen. This truth is foundational to our faith.

Call to Action

Repent and believe in Jesus Christ, the living God, for the forgiveness of your sins.



Leader Guide

Resurrection Sunday

Introduction

Expectations play a huge role in our lives. We tend to perceive what we expect to see. We plan for things according to what we expect to happen. Think about when your expectations were completely blown apart. How do you react? Do you struggle to accept reality when it differs from what you expect?

- ❓ How do you see your expectations affecting the way you perceive a situation?
- ❓ When have you had your expectations “blown up” by reality?
- ❓ Why is it important to have big expectations for who God is and what He can do?

Session Summary

Jesus Christ was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, and died a sacrificial death on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins. He was resurrected from the dead and defeated death. When His resurrection was discovered, it brought hope to those who loved and believed in Him.


The women who discovered the empty tomb immediately went and spread the good news. The resurrection changed everything and brought hope to those who were brokenhearted by Jesus’s death on the cross. This all occurred just as Jesus told them it would.

1. Discovery (Luke 24:1-3)


The Christian faith is useless apart from the resurrection. This one miracle is foundational to all we believe, and Christ followers are to recognize not only the truth of the resurrection but also the details of the resurrection. Easter celebrates the reality that Jesus died on the cross and rose again three days later to defeat death and sin forever.

No one else could have done what Jesus did. He is the Son of God and the perfect Lamb who was sacrificed for the sins of all who believe in Him. The resurrection ties back to what we have been studying in the Old Testament and the need for innocent blood to be shed for the forgiveness of sin. On Easter, we celebrate the once and for all sacrifice that replaced the animal sacrifices of the law.


It is important to recognize that the people involved in the events of the cross and burial of Jesus were living them in real time. They believed He was the Savior, but they could not see how everything would play out. The truth of the gospel was unfolding before their eyes.

-  What do you imagine your perspective would have been had you been one of Jesus's followers living during the time His death and resurrection took place?

The women who went to the tomb that morning were following through on Jewish burial traditions. In keeping with the rules of the Sabbath, after Jesus's death on the cross, there was not much time to deal with the body properly before placing it in the tomb. These women had plans to finish preparing the body. They were doing the next right thing but made a shocking discovery.

-  How does the women's example show us to take the next right step, no matter what? Why is it important for us to both be faithful and be open to God working in unexpected ways?

The Roman soldiers had rolled a large stone in front of the tomb to prevent anyone from tampering with Jesus's body. Mark's account of this event records that the women discussed how they would deal with the stone so that they could access the body (16:3). Imagine what the women thought and felt when they approached the tomb and saw the stone was moved. They then stepped inside and were the first to discover that the tomb was empty!


-  Application: How does the empty tomb change everything? How does it change your life specifically?

2. Announcement (Luke 24:4-8)

We don't have to speculate about how the women reacted to the open and empty tomb because Luke tells us they were perplexed. They were prepared to treat the dead body of Jesus, but that was no longer an option. Amid their confusion, the angels showed up. Suddenly what they expected to be a day of following tradition became a miraculous experience unlike any other.

-  How do you typically respond when your expectations must change—for good or bad?


Angels announced the birth of Christ, and angels announced His resurrection. His birth announcement was made to a few shepherds. His resurrection was announced to a few women. Neither of these groups were considered important or powerful by the culture, but those are the ones chosen by God to hear the news first.

-  What do you think it means that God chose to announce both the birth and resurrection of Jesus to a small group that was dismissed by society?

As typically happens when angels appear in Scripture, the women were scared and intimidated. Then the angels asked why they were looking for Jesus there when He had taught about His resurrection on multiple occasions. The angels pointed the women back to the things they had heard from Jesus as further evidence that He was who He proclaimed to be.

The angels plainly stated that Jesus was not there because He had risen. These are the glorious words that resound on Easter as we celebrate the empty tomb and the risen Savior. It is important to remember the specific events of the Easter story and the powerful words of the angels: "He is not here, but he has risen" (v. 6). This truth is what sets our Savior apart and makes all the difference to our faith.

It is vital to recognize that all the events of Jesus's death and resurrection occurred exactly as Scripture predicted they would. No detail was overlooked and every detail matters. That day at the tomb as they heard the angels' words, the women remembered Jesus's promises. Hope sprouted in their hearts as they began to grasp the significance of the moment.

-  Application: How does the empty tomb and risen Savior spark hope in your life about a situation or circumstance you are currently dealing with?

3. Proclamation (Luke 24:9-12)

The women expected to see the beaten, lifeless body of Jesus and were confronted with the reality of his resurrection. This moment changed everything, and we can learn from their response. After seeing the evidence of the resurrection and remembering the words of Jesus, the women were moved to proclaim this news to others.

- Why does great news prompt us to talk about it? When was a time you couldn't help but share good news with others, whether it involved them or not?

Things had gone from bleak and hopeless to full of excitement and hope. Three women were named specifically and the rest unnamed, but all in this group had the privilege of being the first to know Jesus had risen. They were also the first to share about the resurrection. This moment changed them forever, and their natural response was to tell others.

The disciples desperately needed to hear that their Friend, Master, Teacher, and Savior had defeated death and was resurrected just as He promised. Interestingly, the very news that would bless the disciples the most was received with skepticism. They struggled to believe the women at first.

- Why is it important to share the hope we have in Christ, even if we're met with hesitation by others?

But resistance wasn't the disciples' only response. Peter (and John according to the account in John 20) ran to the tomb to investigate the situation. When they arrived at the tomb, they saw the grave clothes laying neatly in the place Jesus's body had been. It was exactly as the women had testified, and Peter marveled while John 20 tells us that this caused John to believe.

Although these followers had still not seen Jesus with their own eyes, they had seen evidence of His resurrection. Sometimes the evidence of the miraculous makes all the difference. In a world that needs hope, we have the good news of the resurrection. As we consider the truth and the words of Jesus, we should be like the women and spread the news. We should also be like Peter and marvel at the fact that our Savior is risen from the dead and is now in heaven at the right hand of the Father. He lived without sin and willingly sacrificed His life on the cross so we could receive forgiveness for sin and be made right with God. Once we believe and trust in Him, everything changes. The message of Easter must be shared with all. He is not here, He has risen!

- Application: Who will you tell about the good news of Jesus's resurrection this week?

Disputed Report




In Jesus's day women were not considered to be credible witnesses. This is why the Eleven (the apostles who remained after Judas's act of betrayal) did not believe the women's report about what had happened at Jesus's tomb, viewing it as nonsense. However, Peter was curious enough to run to the tomb and look for himself. When he saw only the linen cloths in which Jesus had been wrapped (23:53), he was amazed but still skeptical.

Conclusion

The resurrection of Jesus is foundational to the Christian faith. It is the basis of all we believe. Without Jesus being raised from the dead, our faith is in vain. Scripture contains many prophecies about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. What happened that day at the tomb fulfilled many of the prophecies in exact detail.

When the women went to the tomb to prepare Jesus's body for burial, they experienced a miracle that blew their expectations away. Once the angels informed them of what had taken place, the women were amazed, delighted, and full of hope. They immediately went to share the good news and spread hope to others.

Once we believe the resurrection, place our faith in Jesus, and receive forgiveness of our sins, we should be focused on telling others about how to find hope and new life in Christ too.

-  How does the reality of the resurrection impact your daily life?
-  How can we as a group encourage one another in the truth of the resurrection regularly?
-  Who will you have a gospel conversation with by sharing the story of the resurrection?

Prayer of Response

Praise the Lord for His certain power and plans. Thank Him for the resurrection and that it changes everything.

Memory Verse

"He is not here, but he has risen! Remember how he spoke to you when he was still in Galilee, 7 saying, 'It is necessary that the Son of Man be betrayed into the hands of sinful men, be crucified, and rise on the third day?'" 8 And they remembered his words. - Luke 24:6-8

Additional Resources

- *Luke 12-24 for You* by Mike McKinley
- *Be Courageous* by Warren Wiersbe
- *Luke* by R. C. Sproul

Disciples Multiplying Disciples



Historical Context of Luke

Purpose

The Gospel of Luke is a carefully researched (1:3), selective presentation of the person and life of Jesus Christ, designed to strengthen the faith of believers (1:3–4) and to challenge the misconceptions of unbelievers, especially those from a Greek background. Its portrait of Jesus is well balanced, skillfully emphasizing his divinity and perfect humanity.

Author

The author of the Third Gospel is not named. Considerable evidence points to Luke as its author. Much of that proof is found in the book of Acts, which identifies itself as a sequel to Luke (Ac 1:1–3). A major line of evidence has to do with the so-called “we” sections of the book (Ac 16:10–17; 20:5–15; 21:1–18; 27:1–37; 28:1–16). Most of Acts is narrated in third-person plural (“they,” “them”), but some later sections having to do with the ministry of the apostle Paul unexpectedly shift to first-person plural (“we,” “us”). This indicates that the author had joined the apostle Paul for the events recorded in those passages. Since there are no “we” passages in the Gospel of Luke, that fits with the author stating that he used eyewitness testimony to the life of Jesus (1:2), indicating he was not such an eyewitness himself.

Among Paul’s well-known coworkers, the most likely candidate is Luke, the doctor (see Col 4:14; Phm 24). That is also the unanimous testimony of the earliest Christian writers (e.g., Justin Martyr, the Muratorian Canon, and Tertullian). Since Luke is not named among the workers who were “of the circumcised” (i.e., a Jew; Col 4:11), he was almost certainly a Gentile. That explains the healthy emphasis on Gentiles in Luke (6:17; 7:1–10). Luke also reflects an interest in medical matters (e.g., 4:38; 14:2).

Setting

Traditionally, the Gospel of Luke is believed to have been written after both Matthew and Mark. Those who date Matthew and Mark in the AD 60s or 70s have tended to push the dating of Luke back to the AD 70s or 80s.

Special Features

The Gospel of Luke is the longest book in the New Testament. Focusing on the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, this Gospel is part one of a two-part history, the book of Acts being part two. Both were dedicated to “most honorable Theophilus” (Lk 1:3; Ac 1:1).

Extended Commentary

Luke 24:1-12

24:1. The world's worst Sabbath finally dragged to a close. Sundown brought a new day, the first day of the week. Now the women could fulfill their duty to Jesus and do something concrete to express their grief. But sundown brought darkness, when they could not venture outside their homes, so again they had to wait. The first rays of morning sun gave them opportunity to accomplish their task. They hurried off to the tomb where they had seen Joseph of Arimathea place Christ's body.

24:2–3. The stone was rolled from the tomb. Yes, the large stone that resembled a millstone that donkeys might pull did not have to be moved. They could enter the tomb immediately. As they did, they saw that the tomb was empty.

24:4–5. What had happened? What could they do? How could they stand the loss of his body in addition to losing him to death? From out of nowhere two men in glistening garments appeared. Dazzled by it all, the women fell face down to the ground, afraid to look up. Then those angelic voices addressed them: *Why do you look for the living among the dead?*

24:6–8. Again the voices. He is not here. He is risen! The angels reminded the women of what Jesus had said in Galilee. Then they remembered!

24:9. The women had followed Jesus and supported his ministry in Galilee (8:1–3). They had faithfully watched at the cross (23:49). They were certainly qualified witnesses to recognize and tell the story of Jesus. In Luke the women believed the resurrection and told about it without even encountering the resurrected Lord. Here the disciples, with Judas missing, of course, must learn the central theme of the faith from the faithful women.

24:10. Luke carefully documents the women involved. Mary Magdalene and Joanna were listed in chapter 8, as supporting Jesus in his ministry in Galilee. Here Luke adds one prominent name—Mary, the mother of James—and does not include Susanna from chapter 8. Mark 15:40 identifies the second Mary as the mother of James-the-less. This is usually taken to mean he is the same as the apostle James the son of Alphaeus, as distinct from the apostle James the son of Zebedee and the brother of John. It is quite striking, however, that James and Joseph were also names of Jesus' brothers (Mark 6:3). This James became a strong leader in the Jerusalem church and probably is the author of the Epistle of James. Could it be that the early tradition of the church quietly identified Jesus' mother as the mother of their leaders James and Joses rather than as the mother of Jesus in a humble effort not to pay too much homage to Mary? Is it not reasonable that Jesus' mother would have been among those first women seeking to pay honor to the dead son and to fulfill the ritual requirements of burial? This view is seldom espoused in scholarship but should not be totally dismissed. Present-day respect for Mary does not demand that the early church would always identify her as the mother of Jesus.

24:11. The apostles knew the women well and had traveled long miles and hours with them. Still, the men did not believe the women. This may show the chauvinistic, patriarchal bent of their society and times. It may show how totally separated the disciples were at this time from Jesus. They played a very minor role at the cross. (Luke has not mentioned them specifically since Jesus' arrest.) The disciples, like

the women, had ignored Jesus' passion predictions. They had no expectations of resurrection. The disciples had not seen or heard the "men" in the tomb. Resurrection and renewed fellowship with Jesus were something they did not even think about. They gathered for comfort in grief, not to find Jesus again. This apostolic skepticism is a major evidence for the truth of the resurrection. The apostles would not have invented the resurrection story. They had lost hope and sunk into despair at the arrest and death of Jesus.

24:12. Denying Peter was also impulsive, inquisitive Peter. The women's story pricked his conscience and challenged him to take a look for himself. Here the open tomb is taken for granted in the narrative. Peter easily entered the tomb. His response to such easy access was not recorded. The two "men" did not appear to Peter. All the evidence he had to go on were the cloths that had wrapped Jesus' body. They set him wondering. No one would remove the wrappings and then steal the body. Only a person needing to walk away would remove the cloths. Could the women's story be true?¹

References

1. Trent C. Butler, *Luke*, vol. 3, Holman New Testament Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 414–416.