

# \* The Heights Baptist Church \* Sermon Series: The Resurrection \*

\* Lesson Topic: The Resurrection - What Happened That Day \* Luke 24 \* 3/31/24 \*

## MAIN POINT

The apparent hopelessness of Jesus' death and burial set the stage for the greatest event in history. Jesus didn't just die at the hands of evil people. He, the Son of God, chose to die in our place to redeem us by paying the debt we couldn't pay. Then He rose from the dead, showing his power over death, and being alive, he now ministers on our behalf while serving as our high priest before God (Hebrews 4:14-16).

## INTRODUCTION

**Can you think of an event in a movie where things looked hopeless, and just as all seemed lost, a key twist occurred where things just worked out great?**

Many examples could be given. One would be "A Christmas Story," where just as Ralphie loses all hope of getting a BB gun for Christmas, he receives the greatest gift he would ever receive.

*Note 1 to study leader:* This week's lesson is available for any Lifegroups that choose to get together during the week, since there will be no Lifegroups meeting on Easter Sunday.

*Note 1 to study leader:* This week's lesson continues the series on the resurrection by reviewing the events that occurred on the day Jesus arose from the dead and discusses how this event changed the disciples' perspective from one of despair to one of overwhelming joy.

## UNDERSTANDING

### BACKGROUND

Jesus' death devastated his disciples. It's clear throughout the Gospels that even though Jesus repeatedly spoke of His impending death, his disciples did not begin to grasp what He was saying. At Jesus' death it felt as if all hope was lost. Little did they know God was accomplishing through what appeared to be the greatest defeat to bring about the greatest victory in all of history. In today's passage, we will read about the disciples' first experiences with this wonderful news.

*"If Jesus came to this earth at his second coming, and there hadn't been a first coming, we'd all be in big trouble!" Pastor Randy Hahn, The Heights Baptist Church, 11/3/2019*

**What do you think of the sceptics' idea that maybe Jesus didn't die and resurrect, but simply resuscitated while in the tomb?**

Jesus had been scourged and nailed to the cross. The Roman soldiers saw that he was dead and pierced his side with a spear (John 19:23-24). Joseph of Arimathea took Jesus' body down from the cross, wrapped it in linen, and placed it in the tomb. This was witnessed by the women who had been following Jesus. Jesus' body remained in the tomb from Friday until Sunday. Just previous to all of this, Jesus had been beaten and scourged by the Romans, and had been without water since Thursday night. To think that he wasn't dead but revived, exited the sealed tomb, and looked so healthy and normal when he met Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-18), Peter (Luke 24:33), and two of his disciples on the seven-mile walk to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-32) that they initially didn't recognize him or see anything wrong with him is absurd.

**What about other ideas, such as the idea that maybe the women went to the wrong tomb, or the disciples lied about seeing the risen Christ, or they were delusional?**

The idea that they went to the wrong tomb makes no sense. It would have been a simple thing for the Romans or the Jewish leaders to produce the body and bring an end to this. As for lying, all of the apostles (except for John, who was exiled to the island of Patmos) were martyred for their faith, and none of them recanted. As for being delusional, certainly not all of them at once, and not for the long haul.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ LUKE 24:1-12

**Who were the first people to see Jesus after His resurrection? What did they do with this information (verse 9)?**

**According to verse 11, why didn't the disciples believe them?**

The women told the disciples, but the disciples didn't believe them. It is true that in the first century, both Jewish and Roman societies were patriarchal, and women had limited social, political, or cultural power. Jesus choosing to reveal himself first to women matches so well with all we see about Christ's first coming. But based on verse 11, and based on the disciple's response to anyone who initially brought them the news, man or woman (think of Thomas), their real issue was that Jesus' resurrection seemed impossible to them.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ LUKE 24:13-24

On the very morning of the resurrection, Jesus intentionally sought out two of his disciples as they walked on the road to Emmaus. Jesus listened, asked questions, and engaged them in conversation as they walked together along the seven-mile stretch of road.

**These disciples said they "had hoped" that He was the One who was about to redeem Israel (v. 21). Why do you think they spoke in the past tense about their hope? What had caused them to lose hope?**

The two travelers believed Jesus was a prophet. Peter had earlier declared that he believed Jesus was the Messiah. Based on prophecies about Jesus' second coming, the Jews looked for a Messiah who would exert authority in the political realm, and reign in justice and peace in Jerusalem forever. The death of Jesus appeared to vanquish that hope for them.

These two disciples had heard the report of an empty tomb, but they didn't understand what that meant. They didn't understand who Christ was or his true mission during his first coming.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ LUKE 24:25-35

**What did Jesus accomplish by starting the process of revealing himself to these two disciples with a rebuke and a question in verse 25? How did Jesus proceed to open their eyes to His true mission?**

To help these men understand who He is and why He came, Jesus drew these two disciples back to the Bible's message about the Messiah. Jesus used Scripture beginning with Moses and going through the Prophets to paint a more complete picture of God's redemptive plan. Jesus showed them the things concerning Himself. It is estimated there are at least 300 Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah that Jesus fulfilled during his first coming. It is also very interesting that Jesus didn't just use the prophets but started with the books of Moses (Genesis through Deuteronomy), which are books of history and Law. The whole of the Old Testament points to God's plan of salvation that came to fruition through Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection, and Jesus divinely opened up these scriptures to them.

**We read that Jesus began with Moses (verse 27) and the prophets to explain what the scriptures actually said about the Messiah. In Colossians 2:17 and Hebrews 10:1 we read that that the law is only a shadow, and the reality is found in Christ. How do the Old Testament "types" (spiritual pictures) and prophecies about the Messiah encourage you?**

The New Testament clearly lays out the plan of salvation accomplished for us by Jesus. As we see these truths about the Messiah pictured and prophesied in the Old Testament, we gain a greater sense of awe as we see the whole Bible as God's divine masterpiece pointing to Jesus our Savior.

*"The Old Testament contains over 300 references to the Messiah and every single one is fulfilled in Jesus. There are 61 major prophecies concerning Jesus that are perfectly fulfilled...."*

*What do these prophecies mean to me?*

- 1. It means we can be sure Jesus Christ is the One from heaven....*
- 2. While it does take faith, it is not non-intellectual to believe in Jesus....*
- 3. It demands a response....*
- 4. It gives a confidence to our faith."*

*"You can't shrug your shoulders and walk away. That kind of indifference is the height of ignorance.... You are expressing the height of your stupidity, or you're expressing the height of your love for sin, or both." Pastor Randy Hahn, The Heights Baptist Church, sermon notes and sermon content, 12/3/2023.*

***For those interested, this entire sermon can be found at the Heights Baptist Church website under Sermons, December 3, 2023.***

**What were these two disciples feeling as Jesus opened the Scriptures to them (verse 32)?**

The shift in their understanding of things was dramatic. As scripture after scripture was explained showing them this was God's plan all along, their confusion and despair was step by step being replaced with a clearer and clearer understanding that these things were not terribly unfortunate events, but rather were orchestrated by God to carry out his perfect will.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ LUKE 24:36-53

**In verse 49 Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit will be sent to them. And they are told to wait for this event before embarking on their ministry. What does this tell us about our mission?**

As Jesus' disciples today, we need to ensure we are carrying out our ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit, and not in our own fleshly efforts (Acts 1:8 and Ephesians 1:19-20)

APPLICATION

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO RE-READ LUKE 24:9-10 AND 33-35

**What initial effect did Jesus' resurrection have on the people who first saw him?**

**What effect should Jesus' resurrection have on us as Christians today?**

The resurrection should affect every aspect of our faith. It gives us great hope. And we shouldn't just keep this wonderful news to ourselves. "We live to tell" is a core value at the Heights. With Easter approaching, be looking for opportunities to tell others about our risen Savior and invite them to church on Easter.

PRAYER

Praise God for revealing himself to us through the person and work of Jesus Christ. Thank him that Jesus willingly offered himself on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins. Thank God that Jesus didn't remain dead, but rose again, showing his power over death, and that he is now our high priest, in service to God the Father. Pray that we would live with a keen awareness that Jesus is alive, and that this knowledge and belief would impact everything about our lives.

## COMMENTARY

### LUKE 24

24:1 The first day of the week was Sunday. It was so early in the morning that it was still dark (Jn 20:1) when the women set out to Jesus' tomb to anoint His body.

24:2 On their way to the tomb, the women pondered the difficulty the sealing stone would present. Who would move it for them (Mk 16:3)? However, when they arrived, they found the stone rolled away from the entrance. The stone had been moved by "a violent earthquake" (Mt 28:2).

24:3-8 Jesus' body was nowhere to be found, and the women had no answer for why it was missing. The two men who suddenly appeared and terrified them were angels (v. 23; Jn 20:12). Matthew 28:2-3 and Mk 16:5 mention only one angel. The angels announced the resurrection of Jesus to the women and reminded them that He had predicted this would happen. As soon as they were reminded of Jesus' assertion that He would rise on the third day, they remembered His words. Now they were better prepared to understand and believe the radical things Jesus had said.

24:9-12 The Eleven (the apostles who remained after Judas' act of betrayal) did not believe the women's report about what had happened at Jesus' 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 didn't understand.

24:13-14. Of the two disciples traveling from Jerusalem to Emmaus that Sunday, one was named Cleopas (v. 18). He was possibly the husband of one of the women disciples who watched Jesus die on the cross (Jn 19:25). They had heard about the women's report and Peter's experience at the empty tomb (Lk 24:19-24) before leaving Jerusalem.

24:15. The two followers failed to recognize Jesus at this time. Why? The Scripture implies a supernatural intervention to hide His identity. The resurrected Jesus was different, but He still lived in human form. So a connection existed between the crucified and resurrected Jesus. Jesus questioned His companions about their conversation (see Luke 24:17). This stunned them. Jesus feigned a lack of knowledge in order to spur a deeper discussion.

24:15-16. That the two men were arguing (Gk *suzeteo*; "to argue, question") about what had happened indicates that there was no agreement among Jesus' disciples about what had occurred and why. Like Peter at the tomb, many were amazed and yet unconvinced. It is not known how God prevented the two disciples from recognizing Jesus at this point, but He eventually "opened their eyes" to recognize Him (v. 31).

24:17-18. The men were discouraged (Gk *skuthropos*; "sad, sullen") and shocked that the stranger (Jesus) seemed to know nothing about what had happened the past few days, though it was the talk of all Jerusalem.

24:18. One of the travelers, Cleopas, responded to Jesus. Luke provided no name for the other person. Some Bible students suggest the individual was Cleopas's wife, who also might have been one of the women present at the crucifixion when Jesus died (see John 19:25). This much is clear from the larger context: Cleopas's fellow traveler was not one of the Eleven disciples in Jesus' inner circle. They had remained in Jerusalem (see Luke 24:33).

24:19. Jesus continued to probe. He asked, "What things?" He sought to draw the travelers out. He worked to ready them to receive the revelation of His true resurrected nature. The two clarified the Person of their discussion as the Man called Jesus from Nazareth. They described Jesus as "a Prophet powerful in action and speech." God empowered prophets to convey His message in word and deed. God's blessing affirmed Jesus' role in divine activity, and His popularity with people further confirmed His special nature. The two travelers acknowledged Jesus as a Prophet. His disciples, however, expected more. Like other Jews of the day, they wanted a Messiah to exert authority in the political realm. The death of Jesus appeared to vanquish that hope for them.

24:19-20. The description of Jesus by the two disciples is short on both insight and faith. Jesus is referred to in relation to His hometown (the Nazarene) and as a Prophet and miracle worker, but not as the Son of God. In addition, nothing is said about the unjust nature of Jesus' betrayal, trials, and crucifixion—just that the chief priests and leaders got Him sentenced to death and crucified. These disciples had not fully grasped Jesus' identity, nor had they understood the divine necessity of His death.

24:20. The disciples blamed the events on the Jewish chief priests and leaders, who handed over Jesus to the Roman authorities for execution. Although the religious leaders manipulated the Romans to carry out the deed, the people saw through the deception.

24:21. The followers of Jesus desired a different result. But His death quashed their hope that Jesus was the "One who was about to redeem Israel." Redemption meant to pay a price to set someone free. The people held out hope for liberation from Roman oppression. At this point, the disciples still misunderstood Jesus' purpose. He offered freedom for people enslaved by sin. This deliverance trumped any temporary military victory.

24:22-23. The women didn't find His body. They discovered an empty tomb. The women returned to the disciples with some astounding news. They reported seeing a vision of angels. Heavenly representatives explained the missing body: Jesus was alive! The tomb minus His body raised questions in the disciples' minds.

24:24. Apparently this news stirred the possibility of resurrection. Some of them went to the tomb to confirm the report. The vacant tomb proved to be true, yet they didn't see the risen Lord. Since no sightings of Jesus existed at this point, the disciples hung between hope and dejection. They struggled with what to believe.

24:25. Jesus responded to the disappointment expressed by the two disciples. He asserted that they were being "unwise" (or foolish) and "slow" (or sluggish) of heart. As followers of Jesus, these disciples had received evidence previously that should have enlightened them as to the recent events. His suffering and death led to the victory of resurrection. The followers' lack of perception translated to their inability to have heartfelt confidence in all that the prophets have spoken. Jesus referred to Old Testament prophecies related to the Messiah's fulfillment of God's purpose of salvation.

24:25-29. The stranger (Jesus) rebuked the two disciples for not believing the OT prophecies about the Messiah, particularly about His suffering and following glory. Then, during the remainder of the walk to Emmaus, Jesus worked His way through all the major messianic prophecies in the Hebrew Bible (Moses and all the Prophets refers to the entire OT), carefully interpreting their meaning to His hearers. Then, when Jesus gave the impression that He was not going to stop in Emmaus, they invited Him to spend the night with them, probably so they could hear more.

24:26. Jesus refreshed the disciples concerning prophecies about the Messiah. The prophets had declared the Messiah would have to suffer these things. God's plan of redemption included the "have to" or necessity of suffering preceding victory. God provided salvation through the Messiah's sacrifice.

24:27. Patiently Jesus expounded on Bible passages beginning with Moses and all the Prophets. Presumably He recalled sections from the Old Testament that supported His premise. Nothing indicates which specific passages Jesus used. The whole of the Old Testament, however, points to God's working out His salvation purpose that culminated with Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection.

24:28-30. A meal enabled recuperation from the journey. Jesus reclined at the table with them. The typical setting included a low table surrounded by couches or cushions on which diners reclined as they ate. In a twist to tradition, Jesus acted as Host at the meal. He took the bread, blessed and broke it. This intimate act of fellowship jogged some familiar thoughts in the disciples' hearts. Although these two were not among the Twelve who ate the Lord's Supper prior to Jesus' trials and crucifixion, they likely knew of the event from those present.

24: 31. As they ate, the two companions' eyes were opened. Just as God limited them supernaturally from knowing Jesus at the beginning of the journey, now God revealed Jesus to them in the same way. With God's help, they recognized Him. They became eyewitnesses to the reality of the resurrection.

24:32. Certainly Jesus' disappearance stunned the two disciples. Upon reflection, they said, "Weren't our hearts ablaze within us while He was talking with us on the road?" The journey's enlightening conversation warmed their hearts in a unique way. At the time, they had failed to understand why. Now the fog of doubt gave way to spiritual insight. The disciples realized that clarity came as Jesus explained the Scriptures to them. His words sank into their open hearts, and they acknowledged Jesus as Lord.

24:33. During the evening meal, Jesus blessed and broke the bread. At that point, the two disciples were allowed to recognize Jesus, but He immediately disappeared from sight. Their first thought was to recall the things He had taught them as they walked along the road to Emmaus. With hearts ablaze, they ventured to Jerusalem through the darkness of night to meet with the apostles and tell them about their experience.

24:34. Before the Emmaus residents reported, the others confirmed, "The Lord has certainly been raised." They had received evidence via the eyewitness experience of Simon (Peter). This confirmed the best news possible—Jesus was alive!

24:35. Unknown to the two disciples, the risen Christ had appeared to Simon Peter (an appearance mentioned elsewhere only in 1Co 15:5) sometime earlier in the day. This was a decisive event for Peter and the church because he led the apostles and the early church in the years to come. Now, in a room full of eager listeners, these men talked about their experiences on the road to Emmaus and the meal that followed. It had been a day of many wonders, but an even greater wonder would soon visit them all.

24:36-37 It is ironic that the group of disciples was startled and terrified and thought they were seeing a ghost when the risen Christ suddenly appeared in their midst. After all, they had been rejoicing about His resurrection (v. 34) and swapping stories about His several appearances that day. But their fear is understandable since Jesus appeared suddenly in the middle of a crowd in what was surely a locked room. Peace to you was a traditional Jewish greeting.

24:38-40 Jesus calmed the fears and doubts of His disciples with evidence of His resurrection body. In His hands and feet the nail scars were clearly visible. The crowd of disciples could touch Him and verify that He had a human body and that He was not a ghost.

24:41-43 It is understandable that some were slow to believe. This was a highly unusual and unexpected event. Realizing their doubts, Jesus offered an additional piece of evidence. He showed them that He could eat food ( a piece of a broiled fish), something no ghost could do.

24:44-45 The Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms represent the three major divisions of the Hebrew Bible. Jesus now did for the wider group what he did for the two on the road to Emmaus.

24:46-49 OT passages that clearly prophesy the suffering of the Messiah are Ps 22 and Isa 53. A key OT passage for Messiah's resurrection, cited several times in the NT, is Ps 16:10. Significant OT passages that Jesus may have had in mind about repentance... proclaimed... to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem are Isa 2:1-4 and 49:6. Luke 24:47 is Luke's version of the Great Commission (Mt 28:19-20; Mk 16:15; Jn 20:21-22; Ac 1:8). These verses echo Ac 1:4-8. Since Luke wrote both this Gospel and the book of Acts, he skillfully intertwined the conclusion of his first volume with the beginning of his second volume. The city refers to Jerusalem.

24:50-51 Bethany was located just over the Mount of Olives, about two miles from Jerusalem. Acts 1:12 specifies that the ascension of Christ occurred at the Mount of Olives.

24:52-53 As Jesus had directed (v. 49), the disciples returned to Jerusalem and waited for the events of the day of Pentecost (Ac 2).

## A POSSIBLE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS ON RESURRECTION SUNDAY, HARMONIZING ALL FOUR GOSPEL ACCOUNTS:

We are blessed with four gospel accounts of the resurrection. On casual reading, it is difficult to see how the actual events of Resurrection Sunday unfolded. The three “synoptic gospels” (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) provide similar accounts of what happened, and John adds specific information about Mary Magdalene. The following is one possible sequence of events.

1. When the Sabbath is over (Saturday at sunset), Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome buy spices and perfumes so they can use them to anoint the body of Jesus (Mark 16:1 and Luke 23:56).
2. Early Sunday morning, while it is still dark, a group of women including Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, Salome, and others, head out for the tomb to anoint Jesus’ body (Matthew 28:1, Mark 16:1-2, Luke 24:1; and John 20:1).
3. There is a violent earthquake, and an angel of the Lord comes down from heaven to the tomb and rolls back the stone. His appearance is like lightning, and the guards are so afraid they became like dead men (Matt. 28:2-4).
4. While the women are on their way, the guards leave the area to report what happened to the chief priests (Matt. 28:11-15).
5. Shortly after sunrise, the women arrive at the tomb (Mark 16:2). Mary arrives first, sees the empty tomb, and runs to tell Peter and John that someone has taken the body (John 20:1-2).
6. The rest of the women arrive, enter the tomb, and see that the body is missing. They see two angels who tell them Jesus is alive and to tell the news to His disciples. The women are afraid yet filled with joy. They leave to tell His disciples, but tell no one else along the way, since they are afraid (Matt. 28:5-8, Mark 16:4-8, Luke 24:2-8).
7. Mary reaches Peter and John, and reports that someone has stolen Jesus’ body. Peter and John run to the tomb and find it empty, with the linen strips and the burial cloth still there. They still do not understand from scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead. They then leave the tomb (John 20:3-10).
8. Mary returns to the tomb, sees the angels, and is the first person to meet the risen Christ (Mark 16:9, John 20:11-17).
9. The women all report to the disciples that Jesus is alive. This includes Mary telling them that she has seen the Lord (Mark 16:10-11, Luke 24:9-11, John 20:18).
10. Peter again goes to the tomb and finds it as before (Luke 24:12).
11. Jesus appears to Peter (Luke 24:34).
12. Jesus walks with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. They report this to the disciples, who don’t believe them (Mark 16:12-13, Luke 24:13-32).
13. Jesus appears to the apostles, sans Thomas (Luke 24:36-43, John 20:19-24).
14. The disciples tell Thomas that Jesus is alive, but he refuses to believe (John 20:25).