

He Is Risen!

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[0 : 00] Surprises. There are basically two kinds of surprises. There are the welcome surprises, and then there are the unwelcome surprises. Welcome surprises are you get your taxes done, and you've got a sweet refund. Do I have an amen? Or if you're playing Monopoly and you fall on the chance thing, you get the card that says, go to go and collect \$200. That's a welcome surprise.

An unwelcome surprise is when you have your taxes done and you owe money more than you expected and maybe more than you planned on, yours truly. Or you're playing Monopoly and you fall on the chance thing and you get the card that says, inheritance tax, pay \$200. That's an unwelcome surprise.

But perhaps the greatest surprise of all is Easter. Easter is the annual celebration of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and it's a game changer.

All throughout the ages, since the first century, the Christian church has been proclaiming that Jesus Christ is alive today and changing lives. He is alive. He's risen. He's risen indeed.

Now for many of you in the room, when we started the service and you heard me say, he is risen, you responded, he is risen indeed with every fiber of your being because you have come to know the risen Jesus personally. You know him. You have experienced his mercy and his grace.

[2 : 03] He has changed you. He has changed you. He continues to change you for his name's sake. The first time you heard the good news of Christ's death and resurrection and you had ears to hear, you welcomed it. The surprise of the resurrection was welcomed good news because you realized at that moment Jesus had died and was raised for you. But let's just be honest, even if you're a Christian, you can have some doubts, you can have some hard experiences where you're condemning yourself for sins you've committed. And maybe even if you just remain silent about Jesus, well, got a surprise for you today. So there's some in this room that give a hearty yes and amen to this surprise news of the resurrection of Jesus. It's welcome news. But for others of us in this room, it may not be as welcome. You may be skeptical about the resurrection. And that's not necessarily a bad thing. It's just that you're like, hey, dead people don't come back to life three days later. That's impossible according to the laws of nature. Well, maybe there's a surprise for you this morning.

I'm glad that you're here. Maybe you're not skeptical. Maybe you're just a little bit more pragmatic.

So your thinking goes something like this. Hey, you know what? I'm a pretty busy person.

I'm working hard during the week. And if I'm going to plan my Sunday morning, I got stuff to do. And in that stuff to do, Jesus just doesn't fall into the mix. It's not that I don't believe he existed. He's just not that important to me. Well, for the pragmatists in the room, I have a surprise for you this morning. And then there are the searchers among us.

Every three to five years, you find yourself giving yourself fully to something new. Maybe when you were in school, it was your grades. Maybe it turned into environmentalism.

Maybe it became the cause of sex trafficking. Maybe it became your career. Maybe it came raising children, having a family. But every three to five years, you're turning to something new in order to scratch that itch deep inside of you. I've got some good news for you this morning.

[4 : 43] And then there are the guilt ridden among us. You have deep levels of shame and guilt for real pain that has been inflicted on you or you have inflicted upon others. It's real. And so there are things that you have experienced that you are so ashamed of that you will never tell anyone until all the way up to your death.

Your greatest fear is having these shameful happenings exposed. So here's how you get by. You find ways to hide the shame and numb the guilt.

And in so doing, you keep people just far enough away. We'll have good news for you this morning. Someone already sees it all and wants to come close.

Jesus died and was raised for skeptics, for pragmatists, for searchers, and for the guilt ridden. He came for you and me.

And not only did he die, he was raised. And this resurrection is to be a welcomed surprise announcement. Jesus is alive today.

[6 : 13] Changing lives. We heard that from Billy Johnson already. So here's how we're going to move forward this morning. I'm going to walk you through an eyewitness account of the resurrection of Jesus.

It's given to us by a guy named Luke. The Gospel of Luke. He was a first century doctor and he was a very careful historian. And you'll see that as we go through this account.

And what this eyewitness account claims is that Jesus was dead and now he's alive changing people. And you're going to see it as a series of surprises.

And after we're done walking through that, I'm going to summarize it and then I'm going to say, here's some things to think about on your way out. So let's walk through Luke's account in Luke 24. Danielle read a good chunk of it. She read through verse 7. I'm going to walk you through chapter 24 verses 1 through 12. In your Black Pew Bible, I think it's page 1051 or pretty close to that.

[7 : 20] Luke 24. So here's how we're going to walk through. We're going to see first a scene that should not surprise you. And then we're going to move to another scene where it's a tomb surprise.

Wait on it. And then an angelic surprise. Wait on it. And then a people surprise. A series of surprises that culminate.

It's all about Jesus is alive. So 24.1, we read, but on the first day of the week at early dawn, they went to the tomb taking the spices they had prepared.

Who is this they? Well, Luke tells us. Look at verse 10. Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who went back to the apostles.

They're on their way to the tomb. And the reason why they're on the way to the tomb is hinted at because they're carrying spices. They're burial spices. So here's what has happened. Jesus died on a Friday.

[8 : 26] And then came Saturday, which for the Jews at the time is called the Sabbath. It's the last day of the week. Nobody worked on the Sabbath. And then came Sunday, the first day of the week.

And so Jesus was crucified on a Friday. These women didn't have time to prepare their body. They couldn't prepare his body for burial because it was a kind of a work. So they had to wait out the Sabbath.

And then first thing on Sunday morning, they're back to the tomb in order to prepare his body. But here's what you need to know about these women. These women have been traveling with Jesus. They're from Galilee. Some of them have been with Jesus for three years. They had witnessed his miracles. They had heard his teaching. They had experienced him personally.

They knew the sound of his voice. They themselves were helped fund his itinerant ministry. They were committed. And so these are the same women who just days before had watched Jesus be crucified.

[9 : 31] They watched him die. They watched his body be taken down from the cross. And they watched, chapter 23, verse 55, Luke is very specific.

They see where his body was laid. They saw the tomb. They know where he's at. And so these women are going to the tomb.

And it shouldn't surprise you that these women are grieving. And not just grieving, their hope has been crushed.

Because this was the guy just a week before Jesus was welcomed into Jerusalem to crowds singing his praises like he's a returning king.

They were thinking, this is the Messiah, the Christ, the long-awaited one. But now their hopes have been crushed. It's all changed.

[10 : 31] He's dead. And so maybe you know what it's like to have the very thing that you were banking all your hopes on pulled right out from underneath you.

That's what these women are experiencing. So it's no surprise here. These women are grieving. They're crushed. It's hopeless.

They're just going to do what they need to do to prepare his body. They're fully expecting to find the dead body of Jesus where they had left it on Friday.

So no surprise here. Now we start entering the surprises with verse 2. And what we first run into are some tomb surprises. You ready for this?

Look at verse 2. And they found the stone rolled away. So they walk up to where the tomb was. And remember, they knew where it was, 2355. And the stone had been rolled away in front of the entrance of the tomb.

[11 : 33] It would have been hundreds of pounds. The only way to move a stone like that is by rolling it downhill or by levering it. And what it was for was to block the entrance of the tomb so no animals could get inside, so no grave robbers could get in there.

And so they walk up in surprise. The stones rolled away. Here's how they were feeling. Just imagine you go home after the service today and whether it's a house or an apartment, you left your house with a front door lock and you come to your house.

Front door is wide open. Surprise! That's a sample of how they're feeling right now.

What's going on? It's an alarming surprise. And then we have another surprise in verse 3. Not only is this tomb open, they go into the tomb and they do not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

It's an open and empty tomb. Which is even more surprising than it being open. So, in verse 4, we read, while they were perplexed about this, it was confusing to them.

[12 : 53] You'd be confused too. You're coming to the tomb because the one that you'd set your hope on has died. You just want to put spices on his body and give an honorable death, burial, and you walk up and all of a sudden the thing's open and there's no body inside.

Where's the body? Who took the body? And why would anybody take his body? The tomb surprise is a confusing surprise.

surprise. And if you were there, you would have been as confused as they were as well. And then something happens.

More surprises. An angelic surprise. And this angelic surprise is a surprising appearance as well as a surprising question as well as a surprising connection.

So look at the surprising appearance. Verse 4, While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men in dazzling apparel stood by them.

[14 : 05] It's a surprising appearance of two angels. And you know they're angels because of their dazzling apparel. They were shining. This word dazzle is the same word that describes Jesus' radiant glory at his transfiguration.

They were radiating light. And notice, they're radiating light next to these women in the tomb.

Literally, they are bringing light into the dark tomb. They're bringing clarity to their confusion.

Angels, when they come on the scene, they make announcements.

We see that in the gospel of Luke that the birth of Jesus is announced by angels at the beginning of the book. And here at the end of the gospel of Luke, we have angels announcing his resurrection.

And so, we have the surprise appearance of these angels and the women. They're afraid and they bow their eyes. they don't want to look. They don't want to look. And now, there's this surprise question and announcement.

[15 : 25] Look at verse 5. They say, and as they were frightened and bowed their face to the ground, the men, the angels said to them, why do you seek the living among the dead? Why do you seek the living among the dead?

Here's how to think about it. They're kind of like, duh. What are you doing here? Why do you think Jesus would be here?

Why are you seeking the living one in a cemetery? It's a surprising question.

And they go on to say, he's not here, but has risen. He's alive. In the original language that this was written in, that verb has risen, scholars call it a divine passive.

And here's what that means. These angels are saying that God has raised him from the dead. And so for their questions about who stole his body, these angels are saying, nobody stole his body.

[16 : 34] God raised him from the dead. These angels are kind of like saying, hey, let's just set the record straight so there's no confusion.

He's not here. Dead people are in tombs. He's not dead. He's alive. He's alive. And if that were not, there's now this surprising connection.

And we see that in verse 6. He is not here, but has risen. You see the word remember? 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. It's a really important connection that they're making here.

These angels are saying, duh, he's not here. He's risen. Like he said he would be. He's fulfilling the divine must.

[17 : 54] These angels are making a connection between what Jesus foretold and what Jesus has fulfilled. He foretold. He foretold that he was going to die.

And not just that, he foretold where he would die. He foretold who would kill him. He foretold how he would be killed. And not just that, he foretold not that he would just die, but that he would be raised. And not just raised, he foretold when he would be raised on the third day. What do you think it means when angels quote you?

Because this is what these angels are doing. Do you remember what he said? And they basically quote him verbatim from Luke 9 and Luke 18 where Jesus foretells his death and resurrection.

What does that mean? That means that his word is all authoritative. And what these angels are showing us is that Jesus, what Jesus foretold about himself, he has fulfilled.

[19 : 06] In 922 and 1831, he does foretell where he's going to die and who's going to kill him and how he's going to die. And he also foretells that he's going to be raised and when he will be raised.

And what the angels are saying here in 24-7 is it's been fulfilled. Remember? It's happened. It's a very specific fulfillment.

Let me give you some perspective on this. Back in the day, this guy named Joe Namath who was a quarterback, he publicly guaranteed that his underdog New York Jets would upset the juggernaut Baltimore Colts in the 1969 Super Bowl.

And then he delivered on it. They actually won. They actually won. Jesus has publicly guaranteed in Luke 9 and Luke 18, he's publicly guaranteed where he would die, Jerusalem, by whom he would die, sinful men, the way he would die by crucifixion, and that he would be raised on the third day.

It's one thing for Joe Namath to get lucky and win a Super Bowl. It's another thing for Jesus Christ to foretell his death and resurrection and then to fulfill that according to God's loving plan to rescue sinners.

[20 : 42] That's what this is all about. Jesus' death and resurrection was a must. It was a must for skeptics and for searchers and for pragmatists and for the guilt-ridden to rescue us it is a surprising connection.

The words Jesus foretold have been fulfilled. Now, if Jesus was right about his own death, if what he said was right about his own death and his own resurrection, it begs the question, what else did he talk about?

Well, did you know he talked about the nature of man? He talked about men and women enjoying food. He talked about men and women being in relationship with each other.

He also talked about that at the core, men and women have a sin problem. There is this well within us that bubbles up things like sexual immorality, like envy, like hatred.

In Mark chapter 7, Jesus is very clear. What defiles a man and a woman is what comes from inside of you. Our hearts are sinful at their core and out of our sinful hearts we commit sins.

[22 : 24] sins. They defile us before God, says Jesus, and that defilement before God has a judgment on it.

We read elsewhere that the wages of sin is death. Our sin deserves death according to our Bibles, which reminds me something else about Jesus' death.

death. He foretold where He would die, by whom He would die, and how He would die. He also told us why He would die.

In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus says, I came not to be served, but to serve and to give my life as a ransom for many. You see, the death that Jesus died isn't just a historical event, it accomplished something.

Recently, there was a woman and her guy that were taken hostage in Africa, and someone paid a ransom payment and they got rescued. They were released.

[23 : 37] A ransom payment is a payment that liberates captives from slavery. And when Jesus talks about His life, His death as a ransom, His death liberates sinners from the slavery of sin and

frees them so that they can experience the fullness of life in obedience to God.

Another way of thinking about it is like this. Jesus' death payment was for sin. Jesus' resurrection was the declaration that that payment has been received and accepted.

Jesus' word proves true. true. And what these angels are doing is, it's not just surprising that they showed up, it's not just surprising that they say, hey, why are you looking for the living among the dead?

What's amazing is that they're making this connection between what Jesus foretold and what He's fulfilled. the resurrection is declaring that God's plan has been accomplished.

Let's look at the last surprise. The people surprise. It's in verses 8 through 12 and I won't be long, I just want to point some things out to you.

[25 : 15] In verse 8, the women, they hear what these angels say, they've just quoted Jesus, they've made the connection, verse 8, and they remembered Jesus' words.

Back in the gospel of Luke, when Jesus foretells His death and resurrection, Luke is very clear to say, the disciples didn't get it at all. They didn't understand what He was saying.

And what we have right now is these women are understanding what Jesus has said. He truly did die for sin, He truly was raised from the dead.

The empty tomb is the fulfillment of what He said must happen. And so their conclusion in verse 8, something's dawning in their hearts. He's alive.

He's alive. And in verse 9, they return to the upper room where the disciples were and they tell them everything. They tell them about the empty tomb, they tell them about the two angels, they tell them about the connection they made or the fulfillment of Jesus' words.

[26 : 23] They say, He's alive. He's alive. They haven't even seen Jesus. They know He's alive.

There's a change going on here. The people's surprise is a surprising change. These women, just minutes before, went to the grave thinking that they're going to put spices on a dead body.

And now they've just left the grave. The burial spices are still in the grave. And now they've left announcing He's alive.

Grieving to joy, hopelessness to hope. But it doesn't end with these women.

There's a chain reaction going on because in verse 12, Peter has heard what they said, and it's not surprising by the way that the guys kind of first say, kind of like, whatever, I don't think what you're saying is true.

[27 : 30] You see that in verse 11, but these words seem to them the apostles in idle tale. Not surprising. But Peter thinks about it.

And he bolts. Can you imagine what's going on in Peter right now? I'm guessing he was thinking something like this. These women come back, they're all excited, they relay the account, and I'm guessing something like this starts bubbling up in him.

Is it true? Is it true? The last time in the gospel of Luke that we saw Peter, do you know what he was doing? He was weeping bitterly.

And he was weeping bitterly because he had just denied Jesus three times, just like Jesus said he would. And so when he hears this, that the tomb is empty, that Jesus is alive, just like he said he would be, could you imagine what's going on in him?

Seriously? Is it true? He hightails it to the tomb, he goes into the tomb, and he doesn't see Jesus, the angels aren't there, all that he sees are the burial linen cloths lying by themselves, and that's all he needed.

[28 : 54] He went home marveling at what had happened. Could you imagine what it would have been like to be Peter after denying Jesus? the shame, the guilt, the isolation, and here he's marveling.

Surprise! He's alive, changing people. The empty tomb is like this catalyst of change that changes people.

It starts with these women, it goes to Peter, and then we see in Acts this gospel message of Jesus who's died and been raised from the dead. It starts spreading to Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria, to the ends of the earth, and it's landed in Kenosha.

Jesus is alive, changing people today. If you read the rest of Luke 24, you would read a lot more of the surprises of Jesus.

There are some things that he does and says in the rest of Luke 24 that you're just like, he's amazing. This is amazing. So let me just recap. We started off with no surprise.

[30 : 11] These women were grieving and hope fallen, hope crushed. And then there was the tomb surprise that resulted in confusion with these women, and then there's the angelic surprise where clarity resulted.

the connection to Jesus' own words. And then there's the people surprise, changed lives. Can it be true?

Here's how you can sum up these 12 verses of Luke 24. You've already heard it. Jesus is alive.

He's alive today, and he is still changing people.

He's changing people from people who are hopeless to people who are hopeful, for those who are ashamed to being marveling and full of happiness. Hey, does this news that Jesus is alive, does that surprise you?

And if it does, is that a welcome surprise or is that an unwelcome surprise? If you're a skeptic in the room, I'm so glad you're here, it's not bad to be a skeptic.

[31 : 29] You're thinking. But let me just put it to you this way, just by way of suggestion. Let's boil it down.

If Jesus wasn't raised from the dead, then his words prove folly, who were terribly mistaken.

Those of us who banked our lives on him were terribly mistaken. We acknowledge that. But if Jesus truly was raised from the dead, his word is proven true, which means there's no one like him.

He's one of a kind. he was either raised from the dead or he wasn't. And so if you're a skeptic in the room, I've got two questions for you.

The first one is this. Could a supernatural explanation of the empty tomb actually be the best explanation for the empty tomb? And then second, how do you explain the empty tomb?

[32 : 39] How do you explain the empty tomb? If you're a pragmatist and you're thinking about your Sunday mornings and how you want to spend them, you're determining what matters most and how you want to spend your time and what you want to get done, my question to you would be this.

In light of today's passage, could it be that you just haven't realized what your greatest need is?

That Jesus himself has said that the biggest problem you have is not outside of you, it's inside of you, that you have sin at the core of who you are.

And the good news is that God has made the most practical solution to that for your biggest problem by sending Jesus as a payment for your sin.

So pragmatically speaking, it's the best solution to your biggest problem. And if he's alive, he doesn't fit into your schedule, you fit into his plan.

He's that glorious. If you're a searcher, you've just been moving from one thing to the next.

[33 : 58] You're just trying to scratch the itch. Do you remember the angels' question to the women? Are you looking for the living among the dead? Are you trying to scratch the itch through your career, through a cause, through your children, by more and more comfort?

Is that where you're trying to find life? Among the dead? Doesn't give life? Maybe you're here this morning because God has been wanting you to hear this.

maybe you have been searching not for an it, but for a who. Jesus, who is alive today and can scratch your itch.

For the guilt ridden. Jesus pays his death, paid for all the sin and guilt you have accumulated and will accumulate.

In fact, he already sees you for who you are. He sees through the walls, he sees through the layers of protection, and not only does he see through that and see you as you are in all of your shame and guilt, he's able to forgive you and set you free from your shame and guilt.

[35 : 29] And not just able, he wants to. He wants to set you free. Jesus is alive today and he is changing lives and he can change yours.

He's a friend of sinners. sinners. If his death is God's way of paying for our sin, then his resurrection is God's announcement that that sin payment has been fully accepted and it's being offered to you right now.

Today, God is offering you full forgiveness in Jesus and you don't earn it, you receive it as a gift.

That's what it is. And for those of you in the room who already know Jesus personally, you hear the words he is risen and up from your soul comes he's risen indeed.

If you're a doubting Christian, you find yourself wondering, is this all true? Let the good news of Easter Sunday strengthen your resolve.

[36 : 54] He is alive. It is all true. He is our living hope. He is our living confidence. And if you are a self-condemning Christian, you sinned this morning against your kids, you sinned early in the week against someone else and you just keep on replaying it through your mind again and again and again.

You, the very one who Jesus shed his blood to ransom, are condemning yourself over and over again. You need to remember that the Jesus who died for you is alive for you and he is interceding right now according to 1 John 2 one as your advocate.

And as you sin, he says, done, paid, my blood. He is alive interceding for you. He is our living hope. He is our living assurance before the Father. God is a quiet Christian. The thought of speaking of Jesus is scary to you.

Do you remember what happened to the women when they remembered the fulfillment of Jesus' words? They left the grave and they told those whom they were closest to that he is alive.

[38 : 27] the resurrection is a catalyst to evangelism. To go tell that he is alive, he is risen.

You see, this is good news. It's not just good news for you, it's good news for your neighbors. It's not just good news for your neighbors, it's good news for everyone living in the city of Kenosha.

This news is what they need to hear.

It addresses their greatest problem and it's not just for our city. this news changes the world. You can't keep silent about the resurrection.

He's alive and he's changing lives. The resurrection of Jesus, it's the greatest surprise of all. And it's the most welcome news of all for sinners like you and me.

So just one more time. He is risen. God, thank you so much for this historic account of the resurrection of Jesus.

[39 : 35] It does our heart well to recall it. Jesus, you are alive. Change our lives. In your name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.