

Resurrected

Luke 24

Last week we studied the crucifixion and saw how the death of Jesus provides PERSPECTIVE on any problems we face.

Addressing a Problem:

1. Perspective - The Cross
2. Power - The Resurrection
3. Plan - The Holy Spirit

The cross clears out any confusion and reminds us **what we all deserve**: death and hell. Not only do we all deserve to die physically because of our sin, but we all deserve to suffer eternal misery under God's righteous judgment. With that perspective all of our aches and pains, our worries and concerns, our conflicts and broken relationships don't seem quite so bad. It becomes **much easier to be grateful** - especially when we move from the condemnation and misery we deserve to the amazing grace of what God has given us in Christ.

The cross provides perspective. Today we reflect on **the resurrection of Jesus** - and this **reminds us of the POWER available to those who believe**. The death and resurrection of Jesus together form the centerpiece of Christianity, the heart of the Gospel.

- "Because He lives, I can face tomorrow. Because He lives, all fear is gone. Because I know He holds the future. And life is worth the living, just because He lives."
- Because Jesus rose from the dead, **we have confidence** in our total forgiveness and status as beloved children of God. The penalty for sin has been paid!
- Because Jesus rose from the dead, **we know the power of sin over us has been broken!** Death has been defeated. We've been set free!
- And because Jesus rose from the dead, **we have hope** for this life and for eternity. Jesus was "proven to be the Son of God in power by His resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord."

Come back next week to learn about **the Ascension of Jesus**, who reigns right now at the Father's right hand and sent the Holy Spirit to strengthen and guide us each and every day.

Today in Luke 24 we will first see **three reasons to believe** in the resurrection and then we'll see **three applications**. First - why believe in the resurrection? Second - why does it matter? We'll see there are lots of compelling reasons to believe Jesus rose. And then we'll see this point not only matters but is essential to our daily faith.

So why should we believe that Jesus rose from the dead? If you picture Christianity as a building, obviously Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of that building and the resurrection is the

central proof of Jesus' identity. So in a very real way, EVERYTHING about Christianity depends on this single point that Jesus rose from the dead. Paul says it this way in 1 Corinthians 15:

Everything depends on the Resurrection

"If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins." 1 Corinthians 15:17

You could not state this more strongly. If Jesus did not rise from the dead then we have no reason to believe anything else he said. If Jesus did not rise from the dead then we can have no confidence in Him to save us from death and hell. Without the resurrection, "your faith is futile. You are still in your sins."

Everything depends on this proposition: on the third day, Jesus rose. Or as the angels said it: "He is not here, but has risen" (Luke 23:6).

If I asked you - **why are you a Christian?** I'm sure you'd have several good reasons:

1. You believe the Bible
2. Lots of people you respect believe in Jesus
3. You've experienced the truth of Christianity in your life
4. The Christian worldview makes sense of life

If you press your reasons back to their **most basic foundation**, it would bring you right to the resurrection. Ultimately, we are Christians because Jesus rose from the dead. That is why we have the New Testament. It is why the apostles preached the gospel they preached - because they saw and talked with and ate with Jesus after He rose again. It is why the gospels were written and the other letters were written. If Jesus had just died and that was the end of it those 11 disciples and the other 100 or so with them would have dispersed into the wind like the followers of other false Messiahs before and after Jesus.

Look at how the two disciples on the road to Emmaus were talking:

Everything depends on the Resurrection

"But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel." Luke 24:21

They were about to learn that the man they were talking to WAS the Risen Jesus - but apart from that key fact all they had was DISAPPOINTMENT. And if the resurrection is just a myth a few guys invented then Christianity is false. Without the resurrection Christianity would be a baseless cult like the Mormons and Jehova's Witnesses and Islam.

But brothers and sisters, listen to the testimony of the first witnesses of the empty tomb. The women went to the tomb early on Sunday to anoint Jesus' body with the spices they had prepared. But instead of a lifeless body to embalm they found the stone rolled away and the tomb empty. Then two angels appeared and said:

Reasons to Believe Jesus Rose:

“Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.” Luke 24:5-6

We have lots of reasons to believe Jesus rose. Check out the church blog for more on this. But I’ve chosen three key reasons to highlight today. First

Reasons to Believe Jesus Rose:

“Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.” Luke 24:5-6

1. Reliable History

We have four gospel accounts that include dozens of specific details. Skeptics often point out the few apparent discrepancies between the accounts but all of those can be easily explained. For example, Luke documents two angels by the tomb while Matthew and Mark only mention one. But doesn’t it make sense that ONE angel would speak, even if two were there? If your son came home from school and said, “A bully was picking on me today,” would you accuse him of lying if you later found out there were two or three bullies involved? No. One guy was the ring-leader and that’s who your son initially focused on. Later, to fill in the picture, he mentioned that there were a couple of other guys there too.

That’s exactly what happened with the resurrection account. Matthew focused on the earthquake and the Roman guards being stunned. Mark got straight to the words of this figure, simply calling him a young man in a white robe. So Matthew, Mark and Luke AGREE on these important details:

- The first witnesses of the empty tomb were women.
- They went to anoint Jesus’ body - not at all expecting to find an empty tomb.
- They had not thought the plan through - as they had no way to roll away the stone.
- They saw an angel in a white robe who told them Jesus had risen from the dead.
- Then they went and told Simon and the other apostles - who ran to the tomb and confirmed everything the women had said.

When you evaluate HISTORY, you look for multiple sources confirming the same key points. You listen for the little details that give a story the ring of truth. When there are different accounts of the same event you pay special attention to details that might have been deliberately SMOOTHED OVER, always considering the motives of the one who wrote it down.

Think about it - wouldn’t scribes through the centuries have been tempted to fix the whole one angel versus two thing? Wouldn’t that have been an easy correction? “Let’s just add Matthew’s earthquake to Mark and Luke... let’s bring Luke into alignment with just one angel... let’s be sure the lists of the womens’ names all match exactly...”

Don’t you see how PERFECT UNIFORMITY creates SUSPICIOUS history? But all of these details and a few minor differences reads like RELIABLE history! It shows the accounts have

been preserved faithfully, as originally written. They have not been tampered with or adjusted to smooth things over.

With history you also look for **EMBARASSING DETAILS**. See how the first group is WOMEN? In the first century women could not testify in a Jewish or Roman court. Their testimony was invalid. Sorry ladies. Women's suffrage and women's lib was WAY in the future. And also notice the confusion and fear and lack of faith that runs through this whole passage. Those details are embarrassing! If all the main characters looked impressive and heroic throughout a book we would rightly wonder if the truth had been doctored a bit. But look at verse 10:

Reasons to Believe Jesus Rose:

“Now it was Mary Magdalene... and the other women who told these things to the apostles, but these words seemed to them and idle tale, and *they did not believe them.*” Luke 24:10-11

1. Reliable History

Mary Magdalene was the prostitute who washed Jesus' feet with her hair and caused all kinds of scandal. Jesus not only allowed this unclean sinner to touch him, but he accepted her into his inner circle of disciples after casting seven demons out of her. Now, is that the kind of resume you would select for a primary witness in your key legal case? Hmmm... ***Demon-possessed, homeless prostitute.*** Yeah, perfect! The jury will love her.

And then notice the response of the apostles! They had all traveled together with Jesus for most of three years - but these pillars of the early church DID NOT BELIEVE the women... It's details like this that make the gospel accounts read like such reliable history.

And one more key point here - THE TOMB WAS EMPTY. We can't be totally certain today where Jesus was buried. But back then everyone knew which tomb belonged to Joseph of Arimathea. They knew exactly where it was. And NO ONE was able to dispute that critical fact - the tomb was empty. There was no body. Did those women somehow overpower or manipulate the Roman guards to roll the stone away? Did the disciples somehow come in the night and snatch the body while the guards slept - at the risk of their very lives?

Had the Jews or Romans been able to produce Jesus' body in the first few weeks and months after his alleged "resurrection" the Gospel would have been disproven and Christianity would have collapsed before it even started.

There is a lot more in Luke 24. Try to count all the references to people **SEEING and TOUCHING and even EATING**. These are more specific details to document the FACTS. Why did Jesus eat with the disciples so much after the resurrection? Was he really that hungry? No. He was proving that it was not a vision they were seeing. He was not a ghost. It was REALLY HIM. He rose from the dead PHYSICALLY. He ate food because that is what real, living people do - we EAT.

There is no way to PROVE that Jesus rose from the dead. But when you evaluate all the details we have from history - both in the Bible and from Jewish and Roman historians - **the most likely explanation** is that Jesus did, in fact, rise from the dead. It's like the CREATION DEBATE. No one can prove how the universe came to be. All we can do is look at everything we see now and try to discern the BEST EXPLANATION. Some believe the random explosion of NOTHING produced EVERYTHING - which works for me because it sounds exactly like God saying, "Let there be light."

The second reason to believe in the resurrection is:

Reasons to Believe Jesus Rose:

"He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you... that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men... And ***they remembered his words.***" Luke 24:7-8

2. Biblical Authority

The entire New Testament was written to document the FACT of Jesus' resurrection. The four gospel accounts, the book of Acts, all the letters - all 27 books - were written to present and apply the truth of Jesus' death and resurrection.

The angels here remind the disciples of Jesus' own words - ***three times prophesying*** that he would suffer, die and on the third day rise from the dead. Listen to Luke's introduction to his gospel - and remember, Luke was not one of the 12 apostles. He was a gentile physician who became a companion and supporter of Paul on his missions trips. So **Luke was a CONVERT** to Christianity. Here is why he wrote his gospel:

2. Biblical Authority

"Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were ***eyewitnesses and ministers of the word*** have delivered them to us." Luke 1:1-2

2. Biblical Authority

"It seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ***that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.***" Luke 1:3-4

Here is Luke's ORDERLY ACCOUNT - detailing everything as a reliable historian based on firsthand testimony of the eyewitnesses and the original source material. Now listen to Luke's intro to his second volume, the book of Acts:

2. Biblical Authority

“In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.” Acts 1:1-2

2. Biblical Authority

“**He presented himself alive to them** after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.” Acts 1:3

This is **WHY LUKE WROTE**: because so many reliable witnesses saw Jesus alive! Not just a couple of isolated incidents, but numerous personal experiences over a period of forty days! Now listen to how Paul says it in 1 Corinthians:

2. Biblical Authority

“Now I would remind you, brothers, of **the gospel I preached to you**, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.” 1 Corinthians 15:1-2

2. Biblical Authority

“For I delivered to you as of first importance **what I also received**: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.” 1 Corinthians 15:3-5

2. Biblical Authority

“Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, **most of whom are still alive**, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.” 1 Corinthians 15:6-8

Testimony of the resurrection goes back to the earliest days of the church. Paul says, “**WHAT I RECEIVED** I also passed on to you,” referring to the early creeds and traditions - in addition to his own personal experience of the risen Christ. And we not only have the unified testimony of the apostles as well documented in the New Testament, the apostles and Jesus frequently call on the authority of the Old Testament as well.

2. Biblical Authority

“O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe **all that the prophets have spoken!** ...And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them **in all the Scriptures** the things concerning himself.” Luke 24:25,27

That must have been a long Bible study. It is the premise of our whole sermon series this year - that **the whole Bible presents One Unified message** - that is ALL ABOUT JESUS from beginning to end. Jesus goes on later with all the apostles:

2. Biblical Authority

“Everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled... **Thus it is written**, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead.” Luke 24:44,46

If you want more on that just look at **Peter’s sermon in Acts 2** and how he appeals to both HISTORY and SCRIPTURE as he preaches the gospel.

2. Biblical Authority

“This Jesus... you crucified... God raised him up... For David says concerning him, ‘...You will not abandon my soul to Hades or let your Holy One see corruption.’” Acts 2:23-24,27

Peter appeals to the facts of history - that Jesus rose from the dead. And then supports those claims from the Psalms. This is the consistent pattern of all the writers of the New Testament. One more key reason to believe Jesus rose:

3. Spritual Clarity

“When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed it and broke it and gave it them. **And their eyes were opened** and they recognized him.” Luke 24:30-31

Until that moment those two disciples on the road to were blind in their doubt and confusion. But as Jesus broke bread - clearly reminding them of the Lord’s Supper - suddenly they saw the truth and understood everything. The two said to each other:

3. Spritual Clarity

“Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?” Luke 24:32

Just a few days after this the Holy Spirit would be poured out and all believers would have this kind of experience regularly. It’s called **ILLUMINATION** and is one of the key roles of the Holy Spirit in our lives - to remind us of all Jesus said and help us understand the truth we read and hear in the Scriptures.

This is an important confirmation - the internal feeling that it’s true - that Jesus rose and that He is with us personally through His Spirit. But this is the THIRD reason because it must be subservient to and based on the first two. We must be careful to keep our emotions as the caboose of our train, and not the engine. **Feelings follow facts**, not the other way around. But feelings can confirm facts.

So why do we believe Jesus rose from the dead?

Why Believe in the Resurrection?

1. Reliable History
2. Biblical Authority

3. Spiritual Clarity

Again, see the blog for lots more reasons and additional details. Now let's see why this matters - how it's relevant for us. Three applications.

Because Jesus Rose from the Dead we have:

1. **Confidence** - Everything He said was true

"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." Luke 24:6-7

If Jesus did not rise from the dead why should we believe anything else he said? If he stayed dead he was just another false Messiah - just a fraud making false promises. But because he did rise from the dead he proved everything else he said to be true.

So we can have total confidence in the words of Jesus and the whole New Testament. It all stands or falls together. And with the resurrection as the cornerstone of our faith we can have supreme confidence that the whole building of Christianity is rock solid, for it is based on this key fact: "He is not here, but has risen!"

Second:

Because Jesus Rose from the Dead we have:

2. **Power** - to overcome sin and live for Jesus

"Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and... rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins **should be proclaimed in his name to all nations.**" Luke 24:46-47

Because Jesus Rose from the Dead we have:

2. **Power** - to overcome sin and live for Jesus

"You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are **clothed with power from on high.**" Luke 24:48-49

When you read Luke and then go on into the book of Acts it is striking **how quickly and thoroughly the disciples are changed** after Acts 2 when the Holy Spirit comes upon them. Suddenly the disciples who in Luke 24 are filled with doubt and are cowering in fear become bold preachers of the gospel, doing all kinds of dramatic miracles. How?

The Holy Spirit came as Jesus promised. And the Holy Spirit filled them with the same POWER that God used to raise Jesus from the dead. Listen to Paul's prayer in Ephesians 1:

2. Power - to overcome sin and live for Jesus

"That you may know... what is **the immeasurable greatness of his power** toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead." Ephesians 1:18-20

Paul prays for spiritual REVELATION that believers would know - personally, experientially know our hope of heaven and eternal life and the **LIMITLESS POWER available to us in Christ**. As Spirit-filled followers of Jesus we have INSIDE OF US the very same power that accomplished the resurrection.

Think of that. What greater power could anyone demonstrate? ***What greater enemy is there than DEATH?*** Who could face death and win? No one. Death's power reigned supreme. He was the most feared of all gods of ancient times. But Jesus walked into Death, disarmed that terrible enemy, and then walked right out of Death's domain, victorious over sin and death forever.

THAT VERY SAME POWER is living in YOU right now. Do you believe that? Have you experienced that? That is why Jesus told his disciples, "It's better for you that I go - because then I can send you my Holy Spirit and YOU WILL DO EVEN GREATER THINGS THAN I HAVE BEEN DOING!"

That promise still applies to us today. "Greater is he living inside of you than he who is living in the world." We have RESURRECTION POWER.

Pastor Colin Smith tells the story of a man who sat down in his office and said, "**Pastor, I just can't stop looking at porn.**" Colin looked him in the eye and said, "Well, let me introduce you to Jesus." The man looked up and said, "Oh no, I'm a believer and have been for some time. I just can't stop this one behavior." And Colin said, "If you have trusted in Jesus - really and truly surrendered yourself to Him - then you not only have forgiveness of your sins but you have FREEDOM FROM THEM and you are filled with the Holy Spirit!"

The person who says, "I can't stop sinning," is basically saying, "I don't believe in Jesus. I don't have the Holy Spirit." Because the Gospel is not just about forgiveness of sins, it is about freedom from sin and walking in the fullness of God's power! Listen to Romans 6:

2. Power - to overcome sin and live for Jesus

"We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be ***united with him in a resurrection like his.***" Romans 6:4-5

2. Power - to overcome sin and live for Jesus

"We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that ***we will also live with him.***" Romans 6:6-8

The believer has been UNITED WITH CHRIST in both His death and His resurrection. Think about what that means for your relationship with sin. You have died to sin. That old, sinful self was crucified, died and was buried with Jesus. When Jesus stepped out of that tomb, your NEW SELF stepped out with Him. You are ONE with the Victorious, Glorious, Resurrected Christ!

If you truly can't stop a certain sin - it's time to come back to the basics of the gospel. Sit down with me or another elder or your small group leader and share a detailed confession of your sin. Here is the question I ask people in this situation:

- ***Have you made a decisive break with your old life?***

I literally draw a line down the middle of a paper and say, "**Can you see a BEFORE AND AFTER in your life?** This was my life before Jesus took over, this is who I am now that Jesus is in charge." If you can't see that before and after there is a good chance you have never truly repented and you have not yet fully committed your life to Christ. Because once you do - you will never be the same!

That's not to say we are perfect - but it is to say that the believer is BEING PERFECTED. We are growing. We are not who we were. ***We are making progress***, growing to be more and more like Jesus in holiness and zeal for His glory and mission.

Because Jesus Rose from the Dead we have:

2. ***Power*** - to overcome sin and live for Jesus

"You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are ***clothed with power from on high***." Luke 24:48-49

The gospel promises both freedom and FRUITFULNESS. The true believer will not be controlled or defined by sin. Nor will the believer be driven by his or her own agenda. Rather we will increasingly devote ourselves to the cause of Christ - preaching the gospel, building His Kingdom instead of our own.

That is what the power of Christ is FOR - not for us to get whatever we want, but for us to do whatever God wants. And the center of that mission is to proclaim the good news of our Savior who rose from the dead!

One more application of the resurrection.

Because Jesus Rose from the Dead we have:

3. ***Hope*** - for our own resurrection and eternity

"Having the eyes of your hearts enlightened that you may know what is ***the hope to which he has called you***, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints. Ephesians 1:18

Because Jesus conquered death himself, we know he has conquered death for us. This cannot be said of any other founder of any other religion in history.

- The writers of the Hindu Vedas - all dead.
- Buddha - dead in his grave.
- Mohammed - still dead, last I heard
- Joseph Smith of the Mormons - dead
- Charles Taze Russell of the JW - dead and buried
- Mary Baker Eddy of the Christian Scientists - dead
- L. Ron Hubbard who founded Scientology - dead and still dead

There is **only one founder of any religion** who died but then rose from the dead and still lives today. His name is Jesus Christ - He is the all sufficient Savior who died for you and me - and He is the victorious Risen Lord who conquered sin and death forever!

Why do people trust in writers and leaders who couldn't conquer death themselves? You can't have any confidence in what they said! You have no reason to hope in their teachings to face your death and to trust them with your eternity.

But because Jesus Christ lives - we know He holds the future. **He holds the keys to heaven and He himself is the WAY into heaven and eternal life.** He has prepared a place for us and is waiting to welcome us home! This is our great and blessed hope - Jesus is coming soon to bring us home to be with Him forever. Our Risen Savior is coming again!

Because Jesus rose from the dead we have:

1. **Confidence** - everything He said was true
2. **Power** - to overcome sin and live on mission
3. **Hope** - of our own resurrection and eternal life

Everything in the Christian faith depends on this single truth: **"He is risen."** We have many strong and compelling reasons to believe Jesus did in fact rise from the dead. And because he did rise, we have confidence in all he taught. We have power to conquer every sin, to endure every struggle and to advance His mission on this earth. Finally, we have hope that we too will rise with Christ after we die or when He comes back for us!

This is the wonderful Gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord!

Let's pray and then sing of our Lord **who reigns FOREVER!**