

Easter Sunday 2024

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Luke 24 - Jesus is risen, and repenting leads to forgiveness & joy

In 2007 director James Cameron who's made movies like Titanic and Avatar, produced a documentary called, the 'Lost Tomb of Jesus'. **(SLIDE)**

But it seems the ship he was attempting to sink this time was, Christianity.

The tomb was discovered in 1980, but later it was sensationally claimed that the bones of Jesus Christ had been discovered.

Even more than that, this person named Jesus, supposedly had a child with a woman named Mary, Mary Magdalene.-----

When the Discovery Channel released the doco they claimed that Christians can still believe in a spiritual resurrection, even if not a physical bodily resurrection.---

They claimed that even if we've found Jesus' bodily remains, his spirit could still have left his body and ascended into heaven.-----

Yet, in 1st C Israel, names like Mary, Jesus (Yeshua) and Joseph were actually common. (<https://alwaysbeready.com/lost-tomb-of-jesus/>)

Israeli archaeologist, Amos Kloner, who was one of the first archaeologists to work on the ancient burial cave, says there is absolutely no proof to the preposterous claims on the documentary.-----

Another archaeologist said, the director n' producer's "conclusions were already drawn in the beginning" and their "argument goes far beyond any reasonable interpretation."-----

So I want us to consider this morning,

Did Jesus rise bodily from the dead?----- Is it true?----- **(SLIDE)**

And why does it matter?----- What difference does it make?-----

We'll look at one of the eyewitness accounts of Jesus' resurrection, in Luke's biography of Jesus. Luke's an educated man, a doctor, and he tells us at the start of his book, **(SLIDE)** that he has carefully investigated everything.

He gained information from the eyewitnesses of Jesus themselves.

Then sought to write an orderly account of Jesus' life.-----

And what we considered on Good Friday, was Jesus' death.

And Jesus really did die.

Jesus was nailed to the cross about 9am, and he hung there for about 6 hours.

In **Luke chapter 23** and verse, or sentence, **46** we're told, **(SLIDE)** Jesus then, 'called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I entrust my spirit." Saying this, he breathed his last.'

He took his last breath and died.

And the centurion, whose job it was to oversee the execution of people, knew he was dead.

Then in **v53**, we're told Jesus' body was taken down from the cross, wrapped in a cloth and placed in a rock tomb, which was sealed shut with a big stone.-----

And the women saw where this was, **v55**.-----

Jesus died on that cross.-----

We'll consider the resurrection Luke says happened next, and I'll be making 3 points; as we consider if it is true and why it matters. **(SLIDE)**

And my **first point** is, that Jesus is alive, and been resurrected with a body.-----

In **ch24v2**, the women go to the tomb early Sunday morning and find the stone rolled away, with no body to be found.

And they're told by angels [v4 cf.v23], '**He is not here, but he has risen**', just as he said he would.-----

Jesus then met 2 men on the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus.

Eventually they realise it's Jesus.

He leaves them and they head back to tell the other followers of Jesus in **v33**.

And what do they hear? What are they told? -----

"The Lord has truly been raised, and has appeared to Simon." -----

It's true, Jesus has risen – Simon Peter saw him!-----[cf. 1 Cor 15.3-8]

But this is no mere spiritual resurrection. It's not that Jesus' spirit has simply left his body and his ghost appeared to people.-----

For Jesus suddenly appears in the middle of them in **v37**, the disciples first thought he was a ghost.

And Jesus knew what they were thinking n' says:

'Look at my hands and my feet. It's I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you can see I have.'-----

Jesus is no ghost, he has a physical body, and can be touched.

And to further prove it, what happens in **v42**?-----

They give him some cooked fish, and he took and ate it in their presence.'

This risen Jesus, back from the dead, with flesh and bones, could eat fish.-----

It's **not like 'Slimer'**, that little green ghost in the 80's movie 'Ghost Busters'.**(SLIDE)**

In that we see Slimer scaring people in a hotel n' scoffing food, as a glutton.

But No, ghosts don't eat. And Jesus proves he is no ghost.-----

After Jesus' resurrection he still had a body, n' could be recognised.-----

His dead body is not still in a tomb somewhere.-----

A belief in only a spiritual resurrection is not consistent with what the eyewitness testimony in the Bible teaches about the risen Jesus; and not what Christians believe.-----

Also, Jesus is no waking dead, or half-dead zombie.

It's really him, still him – in a body that will never get old, or die again, for he has defeated death by his resurrection.-----

The Christian faith, our trust in a crucified and risen Saviour is based on historical events.

Do you believe it, though?-----

That Jesus was raised from the dead, he is alive, with a body.-----

If not, or you're not sure n' still have questions, there's really good resources available, some in the transcript, and I encourage you to investigate it.---

[see The Case for Christ, Lee Strobel; The Reason for God, Tim Keller;

<https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/spiritual-growth/core-christian-beliefs/resurrection-evidence.html>

<https://ca.thegospelcoalition.org/article/10-concise-pieces-of-evidence-for-the-resurrection/>

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/historical-evidence-for-the-resurrection>]

Point 2, Jesus expects people to believe he is raised because it was predicted.

In **v6**, as the angels said to the women about the resurrection, this is exactly what Jesus said would happen.

Jesus amazingly predicted these details about his own death.**(SLIDE)**

Twice earlier, in Luke 9(v22) and Luke **18 (v31-33)** Jesus predicted how he'd die and rise.

And Christ didn't only want them to believe it cos he said it, but also because the Old Testament predicted it.-----

Look at **v24**, the 2 men on the road are downcast, they hear that Jesus' body has gone and they don't believe Jesus is alive.

And how does Jesus respond to them?

"How foolish and slow you are to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Wasn't it necessary for the Messiah to suffer these things and enter into his glory?

Then from what we call the Old Testament, the Hebrew Scriptures, he helped them see what was said about him. -----

He makes the same point in **v44**.

The law of Moses, the prophets and Psalms was a Jewish way of summing up the whole O.T.

And Jesus is saying, you should have believed I was raised, because that is what God promised in his written word.-----

Just to give you 2 examples. The prophet Isaiah spoke 700 years before Christ, of this Servant, who would die for the sins of others:

Isa 53:5(SLIDE) 'he was pierced because of our rebellion, crushed because of our iniquities; the punishment for our peace was on him...'-----

And 'he was assigned a grave with the wicked', v9.

But in **v11**, 'After his anguish, he will see light and be satisfied'.-----

Also King David wrote 1000 years before Christ, ultimately speaking of Jesus:

Psalms 16:10,(SLIDE) 'because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay.'(NIV)-----

These predictions came true hundreds of years later in the life of Jesus.-----

The OT promised that God's Saviour, his appointed King, would rise from death.

Even before physical decay would occur.-----

Jesus himself promised that he would die then rise from the dead.

And when the women went back to tell the male disciples of the empty tomb and risen Saviour, they were not believed.

Those women weren't deluded, it was the men who were slow.-----

Jesus expected his hearers to believe he would rise, because he said he would.

And because the OT said he would.-----

Kids, if I were to predict that my football team, Essendon Bombers, will win the grand final this year,(**SLIDE**) you might think I'm stupid.

If I predict that the Australian Women's soccer team, the Matilda's, will win the Gold Medal at the Olympics,(**SLIDE**) you might think, "Ooohh I'm not sure about that".

You might think if I predict you'll get the top mark in your Year 12 ATAR score in your whole school,(**SLIDE**) you might think, 'Yeh I can do that', or 'Yeah right, no way, Clint'.-----

But if my prediction comes true, maybe you'll listen to me the next time.-----

Like that, kids and adults, Jesus predicted several times that he would die and then come back to life on the 3rd day. And he did!(**SLIDE**)-----

And that's more amazing & life changing than any of my predictions.

So Jesus is worth listening to.-----

He wants us to believe he came back from dead, because he promised he would.

But do you believe it?-----

You can rest your life, and rest all your hope on Jesus' word.-----

For he said, in **John 11,(SLIDE)** "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live even though he dies."-----[v25]

My third point is that forgiveness comes only by turning to Jesus.----(SLIDE)

Here we're thinking about what difference Jesus' resurrection makes & why it matters.-----

In **v47** Jesus said that after he suffers, dies and rises on the third day, 'repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in his name to all nations'.

'In Jesus' name' is saying, by his authority, and because of who he is & what he's done, repentance will lead to the forgiveness of sins.-----

Let me explain a few of these words.----

Sins, does not just refer to particular naughty things you do, like eating a whole tub of ice-cream at once, or particularly bad things most people don't do like murder.

Sin describes an attitude of the heart that impacts everything we do and say.

Let me explain it with a story.

It's like we're renting and **our well-off landlord invites us to his wonderful home.**

We turn up without RSVP'ing, he opens the door to greet you with a smile, and you walk on-in, totally ignoring him.

You eat all his food, the lavish feast he put on. You down his bountiful top-shelf drinks, and never even thank him, or look at him.

You refuse to talk to him all night, avoiding him.

You spill red wine on the carpet and just laugh about it. **(SLIDE)**

To step on his plants in the garden & don't respect his instructions to keep your muddy shoes off the carpet.

You smash his expensive artwork, steal his Faberge egg.

You insult the other guests, then find his car keys and take his \$600,000 Ferrari for a drive but slam it into a pole. **(SLIDE)**

You return the smashed-up car without saying a word.

Finally, you leave the party **(SLIDE)** without any note of apology or thanks.-----

In fact you even stop paying your rent, thinking you'll get away with it.-----

Now what do you think the rich landlord is going to do?-----

He's going to evict you from your house, sue you for the damage to his house & car, leave you with a bill you can never repay, and lay charges for your theft.-----

You might think I'm over the top, but that's what sin is, & what we all do to God – we're guilty of ignoring Him, trashing his world, failing to thank him for the good gifts he gives us, failing to love him in return, or respect what he asks of us.

We hurt other people he has made and cares about.

He still generously gives us his only Son, but people couldn't care less.----

We think we're deserving of the good things we have, and forget that a day of reckoning is coming.-----

Coming back to the landlord we've repeatedly ignored & disrespected, what's the only way you could be forgiven?-----

Your only chance is to go back to landlord fall on your knees and apologise, even beg for forgiveness.

You can't earn it.

You don't have money to repair the smashed car or broken artwork.

You can never repay him, but you can come asking for mercy.

And **that's what repentance is.**

Instead of turning your back and walking away from God, you can, do a U-turn.

Turn towards him, say sorry for your sin, and ask for his forgiveness.

Repentance is turning to God, in your heart and mind.

It's turning away from sin and to God, by trusting in the Saviour he sent, Jesus.-----

So we **need forgiveness.**

Even though we've hurt other people, and ignored and disobeyed God, he is willing to not hold it against us.

In his amazing grace God is willing to wipe the debt clean, drop the charges, and look over the personal offense.-----

He is willing to forgive us.----- **(SLIDE)**

For forgiveness is the only way we could ever have a relationship with God, or any hope of heaven and eternal life with him.-----

And we can only be forgiven because of Jesus' life, death and resurrection.

Forgiveness means God will no longer hold us accountable for our sin, because Jesus was held accountable for it. [Rom 3.23-26; Rom 5.6-11]

We've trusted that Jesus died the death we deserved.

He suffered on the cross in our place, taking our penalty.-----
 And in Jesus resurrection, he defeated death, overcoming the penalty of sin.
 He was raised to a new glorious life, and his resurrection demonstrates that our sins were completely dealt with on that cross.[Romans 4.25]
 And as Jesus was raised to life, so can we too be raised to new life, eternal life.---
 Have you turned from sin, to God, for forgiveness by relying on Jesus.
Do you need to make that U-turn, of repenting and trusting in Jesus?(SLIDE)
 Have you made that U-turn?-----

If Jesus' bones have truly been found in a lost tomb, the whole Christian faith falls.
 If you only believe in some spiritual resurrection, your faith is on very shaky ground.
 For the physical resurrection of Jesus, is the foundation for the forgiveness of sins for all who've turned to God through him.-----
 Jesus' resurrection means our sins can be forgiven, we can have a relationship with God now, eternal life and new resurrection bodies in the new creation.-----
 And that gives us peace, assurance and fulfilment now; our purpose and our identity.
 Our identity as people loved by God the God who made us.-----
 So can you see it **makes a difference NOW**.
 Look at how Jesus' disciples respond at the end, **v52**.
 Jesus is alive, he has ascended to heaven, and they respond with **great joy**.(SLIDE)
 Because Jesus is alive and we can have forgiveness and life forever, we can have great joy too.-----
 Jesus is risen, and with peace with God now, and a place in heaven promised, you can have great joy.
 One day all who've been forgiven through Jesus will receive new resurrection bodies too.(SLIDE) [Philippians 3.21]
 New bodies that will never get old, or sick; never sin, never be sad, never die.-----
 Jesus' resurrection guarantees our resurrection.-----
 So if you've turned from your sin and trusted in Jesus you can have great joy too.-----

I knew a man called Allan when he was in his 70's.
 He'd had a child die young, he lived with multiple health challenges including fibromyalgia.
 That meant he often lived with fatigue and pain, widespread and extreme pain, a nerve pain which Allan said, was nothing like he'd ever experienced before.
 But you couldn't tell, because he was a man who kept loving his family and his church and other friends.
 He didn't complain, and he had a faith and joy in his heart that came through on his face.
 And Allan said to me it was Jesus who was the fountain of that joy.-----
 He knew his Saviour died for him, was alive, and was with him.
 And Allan wanted others to know the joy Jesus gave him.-----

If you've experienced the joy of forgiveness, and a living Saviour, with a certain hope beyond this life, do you want others to know that too?-----
 Do others ever hear from you about how good it is to be forgiven?-----
 And how it makes a difference for you Now?-----
 Let your joy be seen Christian!----- Especially this Easter.-----
 Jesus said, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have." -----
 Jesus is risen, therefore we can be forgiven.
 So turn to him, find joy in him.----- Let's pray