

THEY WERE PERPLEXED AND AFRAID LUKE 24:1-9

Text: Luke 24:4-5

Luke 24:4-5

⁴ And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: ⁵ And as they were afraid, and bowed down *their* faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

Introduction:

As we gather here on this Resurrection morning, the joy and optimism is truly unmistakable. Yet, on that first Easter morning, the sense of joy was not immediately known... In fact Scriptures indicate that those at the tomb were first perplexed and afraid.

Researchers at Johns Hopkins University reported thirty years ago, the greatest fears of grade school children were: 1) Animals, 2) Being in a dark room, 3) High places, 4) Strangers, 5) Loud noises.

Today kids are afraid of the following: 1) Divorce, 2) Nuclear war, 3) Cancer, 4) Pollution, 5) Being mugged.

Remember This:

Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrows. It empties today of its strength.

Notice the events that caused them to be perplexed and fearful.

It was a morning of:

1. Solemn Reflections (vs.1)

Luke 24:1

¹ Now upon the first *day* of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain *others* with them.

As the morning began to dawn on the first day of the week after Jesus had died on the cross, some women came to the tomb to finish anointing the body of our Lord for His burial.

This anointing process had been started by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea on the day our Lord died, John 19:38-42.

John 19:38-42

³⁸ And after this Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave *him* leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. ³⁹ And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and

brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound *weight*.⁴⁰ Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.⁴¹ Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid.⁴² There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation *day*; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

While these women were heading to the tomb, our Lord's disciples were locked up inside the Upper Room trembling in fear that the same kind of death that Jesus had met awaited them also, John 20:19

John 20:19

¹⁹ Then the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you.

Certainly, these women were sad and the disciples were scared. Just as the Jesus has said, the Shepherd had been smitten and the sheep had scattered, Mark 14:27.

Mark 14:27

²⁷ And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.

Why were they so upset? They had all believed Jesus to be the Messiah. They had placed their faith in Him and they had expected that He would set up His Kingdom, throwing off the Roman yoke of bondage. Even though

He had told them of the cross and of the resurrection, they had never grasped the message, or the meaning of Christ's words. Now, He is dead! The One that they had placed all their hopes in was gone. This man Who had so radically changed their lives by His power and had demonstrated the love and power of God to them had died a violent and humiliating death. Surely, it was a sad day for His followers!

We can understand their grief!

Even Paul spoke about it in 1 Corinthians 15:12-19.

1 Corinthians 15:12-19

¹² Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: ¹⁴ And if Christ be not risen, then *is* our preaching vain, and your faith *is* also vain. ¹⁵ Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. ¹⁶ For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: ¹⁷ And if Christ be not raised, your faith *is* vain; ye are yet in your sins. ¹⁸ Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. ¹⁹ If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

It Was A Morning of:

2. STARTLING REVELATIONS (VS. 2-12)

Luke 24:2-12

² And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. ³ And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ And it

came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: ⁵ And as they were afraid, and bowed down *their* faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? ⁶ He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet 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 And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. ¹⁰ It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary *the mother* of James, and other *women that were* with them, which told these things unto the apostles. ¹¹ And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not. ¹² Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.

In the midst of their sadness on that morning, God the Father took great pains to minister to the needs of their hearts. Aren't you glad that the Lord cares when you hurt? He moved in several mighty ways to encourage the hearts of these saddened believers. Note a few of the things He did:

- He Rolled the Stone Away (vs. 2)

Mark 16:2-3

² And very early in the morning the first *day* of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. ³ And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

Matthew 28:2

² And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the

Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

Note:

The stone wasn't rolled away to let the Lord escape, but to allow man the opportunity to look in.

- He Sent an Angel with the Good News that the Lord Was Alive From the Dead (vs. 4-7)

Matthew 28:2-7

² And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. ³ His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: ⁴ And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead *men*. ⁵ And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. ⁶ He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. ⁷ And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

Mark 16:5-7

⁵ And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. ⁶ And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. ⁷ But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

- He Had a Word of Encouragement for Peter Who Denied Him

Mark 16:7

⁷ But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

- He Met Mary Magdalene Outside the Tomb

John 2:11-17

¹¹ This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him. ¹² After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days. ¹³ And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, ¹⁴ And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: ¹⁵ And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; ¹⁶ And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. ¹⁷ And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

- He Left a Message for His Followers Inside the Tomb

John 20:5-8

⁵ And he stooping down, *and looking in*, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. ⁶ Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, ⁷ And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. ⁸ Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.

The custom of the napkin was when a man with servants was eating a meal, he would use his napkin to signal them during the course of the meal. If he left the table and wadded his napkin up, it meant that he was finished and would not be back. If, however, he neatly folded the napkin, it told his servants that he was stepping away for a moment, but he would be back! Jesus was telling His disciples, "I may be out of your sight right now, but I'll be right back!"

- He Revealed Himself to Other Disciples As They Traveled (Luke 24:13-35)

There were many other things that took place on that resurrection morning that marked it as a great and glorious day. For us, 2,000 years removed from the resurrection, the message has not changed one bit! We still need to hear the good news that Jesus has risen from the dead! He is alive today and there is hope for tomorrow!

It Was A Morning of:

3. STUNNING REALIZATION (VS. 36-43)

Luke 24:36-43

³⁶ And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you. ³⁷ But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.

³⁸ And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? ³⁹ Behold my hands and my feet,

that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. ⁴⁰ And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them *his* hands and *his* feet. ⁴¹ And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? ⁴² And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. ⁴³ And he took *it*, and did eat before them.

While the disciples were cowering in the Upper Room out of fear for their lives, something miraculous happened in their presence. Jesus, the One Who had died just three days before, was standing in their midst! They were terrified and thought they saw a ghost. However, Jesus had some news to tell. He showed them the nail holes in His hands and in His feet and to prove that He was real, He offered to let them touch Him and then He sat down with them to eat. Most of the disciples hadn't believed until this moment, now they are convinced, Jesus is alive!

The statement: "And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered..." means that it seemed too good to be true. They were beside themselves with joy and couldn't believe what they were seeing! It was an exciting moment for the disciples of our Lord.

It Was a Morning of:

4. SPIRITUAL REPERCUSSIONS (vs. 44-48)

Luke 24:44-48

⁴⁴ And he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled,

which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me. ⁴⁵ Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶ And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: ⁴⁷ And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ And ye are witnesses of these things.

As they ate that first Resurrection Morning, Jesus began to tell His disciples that God's plan was to save the world. They had been called by the Father to be witnesses of that and they were to spread the news that a great spiritual victory had been won when Jesus arose from the dead.

When Jesus arose from the dead, old enemies that had plagued man since sin entered into the world were forever defeated that day. Let's take a moment to notice a few of them right now.

- Death

Imagine the struggle that ensued early that morning as death had to give up the Prince of Life! No more would death be able to claim the victory and sting with human race with its bitter curse. Jesus entered into death's domain and rendered it helpless. Now, for the child of God, death is merely the doorway from this land of sorrow to that Heavenly land of splendor where every tear shall be wiped from every eye and the saints

of God will live forever in the glorious presence of our exalted Savior

- Hell

When Jesus entered death for mankind, He descended into a place called Hell. He went to the paradise portion of that land of the dead, Luke 16:19-31. This was the same place that the redeemed thief on the cross went to when he died, Luke 23:43. Jesus went down there and proclaimed liberty to every person in that place who had died looking forward to His coming in faith, 1 Pet. 3:18-19. Then, when He arose from the dead and ascended to His Father in Heaven, the Bible tells us that He took those souls with Him to the Father in Heaven, Eph. 4:8-10. Now, all those who believe in Jesus go directly to the Father when they leave this world. Hell has forever been removed for the child of God

- Grave

Another enemy that died that day was the grave. All his life, man lives in fear of that moment when he will lay down his body in death. As one of our members and I were talking the other day, we are ready to go to Heaven, but we will always fight for that next breath! However, I am afraid that we have the wrong perspective when it comes to the grave. That hole in the ground is nothing more than a place to store this

old worn out, sin-ridden carcass until the day of the resurrection! When we lay this flesh down in death, our spirits ascend to the Father in Heaven, 1 Cor. 5:8. The next time we see our bodies, they will be glorified and will be like His body, 1 Thes. 4:13-18; 1 John 3:1-3. One of these days, the grave will have to give up the body that has been placed there and that body will be forever changed into one just like that worn by our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Sin

Another enemy that died that day was sin. Now, in truth, sin had been taken care of three days earlier on the cross, but the resurrection of Christ from the dead is the Father's "Amen" to the sacrifice of the Son on the cross. You see, a dead Savior can save no one! But One Who is alive can save all who come to Him by faith - Heb. 7:25. That is a big verse and promises great things to everyone who will believe its message. Sin doesn't have to defeat you! Jesus won the victory over sin on the cross and nailed its coffin lid shut when He arose from the dead. You can be free by faith in Jesus.

- Satan

I'll mention just one more enemy that took a beating that day. His name is Satan, the devil, old sly fox, the dragon, the accuser of the brethren, that old serpent, whatever name you want to call him, the outcome is

the same. He is the enemy of God and of the people of God. He tried every way he could to short-circuit Christ's plans to go to the cross, (Ill. The babies in Bethlehem; the storm on Galilee; the Temptation; the oppression in Gethsemane, etc.) However, Jesus endured every temptation, He weathered every storm and made it to the cross. When He cried "It is finished!", Satan heard the foundations under his kingdom begin to crack. Three days later, when Jesus arose from the dead, Satan witness the total destruction of every plan and every scheme. He saw his power broken and himself judged. He was defeated forever by the Lord Jesus.

Close:

I ask you, have you come to the realization that Jesus is alive and that He is Who you need? Do you understand what will happen if you die without Him? Do you realize that there is no other way into Heaven than through the Lord Jesus Christ? Did you know that He loves you? Did you know that His death was for you? Did you know that His death will not mean anything to you until you bow before Him in repentance and humility and confess you sins unto Him? Did you know that you could do that very thing this morning and be forever saved today? You can! All you have to do is come to Him. All you have to do is believe in Him! All you need to do is leave where you are sitting and come before the Lord today and be saved by grace!

Oh, what a morning that was when Jesus rose again!
Why not let this be the morning when you allow Him to
fix whatever is wrong in you heart today? Hey, He lives
and He lives for you!