

## Luke 24:1-35 – Easter Sunday

Clint Le Page

Main Point – Jesus is risen, believe in him and the truth of the Bible, so we can be freed from death too

If Christ has not been raised, then you followers of Jesus are still in your sins. **(SLIDE)**

Believers who have died have forever perished. **(SLIDE-1Cor 15.16-19)**

And we who put our hope in Christ in this life should be pitied more than anyone.

That's what the apostle Paul wrote 2000 years ago, and it's still true.---

If Jesus didn't rise from the dead, all Christian faith is useless and we're all goners.-----

I believe Jesus Christ was raised from the dead.

We will hear today that eyewitnesses testified to that.

But why do I want Jesus to be raised?-----

Because if he wasn't, I have no forgiveness by God now, no hope of life after death, and the Jesus I've trusted in for 44 years was a lie.-----

This Easter Sunday we're thinking about Jesus' resurrection and why it matters, to everyone.-----

On Friday, we looked at the eyewitness account in Luke's Gospel, of Jesus death on the cross.

His dead body was taken down and placed in a rock tomb.

And the women **(SLIDE,v55)** who'd been following Jesus, saw where his body was placed.

At day-break on that first Easter Sunday morning, they came back to the tomb.

Three of them are named in **v10(SLIDE)**-----

They came with the spices & perfumes they'd prepared to anoint Jesus' body.----

And this brings us to my **first of 4 points, The Message, He has risen.(SLIDE)**

As this group of female followers of Jesus who arrive at the tomb, will experience **three surprises.**

1<sup>st</sup>, **v2**, they find the stone rolled away. **(SLIDE)**

A large heavy stone had sealed the entrance, and the last thing they expected was to see it moved.

[Matthew's eyewitness account tells us the tomb had been protected by guards (Matt 27.65-66), until the angel arrived and freaked them out.(Mt 28.4). So the body wasn't stolen.]

The women find an empty tomb.

And they are perplexed by this. **(SLIDE)**

Confused, not knowing what's happened, suddenly, surprise number 2:

Two men are there in dazzling clothes.

'Dazzling' can mean 'flashing like lightning' – so they are mega-bright.

Matthew's Gospel identifies them as 'angels'.(Mt 28.2,5).

And the women are understandably, freaked out.-----

Then surprise number 3 comes – a surprising message.

The angel says, 'Why are you looking for the living among the dead.

**(SLIDE)**He is not here, but he has risen.'

The angel says, Remember how he said this already.-----

The women are reminded of what Jesus had said.

Three times he'd predicted his death & resurrection on the third day. **(SLIDE-Lk 9.22, v43-45; 18.31-33)**-----

Now it is surprising to us that they had not remembered this.

But we'll see this problem of forgetfulness with everyone in the passage.-----

And I admit that I'm pretty forgetful too – just ask my wife Kirsti.-----

So the angel tells the women Christ is risen, just as he said he would.

And **v8**, then they remembered(**SLIDE**).-----

They heard the angel's message that Jesus has risen, and they remembered Jesus said he would.-----

**But, Did it happen?----- (SLIDE)**

And will the male disciples believe Jesus' resurrection happened?-----

**V9**, the women go and tell the 11 disciples and other followers of Jesus with them.

Matthew's Gospel(**SLIDE-Mt 28.9**) actually tells us Jesus met the women on the way.

The women were the first to see the risen Lord Jesus.

But do the men believe them?-----

Sadly not.(**SLIDE**)

**v11**, their words seemed like nonsense to them. The women were not believed.---

Women have often been looked down on, as second-class citizens.

**Recent research**, and the experience of many, suggests(**SLIDE**) that **Gen Z men are more likely to hold sexist views towards women**, than older men.

14-29 year olds are more likely to devalue women, due to online influences.-----

But Jesus honoured women, in a society that looked down and excluded women.

And here, God honours women,(**SLIDE**) by making them the first eyewitnesses to the truth.-----

I will not make excuses for the men's response.

I want to honour the **strength of these women**.

They are broken-hearted but still devoted, grieving but still engaged, overwhelmed but still serving.

Their strength, love and courage led them to follow Jesus from Galilee, to Jerusalem.

They stood by him at the cross, followed him to the tomb, and then come to properly prepare his body for burial.

They have the matchless privilege of being the first, in many marvelous, overwhelming, grace-filled firsts:

The first disciples at the cross

The first at the tomb

The first to hear of the resurrection

The first to see the risen and glorious Son of God

The first to tell the story of the Prince of Life's defeat of death.-----

I praise God for these strong women.-----

They stick with Jesus, and they are an example for me, an example for us.-----

The 11 male disciples and the rest, didn't believe the women, and all doubt that Jesus' resurrection happened.(**SLIDE**)

Did it happen?-----

They weren't convinced.-----

Maybe you're not convinced either?-----

Peter at least wants to see for himself and runs to the tomb.-----

Maybe, like for Peter, you need to investigate for yourself?-----

In **v13(SLIDE)**, we move to another scene on Easter Sunday.

Two Jewish male followers of Jesus, one's named Cleopas, [likely among the 'rest' in v9] are on the road to a town called **Emmaus**, 11 kms from Jerusalem.

They're discussing the huge happenings of the weekend.

[V15 discussing and 'arguing' doesn't mean with heat or shouting, but they were talking and discussing various views.]

And Jesus turns up.(**SLIDE**)

But notice **v16**, they are 'prevented' from recognizing him; prevented by God that is. That might seem weird I admit. But keep listening.-----

Jesus asks what they were talking about, and the look on their faces reveals they are discouraged, sad, sorrowful.

Cleopas, is amazed that someone coming from Jerusalem, would not know the massive news of the weekend.-----

3½ years ago, **Queen Elizabeth II died**,(**SLIDE**) and it was in the news everywhere. Everyone I knew was talking about it for days.----

Not knowing Jesus had died, would be a bit like not knowing the Queen had died.

So Cleopas asks, 'Are you the only visitor who doesn't know it?'---

But imagine asking Jesus if he knew about the crucifixion and empty tomb – at one level it's hilarious.

And Jesus, with a sense of humour plays along, inviting them to share.----

They believed Jesus of Nazareth was a prophet, speaking God's words, and powerful in his words and deeds.

He was(**SLIDE,v21**) executed on a cross, 'But we were hoping he was the one who would redeem Israel'.

We'll come back to that.

But did they believe Jesus was alive and risen?

No!-----

We're not sure what they meant by 'it's **the third day**' since he died.

But some key salvation events happened in Scripture on the third day.-----

And there's some info in the transcript if you want to read it later.-----

[Are they recalling Jesus words that he'd rise on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day? Or have they lost all hope (some Jews believed a soul stayed near the body but left after 3 days)?

Interestingly, some other key events have happened in the Bible, on the third day: Jonah got freed from the giant fish's mouth ("back from the dead") on the third day (Jonah 1.17). On the third day at Mt Sinai, the Lord God appeared to Israel in awesome power (Ex 19.16). Queen Esther approaches the King to save her people 'on the third day' (Esth 5.1). And Hosea 6.1-2 says, 'the Lord has torn us but he will heal us. He will revive us after 2 days, on the third day he will raise us up'.

Not that the two men in Luke 24 believed Jesus would be raised on Sunday.]

In **v22(SLIDE)**, the two disciples tell Jesus of the women astounding them with the message that Jesus' body was not in the tomb, and angels said he was alive.

Again, to their shame, they did not believe the women, or that Jesus was alive.-----

But look at what Jesus says to them in **v25(SLIDE)**.----

How foolish you are and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke.

Jesus calls them foolish.

Not primarily because they didn't believe the women or angels.

But because the didn't believe the Bible.-----

Let's not claim that people 2000 years ago were just ignorant.

They ignorantly & easily believed in miracles because they didn't know better.---

They needed convincing Jesus was resurrected, just like we do.-----

Maybe their grief at losing Jesus, meant their minds were in a fog, and they weren't thinking clearly.

Grief does that.

But their forgetfulness is like our forgetfulness when we suffer.

Even we Christians can forget God's words and promises, Jesus' promises, in times of overwhelming suffering.-----

But Jesus wants people to believe God's written word, in the Bible.-----

Which brings us to **point 3, 'It had to happen'.(SLIDE)**

**V26(SLIDE)** Wasn't it necessary for the Messiah to suffer these things and enter into his glory?"

<sup>27</sup> Then beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted for them the things concerning himself in all the Scriptures.

Jesus says, his suffering, dying, then experiencing resurrected heavenly-glory, it was necessary; it was 'a must'.

The Old Testament prophecies and signs that pointed to Christ had to be fulfilled.

If God said it, and he always keeps his word.-----

Jesus wants our faith to be rooted not only in our experience, but in the Bible.-----

Beginning with Moses and the prophets Jesus interpreted things for them.

Or as **v32** says, Jesus explained things – the things about him in all the Scriptures.

The Bible is really one big story about Jesus.-----

I wish I was there that day, to overhear Jesus explain all the OT scriptures that pointed to him and found fulfilment in him.

I wonder if Jesus pointed them to passages like these:

- **Gen 3.15(SLIDE)**– that one descendent of the woman would crush the serpent, Satan's head.

And overcome the sin and death he brought into the world, through humanity's sin.

- **Lev 17:11(SLIDE)** – that a creature's blood is its life, and that blood needs to be shed, its life given in sacrifice, for there to be atonement; forgiveness.
- **And Isaiah 53,(v5,8b,SLIDE)** Jesus is the one who is pierced, punished and killed for our sins.  
As we heard on Good Friday...
- **But as Isa 53 also says (v11,NIV-SLIDE)[Job 19.25-26; Psalm 22.22; 16.10]**

He will see the light, he will live.

Our redeemer will stand, and live again, in the flesh.-----

The resurrection had to happen, because God said it would.-----

And when the bible speaks of resurrection, it's not your soul or spirit rising & moving around. It's your body coming truly alive again.-----

Some things are the same, and some things are different.-----

Coming back to Luke 24, Jesus has explained how he fulfils the Bible's promises.

But the two men still don't get it.

I wonder in **v28(SLIDE)**, if Jesus gave the impression he was going further, to draw out their desires.

Sometimes God withholds mercy, until we ask for it.-----

Their curiosity leads them to want to know more.

And maybe that's where you're at with Jesus?---

Wanting to know more, or to find the life and hope and peace he gives?-----

These two men finally see who Jesus is when he breaks bread with them.

Maybe it reminded them of Jesus feeding the 5000 or the Last Supper.

**v31,(SLIDE)** their eyes were opened and they recognized him.

It's actually like that for all of us, all of us.

We can't see the truth for what it is, unless God helps us to see it (2Cor 4.4-6; Eph 2.2-5)

I cannot, we cannot, make someone see and believe the truth about Jesus.

But God can, by his Spirit.

So pray for it.-----

And if you want to know the truth about Jesus, pray and ask God to show you.

Ask God to give you, 'eyes to see', a mind and heart to know the truth and why it matters. Then read the bible.

Knowing the facts is not enough to be forgiven.

We all need God to work in us. So ask him.-----

The Lord **used the meal** to help those men recognize Jesus.

The Lord has used many other things to help people see the truth of Jesus.

If you follow Jesus, what was it for you?-----

A song, a scripture; words you read, or words someone spoke to you?-----

Was it a conversation you had with someone?----

I just watched online a man called **James share his testimony** at Darebin Presy Church, 2 weeks ago.

James grew up in a non-religious family, and in 3<sup>rd</sup> yr uni got very concerned about what was happening in the world.

He was moved to read the Bible.

In Aug last year, he was up at 4am at a party, talking with 2 people, who were Christians, about the meaning of life.

Eventually he asked, 'How do I learn more?'

He was encouraged to read the Bible.

And he attended a Christianity explored Course.-----

On Sept 28<sup>th</sup> the Christianity Explored workbook asked, If he believed that Jesus rose from the dead?

He wrote yes, because intellectually he thought there was no other explanation for the events.

Then when attending another church, and hearing the words, 'on the third day he rose from the dead', James that night felt warmth in his heart.

A joy, and a calm peace and reassurance.

And he realized he believed it all to be true.

Jesus was his Lord and Saviour.-----

And it changed his mindset, and his life.-----

And as James asked everyone, I ask you all, Have you thought about your relationship with Jesus?-----

In Luke 24, when the two men know it's Jesus and he's alive, they rush back to find the other disciples and tell them.(v33-35)

And they learn Jesus had appeared to Simon Peter too.(1Cor 15.5)

Like God promised, the Saviour had to rise, and Jesus has risen.

**But what difference does it make? Why does it matter? Final point.-----**

Have you ever had a **shattered dream**?-----

You know, something you'd always hoped for, or longed for, that just didn't eventuate.

**The Essendon Bombers** got to 3 grand finals way back in 2000.

They'd played the best of virtually any team for each of those seasons, but they won only 1 premiership.

Since then, my nearly 22 year old son has never seen them win a grand final.-----

The Bombers have given us shattered dreams, year after year.-----

Back in Luke 24 **v21**,(**SLIDE**) the two men on the road to Emmaus said, 'we were hoping [Jesus] was the one who [would] **redeem** Israel'.

They likely hoped Jesus would free Israel from Roman rule.

And their hopes were shattered when he died.-----

But Jesus came to bring freedom from something far greater.  
 To redeem someone is to set them free, set them free by the payment of a price.  
 Like when you pay a ransom to free hostages.-----  
 And the redemption Jesus brings isn't just for Jews, it's for all humanity.-----  
 As these Bible passages tell us,(**SLIDE-1Pet 1.18-19 & Eph 1.7**)  
     Jesus frees people from an empty way of life.  
 He gives us meaning and purpose, and fulfilment, in relationship with God.-----  
 That's been my experience.-----  
 Jesus frees people from death, eternal spiritual death, and separation from God.  
     Which is the consequence for our turning away from God.-----  
 He frees us from hopelessness, and brings total forgiveness.---  
 Jesus meets our greatest needs.-----  
 And the price paid for our freedom was his own life.-----  
 Jesus, by his dying and rising, opens the doors of heaven.-----  
 Those who trust in Jesus will still physically die.  
 But our souls will go to be with the Lord in heaven, as we wait for new resurrection  
 bodies, like Jesus has.-----  
 If Jesus didn't rise, it means his death was not effective to forgive our sins.  
     And there is no hope of our resurrection in the life to come.-----  
 As Paul said in **1Cor 15(SLIDE)**.  
 If Jesus didn't rise, we are still stuck in sin, and unforgiven.  
     Facing our deaths with no hope of heaven, or salvation, or life with God.-----  
 But Christ has been raised, and that guarantees the resurrection of all who trust in him.---

But this hope of final redemption also **changes the present.(SLIDE)**-----  
 Ellie Dawson is attends our 9am service, and her father **Allan**, is passing away as I  
 speak.  
 He has known the grief of losing his wife.  
 The grief and suffering of a failing body, weakness and pain.  
 But every time I visited Allan, like I saw on Tuesday, he had hope in his eyes, joy in his  
 heart, and a faith, and changed his present.  
 It made all the difference to life while he lived.  
 But he also could die, with peace, and hope of resurrection life; of being with Jesus,  
 and because of Jesus.-----  
 Please think about the difference trusting in Jesus and the life he brings could make to  
 you.-----  
 Maybe you should investigate further, and sign up for the Christianity Explored Course?---  
 And please think, Christian brothers and sisters, what difference Christ has made to  
 your present, and why it matters for your future.-----  
 Jesus is raised and alive. It's historical.  
 The Scriptures testify to it. It's biblical.-----  
 People saw him.-----  
 Jesus is risen - Believe it, believe the Bible, believe in him, and be redeemed.-----  
 The resurrection of Jesus matters, because with a living Lord Jesus, we get life.-----  
 Let's pray