

# Luke 24:1-12

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[ 0 : 00 ] Please stand for the reading of God's Word. But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared.

And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel.

And 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? He's not here, but has risen.

Remember how he told you while he was still in Galilee that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise. And they remembered his words.

And returning from the tomb, they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest.

Now 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. But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.

[ 1 : 08 ] But Peter rose and ran to the tomb, stooping and looking in. He saw the linen clothes by themselves, and he went home marveling at what happened. This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God. You may be seated. Thank you. Good morning.

I trust that I'm not on. I'm on. I trust that I'm not the first person to greet you this morning. It's a joy to be together as we make our way just to a brief prayer together.

For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last, He will stand upon the earth. Jesus, this morning, would you stand in the presence of your people, that your voice may be heard, your call may be answered, and your greater glory become our life's desire.

Father, would you make much of your Son this morning. Spirit, would you unveil our eyes, that we may see the glory of the risen Lord Jesus. Amen.

[ 2 : 30 ] Our world consists of many tombs. Many belong to plain and ordinary people. A few belong to our loved ones, and on occasion we might visit them.

Only a handful are world-renowned. In our country, arguably the most infamous tomb belongs to no individual, rather a group of unknown soldiers.

There it stands in Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, D.C., guarded 24 hours a day, seven days a week, since the year 1930.

The guards rotate every 30, 60, or 120 minutes, depending on the season. At least one stands on guard, regardless of the weather. As a testimony to the significance of the tomb, emblematic of those who die in combat, whose remains are unrecovered or unable to be identified.

Perhaps the most intriguing tomb was stumbled upon by farmers in 1974, while digging in Xi'an, China. There rests the remains of the first emperor of China, accompanied by 8,000 life-size terracotta soldiers, over 100 chariots, nearly 700 horses, not to mention non-military life-size sculptures.

[ 3 : 59 ] The entire burial site is 38 square miles. Historians estimate that when it was all said and done, it involved over 700,000 laborers.

More can be said about tombs and graves and death and burials. I've said nothing about the pyramids in Egypt, the Roman catacombs, or the Mayan ceremonial burial sites in South America. Tombs and burials, anthropologists tell us, are one of the facets of being human. We bury our dead. It is a sign of respect, a mark of solidarity. It's one of the greatest dishonors to leave the deceased unburied. This Easter morning, we find ourselves going to a tomb.

It is the central object of this text. Not any tomb, but the one that belonged or was consigned to Jesus of Nazareth. What unfolds will unveil a reality for all who pledge themselves to Christ, that the

dead in Christ shall live again.

[ 5 : 12 ] Luke has a lot of data to work from. If you've been with us regularly on Sunday mornings, Luke has told us that Jesus had been with the disciples for at least 40 days post-resurrection.

We know there's additional material because he includes in another episode in the book of Acts, the second volume. Yet here at the end of his gospel, in chapter 24, he deliberately chooses to exclude much of his material.

Rather, he simply records for us one day. One of the 40 days. They're broken up into three episodes. Early morning, which we'll see verses 1 to 12 this morning.

The afternoon, which begins in verse 13 and concludes in verse 32. And the late evening. It's striking. He had enough material to probably compile another volume.

But he leaves us one day. One day recording the most significant event in all of history. Would it be enough?

[ 6 : 28 ] Is this sufficient for the Christian faith? We're only going to focus on the first 12 verses this morning. My hope is that after delving into these first 12 verses, your afternoon may be spent revisiting this text and reading further.

The outline of our time together this morning will revolve around the central object of the tomb. The women went to the tomb. Verse 1.

We'll talk about what transpires at the tomb. Verses 2 to 8. And lastly, we'll conclude with what unfolds from the tomb.

Verses 9 to 12. To the tomb. At the tomb. From the tomb. And to the tomb we go. Verse 1. The chapter begins with a conjunction.

But it is a continuation of what has been written before. The chapter break is sensible because it is the start of a new day. But it actually interrupts the flow of the text.

[ 7 : 33 ] The body of Jesus was taken by a man named Joseph of Arimathea. It was wrapped and laid into a tomb. And I'll actually begin reading in chapter 23, verse 54.

Because it will set this first point. It reads this. It was the day of preparation. And the Sabbath was beginning.

The women who had come with him, namely Jesus from Galilee, followed and saw the tomb and how his body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments.

On the Sabbath, they rested according to the commandment. Luke is following the women. Who are the central characters of this passage, of our passage this morning.

They were the women who had followed Jesus from Galilee. They had come to the city of Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. Some of the women are named later in verse 10.

[ 8 : 31 ] We see them, Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, among others. They had followed the body, being aware of Jesus' final resting place. Knowing where Jesus was laid, they returned to where they were staying.

Because they had to prepare the remainder of the spices and the ointments to complete the Jewish burial of Jesus. However, they were constrained for a day. Because of the legal obligation to rest on the Sabbath.

The women's intention was to return to the tomb in order to anoint the body. After the body had been laid for at least a day, the text tells us that early in the morning, arguably at first light on Sunday, they returned to the tomb with the spices they had prepared.

The women did not get lost, as some skeptics assert. Luke has been careful to situate this among a handful of women. They did not all go to the incorrect tomb, as some suggest.

The women are at the grave they were at previously, 24 hours earlier. Interestingly, Luke places the women as the central characters. At the time when women's testimonies were considered unreliable, both by Jewish and Roman jurisprudence, Luke is recording transparently.

[ 9 : 53 ] Some have even implied that one of the women were his original source, since he himself was not there. Luke is not trying to make a case for the credibility of the women, though they were even questioned by the early church fathers.

He wants to speak plainly and accurately, attesting to the resurrection's factuality. The credibility of the witnesses is definitely important. But for Luke, what was of utmost importance was the resurrection event.

The text makes it absolutely clear that the women went to the tomb to anoint a body. We would be misreading this text to believe that they were anticipating the resurrection.

They were not. If they truly anticipated a resurrection, and they believed in the resurrection, they would have sat outside the tomb, or even more boldly and eerily, sat inside the tomb, and waited for Jesus' body to awaken and emerge.

Yes, it would be super eerie, but if they truly anticipated it, that's what they would have done. They went to the tomb to anoint a body.

[11:12] Secondly, at the tomb. At the tomb, the women don't find a body. Instead, they receive a message.

At the tomb, the women receive a message. The majority of the account transpires at the tomb. Conveniently, the women found the large stone that had sealed the entrance of the tomb already rolled away.

Inconveniently, the body they were looking to anoint, what they were unable to find. The text gives us their response. They are perplexed, puzzled, another translation says.

They are mentally at a loss. And in their perplexity, two men, surely angelic beings, appear in dazzling apparel. They are angelic figures.

Because whenever you encounter an angel in the Bible, fear is the natural outcome. They are frightened, and they bow their faces to the ground. You know this, because whenever angels visited at the beginning of Luke to announce the birth of Jesus, everyone responded in fear.

[12:18] That's why the angels, usually the first line that comes out of their mouth is, Fear not. Fear not. The shepherds who received the message of divine birth were filled with great fear.

Mary herself was greatly troubled. So much the angel had to dispel her fear. Zachariah, fear fell upon him. The reaction is fear by the women. And they're prostrate before the angelic beings. And they are given a message. A message comprised of three things. A rebuke, a declaration, and a reminder.

The rebuke comes in the form of a pointed question. Why are you looking for the living among the dead? The rebuke may sound insensitive. Here you have grieving women over the loss of a loved one seeking to honor Jesus in a burial, only to be corrected that all their plans and preparations to treat the body of Jesus were misplaced.

The women were here to anoint a body. The angels were here to declare a resurrection. There's a rebuke followed by a declaration. And the declaration is found in verse 6.

[13:31] He is not here, but he is risen, has risen. Here we find an element of the gospel message. The death that the women witnessed had been overturned.

I'm going to spend some time here on this point, this declaration. The missing body needed an explanation. And the angels are here to provide it. The body has not been exhumed or moved. It has not been stolen. You are not at the wrong grave. The fact is the body is not here because it is risen. But note this.

The fact that the body is not there does not lead to faith, immediate faith. It requires an interpretation. How are you to understand an empty tomb?

The empty tomb actually caused perplexity and confusion. It must be explained. Well, the declaration is made. He was raised. Well, you may say, well, our resurrection is novel.

[14:33] Actually, they're not that novel in ancient literature. They're not uncommon. Even in popular culture today, they're not uncommon. A lot of movies attest to humanity's obsession with resurrection.

I just saw the Justice League, where the dead Superman needed to be raised back to life. Movie franchises such as Alien and Terminator have attempted to prolong their relevance by incorporating the resurrection of their main characters.

Yes, even Disney gives hints at resurrection. The dead beast is raised to life. A prince to fulfill the hopes and the dreams of Disney.

And even the Lion King. As little Simba, young Simba, hears the voice of his father emerging from the sky.

Yet, these are just manifestations of human desire. Is it actually possible a resurrection is true? And this is what separates the Christian faith from every faith.

[15:43] It's not only, the Christian faith not only records and attests to a resurrection, but it rests on the certainty of a resurrection. This is not only a spiritual resurrection.

This is not a reincarnation as another being or another person. As a young, as a middle schooler, my parents would send me to, and I've shared this here, send me to Taiwan to acquire language

and culture.

And I stayed with a college roommate of my father's, and they were devout Buddhists. And in Asia, there are giant bugs, huge bugs, which I'm fine with because I get to kill.

Except, in Buddhist families, you cannot slay anything. Because that actually might be a person. This is not that.

This resurrection is not just a spiritual resurrection. It's not a mental resurrection as some desire, that is desired by modern cryogenics. Cryogenics, get this, so I go to the, I Google it because Google knows everything.

[16:57] Cryogenics is an effort to save lives by using temperatures so cold that a person beyond help by today's medicine might be preserved for decades or centuries until future medical technology can restore that person to full health.

It's a second chance of life, this website asserts. It is the reasoned belief in the advancement of future medicinal technologies, being able to cure things we can't cure today.

And you'll hear stories of freezing individuals, maybe preserving their brains and uploading it to a supercomputer one day. It's not a spiritual resurrection.

It's not a mental resurrection. This is a bodily, full bodily resurrection. And if you want to dismantle Christianity, then attack the resurrection.

This is where Christianity's credibility lies. Well, do you want to know why God had to raise Jesus from the dead?

[18:04] It's one to describe the event. But more importantly, why is it important? What does the resurrection mean? Richard Phillips this past week made the news for a record that he set.

He spent the last 45 years in prison for a crime he did not commit. He was imprisoned at the age of 27, and the next month he turned 72.

The time he served behind bars makes Phillips, according to the University of Michigan Law School, the longest-serving exonerated in history. His lawyer said the system failed him.

There's no question about it. And on his release, his lawyer said, justice is being done today. When we look at this, we cry, what an injustice.

That's wrong. That's everything wrong with the legal system. Condemned for something he did not do. Time lost. A life missed. Now get this.

[19:09] How much more for capital crime victims? What if you slay or put to death a man or a woman for a crime he didn't commit?

How unjust is that? How wrong is that? Well, that is what happened, isn't it? This is the justice of God at work, is it not?

Because here you have a man, according to, I think, maybe the Good Friday text that we read, where after he died, Luke, the guard, the centurion, next to the cross said, surely this man is innocent.

You see, crucifixion in those days was a means of capital punishment, and it rightly fell on the guilty and the deserving. And the final human verdict on Jesus was that he was deserving of death.

Yet God disagreed with that verdict. Jesus was an innocent man, undeserving of the punishment he received. And if he remained dead, then heaven would have affirmed his death and said, yeah, he's guilty.

[20:24] Let him rest. But heaven itself, the high court of heaven, came down and stamped out the world's injustice. In the resurrection, Jesus got what he deserved.

It's God's reversal of the injustice of the world. God overturned the human verdict to vindicate his son. The original verdict was unjust.

The final verdict would be perfectly just. And this is your plight, is it not? This is my plight. We all die because of sin. We all die because of sin.

And in the court of heaven, your death is a just pronouncement. We deserve death. But the resurrection of Jesus gives us renewed hope that somehow what I deserve, the just verdict of death, can be overturned.

And it can be. Why? Because Christ suffered once for sins. The righteous for the unrighteous.

[21:40] That he might bring us to God. He was put to death in the flesh, raised, made alive in the spirit, Peter tells us. That is the declaration.

That is why God had to raise Jesus. Well, we see, firstly, a rebuke.

Secondly, a declaration. And more quickly, finally, a reminder. The women are given a reminder of Jesus' words. Jesus had foretold to them that he would be delivered in the hands of sinful men, of which they already witnessed.

Jesus had foretold that he would be crucified, of which they witnessed. He had foretold that he would be turned over to sinful men. He would be crucified.

And lastly, he would rise on the third day. And the conclusion that women were to draw was that what Jesus foretold, he would fulfill. He would fulfill.

[ 22 : 41 ] The plan from the outset for Jesus was birth, life, death, burial, and resurrection. It was the blueprint given in Luke chapter 9. The template was reinforced in Luke 17, again in Luke 18.

The angels are not there to say something new. They were not to say, oh, surprise. Surprise. They were there to retrieve the words that Jesus had already said.

That's why Luke is able to say, and they remembered his words in verse 8. They were reminded of what already had been revealed. What Jesus had predicted now came to pass.

And it is to show us that nothing will derail God's plan to save his people. None can stay his hand. None can thwart his will. If you read it closely, it says the Son of Man must be delivered.

The must is a key. Because what is planned and foretold must come to pass. I keep a to-do list, as probably many of you, because I don't do much, but what I need to do I write down.

[ 23 : 51 ] And we keep to-do lists to track progress and to seek to complete tasks. But life happens. Things unfold during our day, don't they? Our schedules are derailed by life, busyness, distractions, unproductivity, Facebook, things like that.

But God is unlike us. As God wrote down his to-do list in the beginning, he ensured that his to-do list would be completed. His uttering of it is finished on the cross is not only that his life is finished, but his to-do list is finished.

His mission is finished. God would not be deterred from his plan. Even the great pest of death would not deter his plan. We've seen it in the book of Acts.

Even when God's servants die, Jesus himself dies. His apostles die. The word goes forth. God's plan continues.

Death derails every single human plan. It decimates families. It leaves parents heartbroken. It makes children orphans.

[ 25 : 00 ] It leaves ambition unaccomplished. It shatters dreams. It is the same conclusion to every single life. Death will derail whatever plan you have. Yet this will not be the case for the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Death, the great annoyance, is destroyed. The sting is removed. It will be victorious no more. So much so that Paul the apostle actually mocks death.

And laughs at death. That which claims our life. The gospel of Jesus Christ mocks. And the angels make the announcement.

And they declare, he is not here. He is risen. In the same way the biblical text unfolds as angels announcing Jesus' first birth. They are now announcing, get this, his second birth.

He was first born in Bethlehem. Now he's reborn in Jerusalem. At his first birth, he was laid down in a manger, wrapped in swaddling cloths. At his second death, he was laid down in a tomb, unwrapping the linen cloths.

[ 26 : 02 ] He was first born and laid down in vulnerability. He is now raised and reborn in invincibility. He was born the first time, humble and lowly. He was born the second time, raised in power and exalted.

He was born the first time into creation. He is reborn the second time over creation. And this is what the Bible means when it asserts that Jesus is the firstborn in all creation.

This is who the Bible asserts to be the firstborn among the dead. The ruler of the kings of the earth. Who is this king of glory? Let me tell you, it is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Oh man, it's exciting. At the tomb, the women receive a message. But we're not done yet. Thirdly and lastly, from the tomb, verses 9 to 11.

The women return from the tomb. And they proclaim this message. They likely return to a company of apostles who are assembled. And they're likely petrified of authorities and possibly hiding out together.

[ 27 : 09 ] The movement had ceased because their master was deceased. And in the state of uncertainty, since their hope had failed them, according to chapter 24, verse 21. It was not

far-fetched to think that they were hiding for their lives.

They would be stamped out just as Jesus was stamped out. Because they had caused a disturbance to the Jewish world. And the women return from the tomb. And they reassemble with the eleven and the rest.

It is in this company of the eleven that the women become the first proclaimers of the resurrection. The women returned convinced that Jesus was who he claimed to be, namely the Lord Jesus, according to verse 3.

They had yet to see his risen body, but they had received the promised word and a few scary angels as well. But Jesus' words became the women's words.

And this was the content of their proclamation. It became the words the women proclaimed. And one would think that the chapter would end here.

[ 28 : 21 ] And all believed. And they went off merrily, filled with joy. Yet they did not all affirm belief. But the text demonstrates that the proclamation of the resurrection of Jesus will produce two divergent paths.

They are marked out by the ESV Bible by the word but, the two conjunctions. Verse 11 begins with one, and verse 12 has the second one. The first is this.

When the gospel is proclaimed, it will produce, in sum, idleness. Idleness. Luke records for us the first unbelievers. You would think they are idolaters or some other Roman people that worship other gods.

Shockingly, the first unbelievers are actually the majority of the eleven and those who followed Jesus. The reception of the resurrection proclaimed is unbelief.

They are skeptical. The apostles heard the women's testimony and disregarded it. It seemed to them an idle tale. We actually get the word delirious from this word.

[ 29 : 38 ] They thought they were worthless words. Fiction. Myth. Delirious. Literally translated, utter nonsense. The apostles heard the word and responded in unbelief, disbelief.

The first unbelievers were Jesus' own disciples. Those who spent the most time with him were the first to express disbelief, doubt. They received the words as idle words.

And their inaction marked their idleness. But the second response is this. It's contracted, contrasted by eagerness.

You see it. But Peter rose, ran, stooping, and looking. You see the sequence of verbs, don't you? Because Peter, for some reason, what was idle to others, awakened Peter. Causing an eagerness is highlighted by these verbs. Rose and ran, stooping and looking.

[ 30 : 44 ] And you see this first account of the proclamation of the resurrection is how the world receives the gospel today.

Some in this room will sit idly, indifferent, rejecting the account, and others will rise eagerly, awakened, pursuing the word of Christ.

And I can assure you that those who pursue this word will go home marveling at what has happened. We can divide up this very room with these two reactions.

And for those of you who sit idly, I want to compel you toward action. Tell someone you want to go to the tomb. Whether literally you can, or figuratively.

Seize the opportunity to participate in Christianity Explored. Say to a loved one who brought you this morning, that you see something different about their life.

[ 31 : 45 ] Ask them, what happened to you? Say something to myself or Pastor Helm along the lines of, I really want to believe, help my unbelief. You see, the fact of the resurrection of Jesus is of no use unless you pursue it and seize it.

You actually have to opt in. And I'll conclude with this. A few years back, I was made aware of a class action lawsuit against a shoe company. Class action lawsuits, there's a handful of people that practice law.

If I get it wrong, you could ask them. But class action lawsuits, in short, are lawsuits where one of the parties is represented collectively by a single member.

So, a co-worker who had the same shoes told me about this case. The company that manufactured these shoes had produced misleading advertisements and false claims.

And he told me I could go to a particular website and fill out my personal information and I could opt in to this lawsuit against this shoe company.

[ 32 : 55 ] I went to the website and opted in because the payout was a refund. To my surprise, my co-worker chose not to opt in. And nearly two years had passed.

And to my surprise, I received two checks in the mail because I had two pairs of these shoes. As a result of the lawsuit. The single consumer representative had won the case.

And I became a beneficiary because I opted in. I did nothing.

I simply owned the two pairs of shoes. I was not there when the verdict was pronounced. I was not physically present. I was simply told via a letter. And I received a check which convinced me that the verdict and the pronouncement was effectual.

Jesus has gone to trial. He was condemned as guilty. Raised innocent. Accursed of God and buried in death. Vindicated by God and raised to new life.

[ 34 : 03 ] This is the courtroom we all must stand in. Before God Himself. But in Christ, this is a class action lawsuit.

Because by yourself, before God, you will stand condemned. But get this. I have a representative who went before me.

And the outcome of his case is transferred and applied to me. I am a beneficiary. I was not there at the resurrection. I was not there at the death.

I was not there at the ascension. But I have received every benefit of that event. In new life. That this congregation. When we assemble at the end of April.

When nearly a thousand adults assemble. That is a testimony. Of the vindication of Jesus Christ. That what was done.

[ 35 : 11 ] In heaven's courtroom. Is applied to you. But get this. You have to opt in. You must opt in. My co-worker.

Shockingly to me said. Bing, I'm not going to opt in. I said. That's a free \$90. And what will shock me.

Is some of you will walk out. And not opt in. Today. Today. Is a day of salvation. If you hear his voice.

Today. Do not harden your heart. Often. In Jesus' death. Guilt is defeated.

In Jesus' resurrection. His innocence is declared. In us. He is pronounced guilty. In him. We are pronounced innocent. That is the gospel. This is the good news.

[ 36 : 09 ] Of Jesus Christ. Share it. Seize it. Pursue it. Cling to it. And I can say with confidence.

That day. When you are buried. In the ground. Together. One day. He will raise you back up. In the same way. He raised his son.

Back up. Why? It's a class action lawsuit. What happens to the son. Happens to. All the children. Oh father.

Father. Father. This is the good news. Of Jesus. Christ. The saving news. Free.

Freely. Proclaimed. To all the nations. Freely seized. By any individual. Effectual. It is effectual. Oh father.

[ 37 : 07 ] Save. For Jesus sake. For Jesus sake. We are going to close our time.

Singing. Frozen.