

Luke 24:1-12

***“And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them”***

NKJ Luke 24:1 Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared.

2 But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb.

3 Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

4 And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments.

5 Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead?

6 "He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still 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 Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest.

10 It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them, who told these things to the apostles.

11 And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them.

12 But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened.

If I were to say to you “You ask me how I know he lives?” what’s the next line? “He lives within my heart” See, most Christians, and a good number of non-Christians have heard the hymn “***He Lives***” by Alfred Ackley. But oddly enough you won’t find it in the Trinity Hymnal, now why is that?

Well, its because there’s a problem with it that perhaps I can illustrate, with an example of something that happened to me way back in the 1990s. It was a year or two after I had become a Christian, and I was taking some classes

in theology. I went out to lunch with some guys in the class and one of them was one of those guys who never ever misses an opportunity to witness. So when the waiter asked how everyone was doing that day, he fired back something along the lines of ***“I’m doing great because Jesus Christ died for my sins, and rose again from the dead. You know that He Lives right?”*** So the waiter rolled his eyes and said ***“Yeah, yeah, I know, he lives within your heart, right.”***

And without missing a beat this guy said. ***“No dude, He’s way to big to fit in my heart, I mean He’s alive and He’s coming back, isn’t that amazing?”***

You see in that answer he exposed an important misconception. You see a lot of people view what we just read about as a “comforting story” but no more than that. So they are willing to affirm “Jesus Christ is alive *to you.*” It’s something you choose to believe in, but in the same way that children believe in Santa Claus, and with no more subjective reality. And in a way, the song *He Lives* reinforces that, it makes it seem like the only evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a subjective experience, a feeling we have in our hearts. So that we can say, he’s alive *here, I know that by faith.* And there is a truth in that, Paul tells us in Ephesians 3:17 that one of the fruits of the work of the Holy Spirit is ***“that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.”***

But friends, the testimony of all four gospels is that the resurrection is not all feelings and desires, the vital testimony that Bible wants you to know and believe is that Jesus Christ really died for your sins, and then really rose bodily from the grave, and is now really seated at the right hand of God the Father in heaven. So you ask me ***How I know he Lives?*** I know because this infallible word of God tells me that, but it’s not enough just to know that is it?

Plenty of people know that is what the Bible says, but to them those words ***seem like idle tales, and they do not believe them.*** That of course is the description also of the reaction of the Apostles when the women told them what had happened to them when they went early in the morning to the tomb to complete the preparation of the body of Jesus.

Now Luke in relating their story, gives us a very truncated description of the events. He leaves a lot of details out. He doesn't mention the earthquake, he doesn't mention the guards being terrified of the angel, he doesn't mention Mary Magdalene's later meeting with Jesus in the garden. He doesn't even give us all the words the angels spoke. But he does give us all the essential information we need to know.

The women go to the tomb with their spices on Sunday morning. What do they expect to find? They expect to find a sealed tomb containing the body of Jesus. Mark tells us that their only discussion on the way there was who are we going to get to roll away the stone from the door? Why? Well, because dead men stay dead, right?

But now you might be thinking, but Jesus told them he would be put to death, be buried, and then rise again on the third day. Why didn't they believe that? Well we can't be certain, but we do know that both they and the Apostles and everyone else thought the experience they were going through just wasn't supposed to happen. The Messiah doesn't die on a cross, that is not what is supposed to happen to the Son of David. He reestablishes the kingdom and rules from Jerusalem and judges the enemies of God. That's why when Jesus had told the disciples that he was going up to Jerusalem to suffer and die, Peter had actually rebuked him saying ***“Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!”***

You see they didn't expect the resurrection because they couldn't accept the crucifixion. If Jesus died that way, he might have been a great and beloved teacher, but he couldn't be the Messiah. Their thinking that morning was still determined by all of their presuppositions, they were still locked into all of their assumptions.

And so they are amazed, to see the angels at the tomb, amazed to find the tomb empty, to learn that Jesus had risen earlier. But when they see, then they remember and understand what Jesus had told them. In a few moments, though understand that they are *unlearning* all of their traditions and assumptions about the Messiah. And please trust me, unlearning is SO MUCH MORE DIFFICULT than learning something afresh. For instance, I

can't tell you how often in speaking with Cultists like Jehovah's witnesses, you can take them through the scriptures right up to the edge of the truth and their arguments are all dashed, but *they won't accept what you are saying, because it would involve unlearning all the comforting lies they've accepted.* To unlearn the lie and believe the truth you need the teachable heart that only the Holy Spirit can give.

Well the women are honored to be able to be the first to proclaim the good news that Jesus had risen to the timid Apostles, who are by now hiding for fear of the Jews. You can imagine what they thought when they first heard. ***They're hysterical, see how this experience has traumatized them. They want to believe he's still alive so much they are seeing things.*** This seems like foolishness, but the ***foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.***

Peter and John at least, want to check out their story, so they go to the tomb, Peter runs ahead, and Luke only tells us about him, he sees the Linen cloths lying there, Christ has risen, and the living Christ had no need of the clothing of the dead. Peter is amazed, but he is slow of heart to believe, he still can't quite grasp it, so he goes away amazed. For Peter, it will take the bodily appearance of Jesus to him later that day to finally convince Him.

Now what is the application of all of this to you?

I want to give you just one great application: *Believe What You Just Sang before this Sermon.*

Plenty of people who would identify themselves as Christians know the story of the resurrection. They hear it once a year, every year, some wake up at the crack of dawn themselves to go and hear it. Often they even feel sentimental about it, they may cry every year. To them it is a wonderful story that they cherish in their hearts. But that's all it is to them, *a story.* You see they know, that dead men don't really rise again from the dead. So they say things like ***“well of course there is a sense in which Jesus lives, his example goes on forever, and we'll try to keep his teachings in our hearts and honor Him, so you could say Jesus lives in our Hearts.”*** But if you ask them, did he really and truly in time and space, die on the cross, get buried in a tomb, and

then really bodily rise again from the dead, never to die again. They'll hedge for as long as they can, but eventually they'll say

*“Well no that's taking it too literally, its just a story, a tale, meant to inspire us and make us feel better, it doesn't matter if we don't think all of that stuff with angels and earthquakes and bodily rising really happened.”*

Well no, it does really matter, because that really is the difference between eternal life and eternal death, whether you are really a Christian. Because you see if this just an idle tale, our faith is empty and we are damned, still in our sins. Far from being helpful, the idea that it's just a nice story is the worst of all possible news. Andy, that's harsh, how can you say that? Don't listen to me, listen to Paul, turn if you would to 1 Cor. 15:

NKJ 1 Corinthians 15:1 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand,  
2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you -- unless you believed in vain.

3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,

5 and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve.

6 After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep.

7 After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles.

8 Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

9 For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

11 Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

12 Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen.

14 And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty.

15 Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up -- if in fact the dead do not rise.

16 For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen.

17 And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!

18 Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

20 But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

### **EXPOSIT –**

You see all of the things that Paul says depend upon the fact of the resurrection of Jesus?

All of the indisputable evidences he refers to

If Christ is not risen, then we have no hope.

The resurrection is the great evidence that He is the Messiah, the He did die for our Sins, that all of His Promises are yeah and amen.

And we rejoice to confess that this really did Happen

So believe it and live, if you do truly believe this fact, if you trust in it, if you have unlearned all the false assumptions that are packed into our heads day after day by a world desperate to have men believe that Jesus is dead, then you know that it is because you have been taught that by the Holy Spirit, and you will be saved.

Romans 10:8 But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach):

9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

So you ask me How I know He Lives, I know because His Word teaches me, and His Spirit enables to believe.