

Resurrection

RESURRECTION POWER!
Focal Verses • LUKE 24:1-12, 30-35

Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will: **DECIDE** that the account of the Resurrection binds us to Christ and to one another; **VALUE** the promise that Christ is with us as we celebrate communion; and **REJOICE** in the knowledge of Christ's resurrection and presence among us.

In Focus

"If you've seen this 70 year-old woman, please contact your local police station," the television newscaster pleaded. Breana couldn't believe her mother's picture was staring back at her from the television screen. Three days ago, her mother left for the Beauty Shop, promising that she'd be right back. Even then, Breana had doubted her words.

Over the past few months, Breana's mom's memory had been deteriorating. Her mom knew her way around her hometown, but other communities were starting to pose a challenge. Before Breana could say, "Mom, let me take you," she had driven down the driveway.

Now, seated on the sofa surrounded by relatives, Breana allowed her tears to flow. She said a quiet prayer, and at that moment, she felt an overwhelming sense of peace. It was almost as if Christ Himself had come into the room and touched her on the shoulder with His resurrection power to let Breana know everything would be all right.

Just then, the phone rang, and Brandon answered it. "Breana! They found your mom!" he screamed. "She drove inside the abandoned warehouse near the hospital, where she used to work before she retired, and she's been there ever since. A security guard found her an hour ago. She's fine! She's alive!" Breana ran from the house, praising God and shouting, "Mom's alive! She's alive!"

The joy of learning that someone we love is well and we will see them again turns sorrow into rejoicing. How can you experience the reality of Christ's resurrection today?

Keep in Mind

"Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon."
(Luke 24:34, KJV)



Focal Verses

KJV Luke 24:1 Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.

2 And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.

3 And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

4 And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:

5 And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

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,

9 And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.

10 It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women

that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles.

11 And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.

12 Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.

30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them.

31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

32 And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?

33 And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them,

34 Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.

35 And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

The People, Places, and Times

Passover. The Jewish festival of Passover, related to the Feast of Unleavened Bread, was taking place during the time of Christ's crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection. Passover, a time of remembrance and thanksgiving, commemorates God's miraculous deliverance of the Children of Israel from bondage in Egypt (Exodus 12). The firstborn sons of the people of Israel were "passed over" or spared from death by killing a lamb without blemish and placing its blood on the doorposts of their houses.

Preparation for Burial. Jewish custom at the time of Christ's death called for a dead

body to be prepared for burial within a day. This requirement might have been established because of sanitation problems and fear of religious defilement from touching a decaying body (Numbers 9:10–14). The bodies of the dead were washed and wrapped in a shroud filled with sweet-smelling spices. Relatives often added more spices several days later to mask the increasing odor. Once the body was decomposed, the dried bones were placed in a stone chest called an ossuary.

How do modern-day burial rituals compare and/or contrast to the burial rituals of Jesus' time?

Background

In the beginning, God made a promise to humanity (Genesis 3:15). Adam's sin had brought death to humanity and God promised that He would send someone whose death would restore eternal life (Romans 5:12–21). As His plan of redemption started its journey through history, God continually provided glimpses into how the promise would unfold. Zechariah 11:12–13 says that this redeemer would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver; Isaiah 53:5–12 tells us that He would be a sacrifice for sin and crucified with criminals; Psalm 16:10 revealed that He would be resurrected from the dead; and Psalm 68:18 pointed to His ascension into heaven.

Old Testament writers recorded more than 300 promises or prophecies concerning God's plan to restore a righteous relationship with His creation. As Jesus walked with His disciples, He shared many of these promises with them, but they didn't fully understand His words. His miracles made them think that Jesus could be the promised Messiah, but witnessing His agonizing death on the Cross caused many of them to lose hope.

On a walk to the city of Emmaus, two of Jesus' disciples were discussing what they had heard earlier that day—that Jesus had been resurrected from the dead. They asked each other about how this could have happened. Jesus, a compassionate teacher, joined their journey and discussion. Referencing the Old Testament Scriptures, He explained the events that puzzled them. In the intimacy of a meal, these disciples realized that the person who had been foretold in Scripture was now breaking bread with them. Their hope returned. Jesus was alive. God's promise had been fulfilled.

How can a personal encounter with God create transformation in our lives?

At-A-Glance

1. Breaking Free from Death (Luke 24:1–10)
2. Breaking Through Unbelief (vv. 11–12)
3. Breaking Bread (vv. 30–35)

In Depth

1. Breaking Free from Death (Luke 24:1–10)

The women who went to anoint Jesus' body with fragrant spices probably thought that their greatest challenge would be removing the stone that blocked access to the chamber where His body had been placed. When they arrived, however, the stone had already been removed, and to their bewilderment, Jesus' body was missing.

The only possible answer, they concluded, was that someone had taken His body. But angels who were at Jesus' tomb offered the explanation. Jesus had risen, just as He had promised!

This puzzling news was also good news, and the women, who were the first ones to tell it, ran to inform the disciples. Throughout His life and in His death and resurrection, Jesus irrefutably proves that He is the promised Messiah.

Why do we sometimes assume the worst reason for something happening instead of hoping the best?

2. Breaking Through Unbelief (vv. 11–12)

"Too good to be true" is perhaps what the disciples said when the women reported that Jesus was alive. Some of the disciples had witnessed His trial, others His crucifixion, and they all knew the finality of death.

After a short while, Peter, wanting to investigate for himself, ran to the burial place and entered the tomb. Just as the women had said, the grave clothes were there, but Jesus'

body was not. Perplexed, Peter walked away, trying to imagine all the possible scenarios that could have caused the disappearance of Jesus' body. The idea that Jesus had actually risen from the dead was still too amazing to believe. God often invites us to trust His word before we understand the way in which He will fulfill it.

How can we convince others to develop a greater trust in the promises of God?

3. Breaking Bread (vv. 30–35)

The account advances to a different setting a little while later. Two disciples invited a “stranger” into their home for a meal. They had met this traveler on their walk to Emmaus, a city about seven miles from Jerusalem. This stranger wanted to know why they were sad and inquired about the topic of their conversation as He walked with them.

The two disciples were surprised by the question. As far as they were concerned, everyone was talking about the events that had happened in Jerusalem over the past few days. They told the stranger that many people had thought that a man named Jesus was the promised deliverer of Israel, but His crucifixion had dashed their hopes. Then they told the stranger that a recent report was circulating that Jesus was alive. That news caused even more questions.

At that point, the stranger explained the Scriptures to them to show that it had been prophesied that the promised deliverer would suffer many hardships, including death. By now, they arrived at the village and were heading inside the home. But they were so intrigued with the conversation that they wanted to hear more from Him. So naturally, they extended hospitality to this lone traveler by inviting the stranger into their home for a meal.

Once inside, the stranger took the bread, blessed it, and broke it. In that moment, the eyes of the two disciples were opened. They realized that the very One of whom the Scriptures spoke

was seated at the table with them. Jesus was the promised deliverer!

Overtaken with this realization, the disciples hurried back to Jerusalem to tell the other disciples that they had seen the risen Christ. Imagine their amazement. When we experience the reality of Christ's resurrection, we too are to go tell it on the mountains, over the hills and everywhere! Jesus is risen!

How can fellowship with others help us develop fresh insight into the nature and ways of God?

Search the Scriptures

1. The angels asked the women, “Why do you seek the living among the dead?” Where have you expected to find God, but didn't (Luke 24:5)?
2. Two disciples walking along a road didn't expect to meet Jesus, but did. Where has Jesus unexpectedly shown up in your life (v. 32)?

Discuss the Meaning

Without Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, humanity would have remained in bondage to sin (1 Corinthians 15:16–17). People who lack the life-changing knowledge of a risen Savior find themselves either living lives of hopelessness or still waiting for the promised deliverer.

How might we do a better job of teaching from Scripture that Jesus is not a dead historical figure but a living Lord and Savior?

Liberating Lesson

The disappointments of life can sometimes cause believers to lose hope in the promises of God. Nothing short of a miracle will help them find a job when the economy is down, restore a marriage shattered by betrayal or indifference, find healing when the doctors have given up, or pay debts that have kept them in bondage for decades. Desperate prayers seem to have gone unanswered, and God's presence no longer appears to be in the places where they used to find Him.

The Good News of Easter—Resurrection Sunday—is not fancy clothes or a new hat. It is not just the tradition some people have. The Good News of the Easter account is the truth that Jesus will find us, join us in our journey, and show us that His plan for us is still good, even in the most difficult moments of our lives.

Application for Activation

Write in your journal about the ways the Resurrection has personally changed your life.

Search the Scriptures and meditate on the prophecies concerning the Resurrection.

Make it your goal to explain your hope in the Resurrection to at least one person in the next five days.

Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

Sources:

Black, Mark C. *The College Press NIV Commentary: Luke*. Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing, 1996.

Craddock, Fred B. *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Luke)*. Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1990. 279-288.

Morris, Leon. *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Luke*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1986.

Say It Correctly

Magdalene. mag-DUH-len.

Sepulchre. se-PUL-kur.

Daily Bible Readings

DAY 232

Matthew 21:28–22:33

Psalms 94:8–15

DAY 233

Matthew 22:34–23:36

Psalms 94:16–23

DAY 234

Matthew 23:37–24:35

Psalms 95:1–7

DAY 235

Matthew 24–25

Psalms 95:8–11

DAY 236

Matthew 26–28

Psalms 96:1–6

DAY 237

Mark 1:1–28

Psalms 96:7–13

DAY 238

Mark 1:29–2:12

Psalms 97:1–7