

1. Love is Eager to Honor Even When There is No Hope
  - a. The women went as early as they could Sunday morning
    - i. "deep daybreak"
      1. "deep" modifies "daybreak"
      2. very, very early dawn, i.e. as soon as they could
    - ii. The earliest that they were able to go (Sunday morning)
  - b. This reveals to me an eager desire to honor and express their love for Jesus
    - i. Or, they saw what a crappy job that Joseph and Nicodemus did and wanted to make sure that it was done correctly
  - c. They went to honor the dead
    - i. bearing spices to the tomb
      1. which they prepared (their time, effort, tears)
      2. This shows me that they spent their own wealth on his death, too.
    - ii. This shows me that they surely didn't expect Jesus to rise from the dead
      1. You don't go bearing burial spices to meet a living person (at least most of us don't) at the break of dawn
      2. It was *hopeless* love; love, but without expectation of good
2. The Resurrection is the Finding of the Unfound Unexpected Jesus
  - a. The first thing that they find (discover) is that the stone was rolled away
    - i. This mean the door was open
    - ii. Which could imply multiple thoughts upon seeing it:
      1. Grave robbers
      2. Stolen body (politically)
      3. Moved to a different tomb
      4. But NOT that Jesus came back to life and left
    - iii. They went into it
      1. They investigated the *implications* of the stone's removal
  - b. They did not find (juxtaposed to "they found") something they expected: JESUS!
    - i. the body (they would have expected to see the body, who takes a dead body?)
      1. of Jesus the Lord (Luke's *inclusio* here that Jesus is their *master* and his)
      2. They became perplexed (into a state of confusion) concerning this (the missing body)
      3. of course they were confused!
        - a. There is no indication that *anyone* recognized the resurrection of Jesus immediately
        - b. Rather, a resurrection in the middle of history was completely unexpected by anyone
          - i. For Greeks, the idea of a resurrected body is foolish: why would you want to come back from Elysium? The flesh is evil and enslaving.
          - ii. For Jews: the only resurrection that was expected (by Pharisees, the Sadducees didn't expect any resurrection) was at the end of days, a final resurrection for judgment and blessing, but not in the middle of history
            1. John 11:24 – Martha assumed that Lazarus would be raised up on the "last day", but not before
            2. For Jesus to be resurrected and history just keep on going was a stumbling block for the Jews

3. Thus, the resurrection became the point of rejection when Jesus' followers proclaimed the gospel to both Jews and Greeks (Acts 5:33; 17:31-32)
  - c. The gospel writers clearly show that nobody, not even Jesus' closest followers thought a resurrection in the middle of history was possible
    - i. In fact, the proclamation of the resurrection of Jesus is what made the gospel unbelievable to the early church's culture
    - ii. It was a strong disincentive to believe, not an incentive, thus giving strong evidence that the gospel is true and not myth or legend
    - iii. Why insert such a stumbling block, if you're making the story up?
- c. Are you and I willing to wrestle with the things that we don't expect, that we don't even assume are within possibility, when God reveals them to be true?
  - i. There is a type of ignorance that simply ignores that the tomb is open and never enters inside to investigate
  - ii. The resistance to original sin, the depravity of all humanity, and the reality that there are serious moral and existential problems with man is evidenced in our own culture.

“But they essentially deny human sin, which they can see in the street. The strongest saints and the strongest skeptics alike took positive evil as the starting-point of their argument. If it be true (as it certainly is) that a man can feel exquisite happiness in skinning a cat, then the religious philosopher can only draw one of two deductions. He must either deny the existence of God, as all atheists do; or he must deny the present union between God and man, as all Christians do. The new theologians seem to think it a highly rationalistic solution to deny the cat.” ~G.K. Chesterton, Orthodoxy

- iii. The reason that people reject the resurrection of Jesus is not because of inadequate evidence, but because of the *implications* of the resurrection: Jesus is the LORD and therefore has all rights, authority, power, and dominion over every created thing, and this is simply unacceptable to the unregenerate person

### 3. The Angels Appear With a Question, a Declaration, and a Command

- a. BEHOLD! (again, just like with Joseph of Arimathea, Luke wants us to see this)
- b. Two men stood over them
  - i. in extravagant robes (used of fine robes, Luke 23:11; Acts 12:21; James 2:2-3)
    1. shining (same word used of lightning in 17:24 and Ps 143:6)
  - ii. Luke doesn't know how else to describe these heavenly messengers
    1. They are not cherubs or effeminate Tom Petty's
    2. They are powerful and bright and frightening
    3. Thus, the women fall on their faces in fear that dishonoring such power might bring about destruction
- c. Question: Why do you seek the Living One among the Dead Ones?
  - i. It doesn't make sense to seek a living person among dead and gone.
    1. You don't go to the cemetery and start digging to find a lunch date.
    2. In the light of the resurrection, seeking Jesus among the dead things is unreasonable.
    3. How do we seek Jesus among the dead?

- a. He is not merely a philosopher whose words we study as a means to our best life now.
    - b. He is not merely a teacher who shows us deep truths.
    - c. He is not merely a prophet who reveals God to us.
  - ii. Jesus is the living Lord (Master), who actively, personally, and powerfully moves today.
    - 1. Thus, we will not find him with those in the “dead” category
    - 2. There is only one man in history who was risen from the dead never to die again, who conquered death and therefore sin, and can then give life away to those whom he chooses
  - iii. The KING is victorious over death!
    - 1. This means that God accepted His sacrifice for our sins because he has conquered the curse that Adam’s original sin procured.
- d. Declaration: He is not here. He is risen.
  - i. This is simply declarative.
  - ii. The good news of the resurrected Jesus, the Lord who conquers death and therefore the curse of our sin, is simply that: good NEWS
    - 1. It is not good advice on how to live. It is simply a fact with which we must reckon.
    - 2. This is always how the gospel is to be proclaimed: it is the announcement of what God has done through Jesus Christ and the interpretation of those events, i.e. what they *mean*
  - iii. The bad news is that everybody dies because everybody sins and thus wages war against God: sin is the curse for our sins the conquering of God over His enemies
    - 1. The curse of death extended into four primary spheres
      - a. Alienation (death) between God and Man, spiritual disintegration
        - i. “You were enemies of God”
      - b. Alienation (death) between Man and Man, social disintegration
        - i. “Why are there quarrels and fights among you?” (James 4)
        - ii. Adam *blamed* Eve for his disobedience
      - c. Alienation (death) between Man and Himself, sou/psychological disintegration
        - i. Depression, despair,
      - d. Alienation (death) between Man and Nature, physical disintegration
        - i. From dust you came and to dust you shall return
        - ii. In the end, the dirt wins
    - 2. This is why the cross was necessary for all aspects
      - a. “Before we can begin to see the cross as something done for us, we have to see it as something done by us.” (John Stott)
  - iv. The good news is that Jesus reconciles us to each of these through His death AND it is proclaimed as sufficient and powerful by His resurrection: alienation is defeated because its curse has been broken for all who come to Jesus as their champion King
    - 1. Proclaimed as task that is finished by Christ
 

*“News is a report about something that has happened which you can’t do anything about because it has been done for you and all you can do is respond to it.” (Lloyd-Jones)*
    - 2. Jesus has completed the payment for sin FOR US
      - a. Col 2:13-14 (who did the work, even the nailing in v14?)
    - 3. The wages are paid, we are only to turn to Him (repentance) and trust in Him (faith)

- a. It is Christ who rescues us from sin, and therefore death, spiritual, physical, psychological, and soulish.
    - b. The gospel shows us that it is in our inability and the ability and accomplishment of Christ, His death for my sins, His resurrection for my righteousness, that is the basis for my acceptance
  - 4. Nothing left for us to complete, no advice by which we can save ourselves and defeat death.
    - a. Most religions (even in the name Christian), functionally center themselves on, “Do these good things and avoid these bad things, make yourself acceptable, and you will defeat death.”
    - b. The gospel centers itself on, “He is risen! He has defeated death! He makes you acceptable through faith alone, therefore obey him.”
    - c. We are not saved by our ability to conform to the Law or do rites/rituals, or even by character transformation, but only by responding in faith to the heralded message of King Jesus
  - e. Command: *Remember* how he said to you these things must happen
    - i. The angels connect Jesus’ resurrection with Jesus’ words
      - 1. Do you trust His words? Even when you cannot comprehend *how* they could be true?
      - 2. We must trust what God has said *in His Word, the Bible*, not merely what we can fathom or comprehensively understand.
    - ii. Jesus had predicted this, numerous times, and yet since they could not comprehend how it could be, they functionally “forgot” it, and thus they needed to be told to “remember” it

#### 4. What Shall We Do With Such Extravagant News?

- a. “Then they remembered...”
  - i. *Hopeless love turns to hopeful love!*
- b. Their recollection is related to hearing the words of Jesus, which is the word of God, and testifying to it
  - i. Thus, this recollection and the subsequent hope which precedes the testifying to the truth, is rooted in recalling the words of God
  - ii. What God has said, i.e. the Bible, is the root of all hope, knowledge of God, and of life, for what God promises He fulfills
  - iii. They told (proclaimed) all these things (the good news) to the eleven (the apostles) and to the rest (others there)
- c. These women proclaimed what they had seen and heard: They faithfully testified
  - i. Women were “bad witnesses” in the ancient world, thus Luke’s telling this part of the story first is strong evidence that he is not trying to spin the story or tell a legend to be believed by its strong veracity
  - ii. Women were not allowed to testify in court proceedings
    - 1. Note how the apostles (and others) respond to their testimony: “Nonsense!”
    - 2. Thus, Luke is preaching the inclusion of women in the gospel story as the first witnesses (and trustworthy ones) to the resurrection of Jesus
  - iii. There was a list of witnesses to this empty tomb, all women!
    - 1. Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary (James’ mother), others with them
    - 2. Because THIS IS HOW IT HAPPENED
- d. The apostles were unbelieving (no+faith)
  - i. This shows the expectations of the eleven: none – dead is dead
    - 1. Legends don’t have these kind of heroes, where “faith” is the key component and they have none

2. It also shows that the resurrection was, though told beforehand numerous times by Jesus, completely unexpected
- ii. They thought the women were delirious with grief
  1. their words as nonsense
  2. This is the sign of skepticism, totally unwilling to accept the report of the women, but rather only to categorize it as the words of deluded untrustworthy persons
- e. We are to Hear, Seek Truth, Humble Ourselves, and Trust His Words
  - i. In contrast to utter unbelief, Peter rose (*anastas*, same word as “He is risen”) up
    1. ran to the tomb (running implies desire, effort, and intensity)
    2. stooping (the doors were short, he had to kneel to get in)
    3. looking inside (investigating the claims)
  - ii. saw linen cloths (evidence)
    1. by themselves (the evidence that this was not grave robbery)
  - iii. went away (again, tomb is no longer useful)
    1. marveling to himself (he is debating options of what might possibly have happened, what does it mean?)
      - a. about that which had happened (the missing body of Jesus, the linen cloths, the story of the angelic announcement as told by the women)
  - iv. At this point, this is where Peter is left, and I think that Luke wants us readers to recognize our place here, too
    1. We hear the announcement, “He is risen, just as He said.”
    2. We desire to know the truth, so we must run with vigor to find out the veracity of the claim.
    3. We humble ourselves to stoop, look, and investigate.
    4. We must wrestle through the conflict of our expectations and the evidence, through the confusion and the wonder.
    5. We are to “Remember what he said...” and trust His words more than our assumptions.
      - a. Remember, it was Peter’s faith which failed when he trusted his own wisdom rather than the words of Christ Jesus pertaining to His crucifixion.
      - b. Here he is again, as are you, with a test: Will you believe what you thought inconceivable, because Jesus has said it and you find the unfound Jesus?

Why the Church? Why did it come to exist? The resurrection of Jesus is the reason that it exists. Apart from seeing Jesus alive and risen from the dead, the conqueror of death and sin, the apostles never would have moved with such passionate perseverance to simply make an announcement that he had. It was the preaching of the resurrection that brought rejection, persecution, and hatred. Why preach it? Because it is true and its implications are Reality-altering: Jesus is the King who gave Himself to death for His people. When he was raised up from the dead, we now know that He has authority over all which our sin brought into the world: alienation from God, from one another, from ourselves, and from Nature. He reconciles it through His body and by His risen life. He is alive to rule and to raise up all that which is broken. We will see Him again, physically, personally, not in some ethereal way. Think about this! Death undone means that the physical world will be remade without corruption, sin, violence, selfishness, and disintegration. And WE WILL SEE THE ONE WHOM WE LOVE, JESUS, face to face. As you walk away from the empty tomb, consider this. Where is he? How long must I wait? Can I trust the One who gave Himself up for me and has risen from the dead? There is hope in God, for Jesus lives.