



He Is Not Here. He Is Risen

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[Luke 24:1-12](#)

Jesus is alive and well! The tomb is empty! He is risen!

- The empty tomb of Jesus Christ declares resurrection power that no other religion can offer.
- God designed people to hunger for the supernatural, so people of all nations have religions of one sort or another that seek in some way to meet this need.
- The one limitation common to all mankind is death, which is the focal point of many religions.
- If a religion can give significant meaning to death, then it can give significant meaning to life.
- According to David Barrett, editor of the World Christian Encyclopedia, nearly 10,000 distinct religions exist in the world, and the number is steadily rising [Toby Lester, "Oh Gods!" The Atlantic Monthly, February 2002, p. 38]
- Many religious leaders from the past, and apparently even new ones today, are making claims that they have the answers to feed that gnawing hunger in the soul for something eternal.
- But the leaders of the world's religions have one thing in common, the grave, the final resting place.
- The grave is no respecter of persons. It's icy fingers grab the young as well as the old, it grabs the male as well as the female, the rich and poor.
- While there is no way to determine how many tears have been shed at the graveside, some things we do know about the grave.
- At some point in life, nearly everyone will contribute some of their tears there, and nearly everyone will become the focus of some of those tears when they, too, are planted in the grave.
- Of all the miracles Jesus performed, victory over the grave is the most significant.
- This power to melt the chill of death and to bring everlasting light to the deepest darkness could only come from One who Himself came forth victorious over the grave and all of its icy power.
- Jesus did this, but no other religious leader has demonstrated this power.
- A person can deny Jesus, lie about Him, and say that He didn't exist, or they can just ignore that He does exist.
- But the fact is that no religious leader has ever been able to put Him back in the grave.

He is risen!

- And he is the only one who walked out of the grave! That grave is empty today! We celebrate a risen Christ. Not a dead Christ, but a risen Christ.
- He didn't mess around with death, he conquered death and now through Him, we will conquer death.
- Oh death where is thy sting, oh grave where is thy victory. We have power, through the power of the resurrection.
- He is not there, the grave is empty, He is risen.
- The resurrection demonstrates the power of life over death, sickness, sin, and even the stress of our busy world today.
- But to hear about the resurrection is just part of its power. We shouldn't just hear about it, but we ought to live in it.
 - Because it's not just a story, it's what give us life. [now and eternally]
- I'm talking about the resurrection. We ought to live in the power of the resurrection.
- And if we do, we will walk out of the grave. We will have victory over death. We will rise to meet Jesus in the clouds of glory.
- We should make it a point to study the resurrection ourselves. We should examine ourselves.

How? But asking ourselves a few questions.

1. Am I living in the power of the resurrection?
2. Do I really believe the words of Jesus Christ?
3. Is there evidence in my life that proves what I believe?

- The real power of the resurrection was demonstrated not only 2,000 years ago, but is also demonstrated today in the lives of people who are following Jesus Christ.
- Those who refuse to give in to the power of darkness and are walking in the light of the resurrection, prove every day that God in the flesh was victorious over the grave.
- When people see your life change. When people see that you are victorious over a sinful past. When people see you rise to a newness of life.
- When they see the old man die in you, and a new man start living, it proves to them that Jesus got up out of the grave.
- Because if you can get up out of the grave of sin, if you can rise to the newness of life. If you can change, there had to be a resurrection.
- He's not here, He is risen.

When God's spirit lives in you, you will be victorious over death, hell and the grave.

- Joseph of Arimathea was known as a counselor. [see Luke 23:50] {It is interesting to note that Jesus who was called Counselor by the prophet Isaiah [Isaiah 9:6] was laid to rest in a tomb made for a counselor}
- Joseph of Arimathea looking for some answers himself. For a brief moment he held the answer to all the questions in life, and then he buried him.
 - Today counselors show up at traumatic events: grief counselors, child counselors, crisis counselors, the list is almost endless.
 - But even before the resurrection, one thing was clear, Joseph, the counselor, had something to learn from Jesus Christ, the Counselor.
 - While history has not given us the exact location where Joseph was buried, we do know that he was unable to repeat the miracle of walking out of the grave.
 - Joseph's unique place in history was secured by his willingness to serve Jesus even when it seemed there could be no benefit in it for himself.
 - Joseph had a longing in his soul for something eternal. He waited for the kingdom of God, and most likely was grieved when he laid the body of Jesus in to his own tomb.
 - Our text calls Joseph a good man and a just man, and these values motivated him to provide as best he could for the body of Jesus.
 - He was a member of the Sanhedrin, the governing body who consented to the death of Jesus; yet, Joseph himself did not offer such consent.
 - He was also a disciple of Jesus Christ.
 - His ability as a counselor didn't secure his place in history; but it was his love for Jesus Christ.
 - When he boldly approached Pilate, the man who was ultimately responsible for the death of Jesus, he made no secret of his desire.
 - This seems out of character for a "secret disciple", yet he "begged" for the body of Jesus Christ.
 - With his own hands, he removed the bloody corpse and carefully washed and wrapped the body of Christ according to the customs of the day.
 - In short, this suddenly bold disciple did all that he could; yet, Joseph had no power over the grave.
 - While he owned the grave in which he placed the body of Jesus, he knew, too, that the same grave would one day own him.
 - He showed the utmost kindness and respect for Jesus, and did all that a human could do for Him under these circumstances.

In many ways, Joseph represents leadership in the church today.

- For as he cared for the body of Jesus Christ, church leaders have a similar role in caring for the body of Christ, the church.
- Although Joseph provided a place for the body that he covered and tended to, he was powerless to give life to it.
- Christian leaders today care for the place where the body of Christ meets and guide the efforts to care for the body of Christ, but they still depend on the Holy Spirit of God to breathe life into the church.
- Without the breath of God, the church is dead. Jesus was lifeless in the arms of Joseph. Without God's spirit, the church is lifeless.
- The church must have the touch of God's spirit. We need God to breath upon us, that we might live. So that when we worship we're not just going through the motions but we are alive.
- So that when we sing, we're not just singing, but there is life in our song.
- Our harps are not hanging in the willows of agony and frustration, but we have found life in Jesus Christ.

He's not in the grave, He's alive!

- Even though the Spirit of God gives the church life, we still have to work at preparing it.
- Joseph prepared the body of Christ. We still have to do everything that we can do to prepare the body of Christ [church], but God is the one responsible for giving the body [church] life.
- This church is alive because God has breathed upon it. It's not the preaching or the singing, or anything else that gives it life. But it's God that gives the church life, because He is alive.
- And if you want to experience life, you can, through Jesus Christ. If you want to live and not just exist, you can, through Christ Jesus.
 - Because He lives, I can face tomorrow. Because he lives, I can ...
- Jesus prophesied that he was going to rise from the dead many times, but it was still a mystery to those who followed him.
- He told them about tearing down the temple and rebuilding it in three days. We know that He was talking about His own body, the Cross, and the Resurrection, but His disciples stumbled with it.
- They thought he was talking about a building, the Temple at Jerusalem.
- We read the gospels and we already know the outcome, but they heard the words of Jesus without knowing the end of the story.
- After knowing what we know about Jesus, we ought to be careful that we don't miss the power of the resurrection like His disciples did.
- The women were devoted to Jesus, they were compassionate towards Him.
- They carefully noted where the body of Jesus was laid, and went about the process of embalming it.
- This was no small gesture s they, too, were doing all they could do for the crucified Christ.
- The angels at the tomb reminded the women: Luke 24:6 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,

- Jesus told them He would be crucified and would be resurrected. He even told them it would happen on the third day; but, for some reason, both the women and the disciples failed to grasp the message.
- It would seem that if they believed what Jesus told them, they would have been eagerly awaiting the resurrection when they saw Him crucified.
- But instead they started getting the body for eternity in the grave. When they saw His first two prophecies regarding being turned over to sinful men and being crucified, they should have immediately prepared for the third thing He prophesied, the resurrection.
- While the women were doing all they could do in the flesh for Jesus, their actions showed that they really did not believe what Jesus told them.
- They were perplexed when the body was not where they thought it was. Maybe they imagined that the body was stolen; but if they had believed the prophecy of Jesus Himself, they would not have been perplexed.
- We can only imagine how the scene might have been if they had really believed His words.

- Instead of the Bible telling only what happened after the resurrection, we could have read the story of the very moment Jesus stepped from the tomb.
- Instead of showing up after He was gone and seeing the angels that remained, they could have been waiting for His resurrection on the third day.
- Imagine the testimony of the eleven if they would have been sitting outside the tomb when Jesus stepped out as the conqueror over the grave.
- Instead of being confused, there would have been joy and happiness. Because they would have been able to witness the resurrection first hand.
- They would have seen him slip out of the grips of death and the grave.
- Maybe the angels shouted at His resurrection like they did when he was born.
- Only heaven will reveal if there was a supernatural expression of the Glory of God at the resurrection.
- Jesus gave them the answer to their perplexity before they were perplexed
- They knew the answer before they knew the question.
- After the angels reminded the women at the tomb of the words of Jesus, they left the graveside to tell the disciples and the rest.

However, the disciples did not believe either.

- It's easy to understand why Peter and the rest of the disciple didn't believe the story of the embalming crew, but what we have to remember is that Jesus had told them the same story earlier.
- When Jesus tried to prepare them, they just couldn't fathom what He was talking about.
- And when it happened, it shocked them. They didn't know what to do. They weren't prepared to face the truth.
- Before we label the disciples and the women as faithless people, we may need to examine our own beliefs about the soon return of the Lord.
- He said he would return for those who love his appearing, and we should be eagerly anticipating the day instead of living like it could be a thousand years from now.
- For if we really believed, we'd live for Him. If we really believed, we would change. If we really believed, we'd be faithful.
- They were all close to Jesus and still missed the resurrection.
- We are in the church, don't miss the second coming. Be prepared.
- After all the miracles they saw Jesus work, and after all the teaching they heard from Jesus, I would think that they would remember a prophecy as important as the resurrection and to be ready for it.
- Instead of preparing the body for the grave, they would have been prepared themselves to witness the greatest even in history.
- But knowing what the grave is, they just couldn't believe that He could raise Himself from the dead.
 - They just couldn't believe that He had more power than death and the grave.
- They had seen so many that they knew and that they were related to put into a grave and life was over.
- Except the times that Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, the widows son at Nain, and the daughter of Jarius.
- But now Jesus was the victim. He was dead. So, who was going to raise Him.
- After all they had witness Jesus do, they seem to have more faith in the grave then they did in Him.
- Surely after all we've seen God do. After He has filled you with His Spirit. [See Acts 2]
- After He has completely changed your life. Surely we would believe on Him.
- But I fear that like the devout men and women who sought to prepare spices according to their custom for the burial of Jesus, that we are so focused on the day to day customs of Christianity that we could loose sight of the words that Jesus spoke.
- We can be so busy preparing the spices that we miss the entire purpose of the resurrection.
- We can become so guilty of talking about who's going to roll the stone away, or move the obstacle, that we fail to realize that it has already been moved.
- That doesn't mean that we should neglect the day to day responsibilities of living for God.
- But we can't get so caught up living for God that we miss our purpose for living for Him.
- We must be prepared for the eminent return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

***2 Peter 1:10** ... 'give diligence to make your calling and election sure...*

- After the women testified of the empty tomb, Peter examined the site where the body was laid.
- We have details as to how the grave clothes were placed, and the text tells us that the women observed closely where the body had been.

- There could be no mistake about the location of the gravesite. The empty tomb is what sets biblical Christianity apart from every other religion on earth, and it is concrete evidence that Jesus Christ has defeated death.
 - If God in flesh can defeat death once, God in our flesh can also defeat death for us!
- The apostle Paul declared in Romans 8:11 that if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.
- Some will tell you that Jesus didn't die on the cross; but that He only fainted or passed out.
- Which is just another way to question the resurrection. But that's not new.
- If you read the Quran [Koran] you will discover that the nation of Islam teaches that Jesus did not die on the cross. [Rashad Khalifa, PH. D., Quran: The Final Testament, Authorized English Version, 61]
- This argument is not new, but not true either.
- Jesus did die on the cross and He died for our sins. The tomb is empty today because He is risen.
- Joseph didn't make a mistake. He took Jesus off the cross. He washed and wrapped his body, and he never noticed that Jesus was breathing, that would be impossible.
 - The women who saw him before he was placed into the grave knew he was dead.
- We have written testimonies of those who saw the man Christ Jesus post-mortem.
- Others have claimed that the Jews or even government soldiers stole the body of Jesus which is absurd.
- If they had stolen His body, surely when they noise of the resurrection began, they would have produced the body to prove that He had not really resurrected.
- The last thing they wanted was the revival that sparked when word started getting around about the resurrection and that took off after the day of Pentecost.
- If either one of these groups would have stolen the body to confound the disciples, they would have made sure it was discovered again to stop the talk of the resurrection.

Matthew talked about that conspiracy in [28:12-15](#).

- And still, there were others who just didn't believe who claimed that the disciples stole his body to pretend that he had resurrected.
- But if that were true then they would not have been so perplexed when they heard about the resurrection.
- They didn't steal his body so others would think he had resurrected; when they found out he was alive, they had trouble believing it themselves.
- Thomas wouldn't believe it until he touched the nail prints in His hands and the wound in His side.

The fact is: **Jesus is risen.**

- Despite the questions and perplexity the resurrection caused the women and the disciples, today we can be absolutely certain that it did, in fact, happen.
- It may seem like the ministry of Jesus before the resurrection was longer and filled with more miracles, but the fact remains that His ministry after the resurrection is still ongoing some 2,000 years later.
- Miracles still happen, and each one testifies to the resurrection power of Jesus Christ.
- Jesus Himself made sure that there could be no question about the authenticity of the resurrection.
- According to all four of the Gospels, He presented Himself for inspection at least ten times.

Luke records two of them:

1. To the Emmaus-bound disciples in Luke 24:13-35
2. To the ten disciples [Thomas was not there] in verses 36-49

- In the book of Acts 1:3, Luke wrote that Christ made the resurrection certain among many by showing "himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.
- The most convincing evidence of the resurrection is the testimony of the angels "He is not here, but is risen".
 - Today, we can echo that testimony!
- Everyone who finds grace at the cross of Jesus Christ can say, "He is risen!"
- I once was lost, but now I'm found. He is risen!

Conclusion:

- The resurrection sets Christianity apart from all religions, but its full effect is not restricted to the man Jesus Christ.
- This great faith began shortly after life reentered the body of Jesus Christ in the tomb.
- It became alive in the church when the breath of life blew through an upper room filled with believers who desired more from Jesus.
- They had experienced His ministry first-hand, and wanted Him to continue to minister in their lives according to His promise.
- Today, when we are filled with the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus Christ, we too can walk past the grave.
- A life of sin and corruption is washed away when we are baptized. We arise from the watery grave to walk in the newness of life.
- We know He is risen because we have died to sin and have raised in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Our lives are completely different. There's been a change.
- When the power of the Holy Spirit turns your life around, you can't help but shout, "He is risen!"
- You can experience the change of the resurrection today.