**Sunrise Service 2018** Luke 24:1-12 [www.bible-sermons.org](http://www.bible-sermons.org) April 1, 2018

*1 But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. 2 And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb,
3 but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. 5 And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? 6 He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, 7 that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.” 8 And they remembered his words, 9 and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. 10 Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, 11 but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. 12 But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened.*

The Bible has to be the most dramatic account ever told. To really get a sense of that morning, you have to put yourself in the mindset of the disciples. They had been called by Jesus, some from their lives of fishing, one from being a despised tax collector, a zealot or two, all of whom had little hope of doing anything more than eeking out a living while hoping for a Messiah to come. They had all entered into trades which meant they weren’t cut out to be a rabbi, and none were even the law keeping Pharisees. Then this man who wandered out of the desert after a 40 day fast, the one John the Baptist declared to be He whom Israel had been waiting for 400 years, and wonder of wonders He asked them to follow Him and be His disciples. It would have been like someone coming up to you today and asking you to be an advisor to the President, only so much greater! The Messiah was to usher in a New Covenant and an eternal Kingdom.

You had also heard Him teach, and His teaching was amazing, profound, deep, and unlike anyone you had ever heard. But that’s not all, He started healing everyone of every kind of affliction. Even the demons fled at His command. He miraculously fed thousands, not once but twice. And in case you still had any lingering doubt, He raised the dead!

But then He started talking about being turned over, betrayed, tortured, and crucified. And He said some mysterious thing, about rising from death. You watched Him horribly scourged and slowly die on the torturous cross. You witnessed the amazing events surrounding it, the strange darkness, the earthquake, and some even said dead saints rose from their graves. But your biggest concern was whether or not the Romans are coming to crucify you too.

Some of the women followers came to your secret hideout and told you that the body of Jesus was gone, and that an angel said He rose from death and would meet the disciples in Galilee. That sounded like a hallucination. If the women were trying to cheer you up, it was more cruel than cheerful. Peter and John had to go see for themselves. They ran to the tomb. John hesitated but Peter charged on in. There was the sheet laying like it had laid on His body, but empty, and the head linen was neatly folded. Your head is spinning! What does it mean? Did He really walk out of the tomb? You saw His lifeless body. You run back to tell the other disciples.

*36 As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, “Peace to you!” 37 But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. 38 And he said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” 40 And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. 41 And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate before them. 44 Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46 and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, 47 and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 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 24:36-49

Try to imagine the joy and wonder of seeing Jesus in that room with the disciples. He is physical and even ate a fish to prove it. There were the wounds in His hands, feet, and side and yet He looks amazingly healthy. Every doubt is now gone, but what does it mean. Will He now lead an army against Rome, or is this something even more wonderful? What did He mean when He said, “receive power from on high”?

It took a number of meetings with Jesus to understand what took place. Thankfully the apostles wrote down just what it means to us. First, it means His sacrifice on your behalf was acceptable to God. Your sin debt is paid! You have the righteousness of God in Jesus. There is no condemnation if you are in Jesus. You are destined for heaven! And for that you should be constantly grateful and full of joy.

Next, it means you have been adopted into the family of God. Jesus said, I am going to my Father and your Father. In other words, we are a part of the family of God. How we need to increasingly realize what it means to be counted as a part of the household of God, how we should love one another, be committed to care for one another, and serve and worship our Savior together.

And the third point I want to bring out is that Jesus’ death and resurrection makes us fit to be vessels of the Holy Spirit, so that we have the power from on high to be a witness of Jesus. We can show His love to others. We can demonstrate His grace. We can tell others how to have life in Him. The Holy Spirit is the power available to us to be different from the world, generous instead of selfish, loving instead of apathetic, a light in the darkness of this world. We have the power to listen to the Spirit and obey.

And finally it means that you too will rise just as Jesus rose, with a resurrected body like His. *20 But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.* Philippians 3:20-21
That happens at His return, but until then you will be with Him, reveling in His presence while you wait for that day. The film, I Can Only Imagine, just recently came out. I encourage you to see it. It speaks of our first glimpse of Jesus in heaven. “Surrounded by His glory, what will my heart feel, will I dance for you Jesus, or in awe of You be still, will I stand in Your presence, or to my knees will I fall, will I sing Hallelujah, will I be able to speak at all, I can only imagine.”

That is what it means to each of you if you are in Christ. If we just accept what He has done for us, just recognize our need for forgiveness, confess that need and ask to be given that gracious forgiveness He made possible for us by receiving in our place the justice we all deserve, then He will forgive us and make His home in our hearts.

For those of us who have received this great gift, I would ask us on this special morning, are we allowing these wonderful effects of resurrection to be at work in us? Are we allowing that power of resurrected life flow through us in grace and love for those we meet? Are we living with eternity before us, laying up our treasures in heaven instead of here on the earth? Are we in fellowship with Jesus each day in His Word and prayer? Are we living in the Kingdom of God under King Jesus. If not, there is no better morning to get back to your first love, to put Him back on the throne of your life.

Jesus is alive! He is risen! And that changes everything. Death does not have the final say. A glorious future is ours in Jesus. That is a message the whole world needs to hear. Pray for opportunities to share it and boldly do so when that prayer is answered.

Song: He’s Alive!

Invitation to hear the description of the painting.