

If Grave Clothes Could Preach...

Luke 24:1-12 - NCBC, April 21, 2019

Main Point: **The resurrection of Jesus truly changes everything for believers!**

- **Jesus' resurrection turns sorrow into joy** (1-7)
 - Surprising grief with God's reality
 - Confronting doubt with God's revelation

The resurrection of Jesus guarantees believers' justification.

- **Jesus' resurrection turns satisfaction into action** (8-11)
 - Transforming fear into delight
 - Transforming shame into witness

The resurrection of Jesus guarantees believers' sanctification.

- **Jesus' resurrection turns searching into awe** (12)
 - Overwhelming suspicion with historical fact
 - Interpreting loss with faith in God's promises

The resurrection of Jesus guarantees believers' glorification.

Application: **Believe that Jesus died and rose again to give you everlasting life!**

Opening Announcements:

- Happy Easter!!

- Newcomer's Lunch Next Week – 12 noon – All Invited
<<Name Above All Names>>



Jesus is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He is worthy of our worship on this beautiful Easter morning.

Let's continue our worship now by opening our Bibles to **Luke 24**. All four gospels, **Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John**, testify to the resurrection of Jesus on Sunday morning after He died on the cross on Friday. But this morning we will focus on Luke's witness from **Luke 24, verses 1-12**.



If you don't have a Bible with you this morning, simply raise your hand as people are coming now with Bibles to give you. You are welcome to just use this Bible for the service and return it to the back table afterwards, or please feel free to take this Bible home as our gift to you! We desire everyone to have their own copy of God's Word that they read regularly as part of their daily worship of God.

Luke 24 is found on page _____ in the giveaway Bibles.

And while you are preparing for the Scripture reading, I want to just welcome any visitors with us today. We're delighted to worship our resurrected Savior with you.

New Castle Bible Church exists to glorify God. We are not a perfect group of people, but we gather together regularly to worship a perfect God. We seek to glorify God by growing deeper in our faith and knowledge of God. And we also seek to reach farther through our love and witness for Christ. So we are a people who exist together to glorify God by growing deeper and reaching farther.

In spite of us, God's Spirit is alive and working among us. We'd love to help you get connected to all that God is doing here at New Castle right now. So thanks for visiting! If you don't yet have a church home, we'd love to welcome and connect with you, and walk alongside you as you seek to know and worship our great God.



Please stand now out of honor for the public reading of God's Word. Reading from the English Standard Translation of **Luke 24**, starting in **verse 1**:

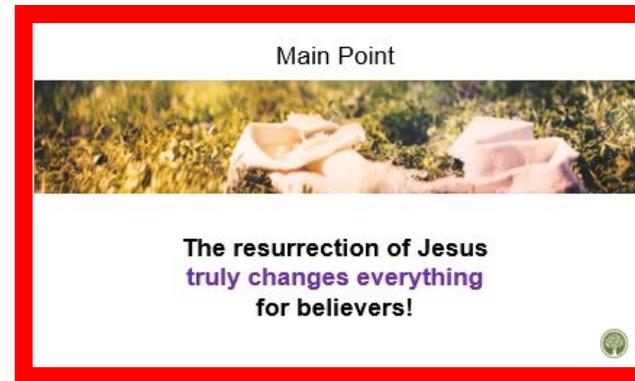
But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. ²And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. ⁵And 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? ⁶He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, ⁷that 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.

This is God’s Word. Please be seated. **Let’s Pray.**

A “game-changer.” We use that phrase to describe how a person or event or idea creates a significant shift in one’s outlook. When a star athlete gets put in the game, we say – that’s a game changer! The introduction of smart-phones was a “game-changer” in personal technology. Social media has been a “game-changer” in terms of personal privacy. In other words, when something’s a game-changer – it creates a fundamental shift in perspective and outlook for the future.

Today our Bibles are open to **Luke 24** where we see the greatest game-changer of all time.



The resurrection of Jesus truly changes everything for believers! From the perspective of eternity, Jesus’ resurrection is the greatest difference-maker ever known to man. If Jesus had not rose from the dead, Christianity would not exist today. There would be no forgiveness of sin. No hope of rescue from our holy God’s justice. If Jesus didn’t rise from the dead, the Old Testament was a lie,¹ and all Gospel preaching today is a lie.²

The apostle Paul said it this way in **1 Corinthians 15**,

*If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. ... If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, and you are still in your sins... and we are of all people most to pitied.*³

But in fact Jesus did come back to life!! After He was crucified to take away the sins of the world, He conquered death to bring us life! There’s never been a

¹ <https://www.gotquestions.org/death-resurrection-Messiah.html>

² 1 Corinthians 15:15

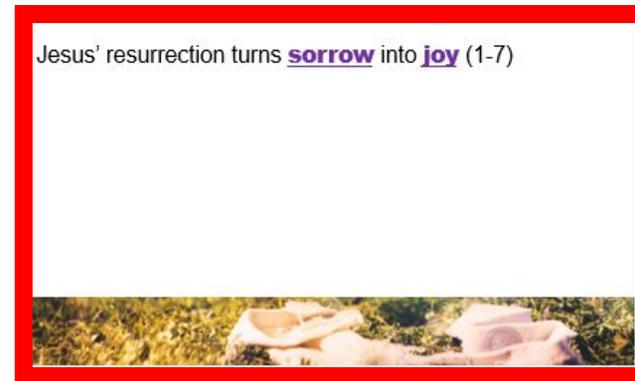
³ 1 Corinthians 15:14, 17, 19

more significant game-changer for the entire human race than the resurrection of Jesus!

So let's walk through this historical account to observe how the resurrection of Jesus truly changes everything for all who believe on Him.

When Jesus was arrested on Friday, all of the 12 disciples eventually fled except John.⁴ Only John and some of the women stood at the foot of the cross and watched as Jesus died.⁵ Then only the women went with Joseph and Nicodemus to watch their hasty burial before sundown.⁶ So isn't it fitting that **Luke 24** picks up the account describing how these women – the same women who were eyewitnesses of Jesus' death and burial – became the first eyewitnesses of His resurrection as well?

And what a difference Jesus' resurrection makes for these women... turning their,



sorrow into joy.

There is a profound way Jesus' resurrection turns sorrow into joy for all who believe that He has risen.

Let's put ourselves into the sandals of these grieving women in **Luke 24**. The extent of their grief was agonizing. Their friend, their teacher, the One who had power to heal diseases, and cast out demons, and bring God's kingdom to earth⁷ – they had just watched Jesus die. They saw the blood and fluid come out of His side when the soldier pierced His heart-cavity with a spear.⁸ These women were completely heart-broken, disoriented, and numb.

I suspect they followed Joseph and Nicodemus to the tomb just because they really didn't know what else to do on Friday afternoon. They must have watched with aching hearts as the men wrapped Jesus' body in the grave clothes along with 100 pounds of myrrh.⁹ The

⁴ Mark 14:27, 50; c.f. Psalm 88:8, 18; Zechariah 13:7

⁵ John 19:25-27

⁶ Matthew 27:59-61; Mark 15:46-47; Luke 23:53-56; John 19:38-42

⁷ Matthew 4:23-25

⁸ John 19:34

⁹ John 19:39-40

unyielding finality of death seemed to scoff in their face. If only there was something they could do?!

And so the last verse of **Luke 23** records how just before sundown on Friday evening, they returned to their homes in Bethany, about 2 miles from the grave, and *prepared spices and ointments* to take to help finish the burial process. Since Saturday was the Sabbath – perhaps they passed out in sheer exhaustion from the emotions and distress of the last two days? Then **chapter 24, verse 1** describes how very early Sunday morning – likely before the sun even came up,¹⁰ these women took their burial spices and started out for the tomb.

Now **Luke 24** is a condensed accounting of what actually happened. We can flesh out the details by consulting the other three gospel accounts. Because not all the women actually arrived at the tomb at the same time. **John 20** describes how Mary Magdalene arrived at the tomb first by herself while it was still dark and saw the stone was rolled away and there was no body in the tomb.

Through her lens of profound grief, she could only come to one conclusion: Someone had stolen Jesus' body! So before the other women even arrived she ran back to Jerusalem to tell Peter and John that someone had stolen the body of Jesus!¹¹

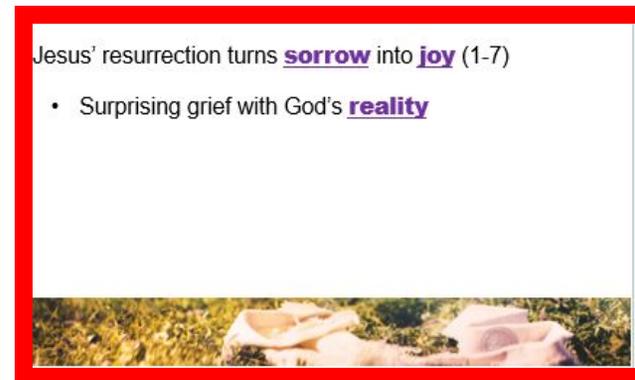
Meanwhile, shortly after Mary Magdalene leaves the tomb, the other women show up with their spices. And **Luke 24:2** says,

¹⁰ John 20:1

¹¹ John 20:1-2

And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

You see, here's the first way Jesus' resurrection turns sorrow into joy:



by **Surprising grief with God's reality**

Grief didn't expect a resurrection. No disciple expected a resurrection. Grief had robbed them of hope, and darkened their perceptions with numb disbelief. But God's grace specializes in overcoming darkness with light, and overwhelming death with life!

Through their tear-filled eyes – grace surprised these women with an experience - a reality that only God could explain! The stone was off its track and lying in the yard. And the tomb was empty!!

They found the stone, but they couldn't find the body. They didn't have a category for this. This experience certainly had their attention, but note **verse 4**, *They were perplexed*. They didn't know what to make of this!

You see, just like Mary Magdalene who had already left the empty tomb still distraught and hopeless, spiritual experiences alone aren't enough to turn sorrow into joy. God must supernaturally give us the right interpretation of our experiences if we are to truly experience the lasting joy of His resurrection!

And so look at the middle of **verse 4**, *Behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel*. **Matthew** and **John** tell us directly that these men were angels – God's messengers.¹² Clearly the women were frightened – bowing themselves and not even able to look at them for their radiant brightness. And then the angel said, *Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen*.

Jesus has risen! God gives the women the right interpretation of their surprising reality.

Jesus' resurrection turns sorrow into joy (1-7)

- Surprising grief with God's reality
- Confronting doubt with God's revelation



By God's grace, the women's **doubt is confronted with God's revelation**. God sends messengers with His Word to comfort these women in their sorrow, and make sure

¹² Matthew 28:5; John 20:12

they interpret their reality according to His revelation.

Jesus isn't dead. He's alive. You don't look for living people in tombs, do you? Jesus has risen!

Glorious Divine revelation is given to these women to help them understand they are the first eye-witnesses of Jesus' resurrection!

Then notice what the angel says next in **verse 6**,

Remember Remember how He told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.

Remember Jesus told you this would happen! You are defeated this morning in your grief because you have forgotten God's Word!

Back in Caesarea Philippi according to **Luke 9**,¹³ then again in Galilee according to **Mark 9**,¹⁴ and then finally on the road up to Jerusalem according to **Luke 18**¹⁵ - three different times in three different places Jesus told you in graphic detail how He would be delivered over to the scribes, then to the Gentile Romans. He would be flogged, crucified, and buried. And then on the third day He would rise from the dead!

And as the angels reminded the women of the promises of Jesus, they were able to rightly interpret the empty

¹³ Luke 9:22, c.f. Matthew 16:21; Mark 8:31

¹⁴ Mark 9:30-32, c.f. Matthew 17:22-23; Luke 9:44-45

¹⁵ Luke 18:31-34; c.f. Matthew 20:17-19; Mark 10:32-34

tomb! Jesus' resurrection turned their deepest sorrow into the greatest joy!!

Matthew 28 verse 8 says *And they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy and ran to report it to His disciples!*

Because here's the reality: when God opens your eyes to believe that He has truly risen from the dead, that kind of joy can't be kept a secret!



Jesus' resurrection turns satisfaction into action.

Believing in the resurrection of Jesus turns private faith into public testimony!

There is no greater power than resurrection power. Only God has the power to bring stone cold dead bodies back to life. And the angel's words "bring down to the inside of these women's minds"¹⁶ – and it clicks – and they realize that their Lord and Savior is alive, O...Jesus' resurrection

¹⁶ Credit to John MacArthur for this phrase
Page 7a of 14



Transforms their fear into delight!

Only the resurrection is powerful enough to turn grieving hopelessness into triumphant wonder and awe! Only the evidence of death-crushing life is powerful enough to



Transform shame into witness

After all, remember that in this age women were viewed as not much more than property. The witness of women was not even allowed in human court! And yet God's grace overwhelms the shame and fear that control so many hearts in our society and grants pure joy and

humble boldness – turning these women into exuberant witnesses of Jesus’ resurrection.

Now **Luke** doesn’t tell us what happened on the way back to Jerusalem from the empty tomb. But according to **Matthew 28:9**, as the women were running to tell the disciples,

Behold, Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!”

“Good morning ladies.”¹⁷

Can you imagine the delight and satisfaction of that moment? What they had heard with their ears was now confirmed with their eyes! *And they came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him. Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.”*

And so **verse 9** of **Luke 24** says, *and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest.*

I can only imagine how that first testimony from these women must have been experienced by the hiding apostles. Because of Judas’ betrayal, the formal name for their group was now the eleven, rather than the twelve. But remember, there were only 9 of the apostles present when the women first arrived since Peter and John had already left for the tomb to investigate Mary Magdalene’s report that someone stole Jesus’ body!

“Guys – the tomb is empty. The stone was just lying there. We talked to Jesus. Jesus said Good morning ladies! There was an angel.” Can you imagine the breathless commotion? I almost hear the apostles saying... calm down, calm down... one at a time! Have you all lost your minds?

In fact **Luke 24:11** reports that the women’s words *seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.*

But rejection could not silence the joyful satisfaction of these witnesses of Jesus’ resurrection! All the women listed in **verse 10** had been with Jesus throughout His ministry. They had heard His clear teaching and warnings about His death and resurrection. And now it made sense! Jesus had fulfilled His plan! The resurrection changed everything!

But you say wait a minute, Mary Magdalene is listed in **Luke 24:10**. How did she get in this list? Last thing we knew about her she had hopelessly concluded that someone stole Jesus’ body, and sent Peter and John off to further investigate. Why does Luke include Mary Magdalene among the women who first witnessed Jesus’ resurrection?

Well the answer is found in **John 20**. After she sent Peter and John to the tomb, Mary Magdalene went back to the tomb as well. (More than likely Peter and John had already left the tomb by the time she arrived, as they would have had fresh legs while she would have been exhausted from her previous sprint to Jerusalem.)

¹⁷ Credit to John MacArthur for this phrase.

John 20, verse 11 describes her *standing outside the tomb weeping; and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet.*

These were the same two angels who had appeared to the other women who had come to the tomb earlier! But now Mary Magdalene gets her own private announcement. The angels said to Mary, *Why are you weeping? She said to them, They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.*"

Remember Mary still thought someone had stolen Jesus' body. But then Mary *turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus.*¹⁸ *Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to Him, "Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take Him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher).*¹⁹ And then:

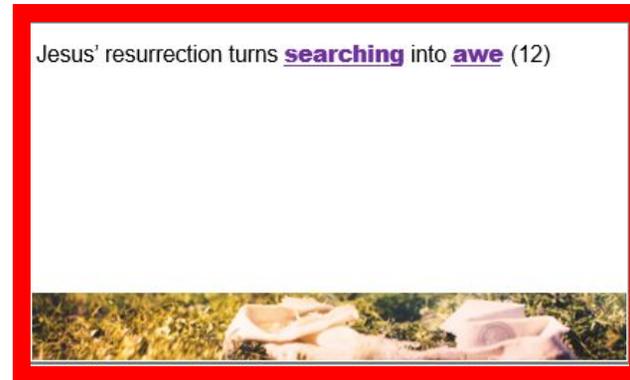
*Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord!"*²⁰

You see, the resurrection of Jesus truly changes everything for believers! Sorrow is turned to joy. Satisfaction is turned into action. And finally,

¹⁸ Mary didn't recognize Jesus immediately, just like the two on the road to Emmaus didn't recognize him until he broke bread (Luke 24:31).

¹⁹ John 20:11-18

²⁰ John 20:18



Searching is turned into awe.

Verse 12 picks up where we last left Peter and John on the way to see the empty tomb for themselves.

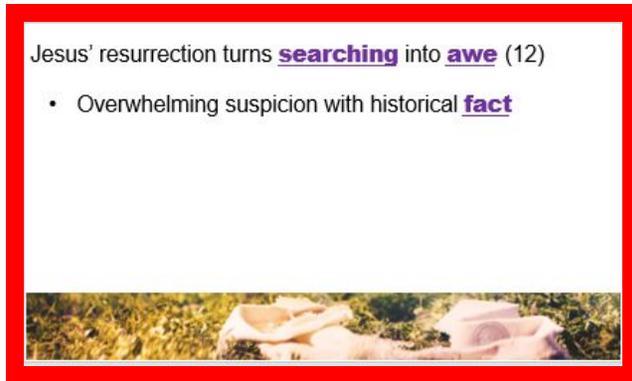
But Peter rose and ran to the tomb. Remember according to **John 20**, Peter and John only had Mary Magdalene's first report that the tomb was empty due to a theft of the body. So when Peter goes to search, he hasn't heard that anyone has seen Jesus. He hasn't heard the breathless reports of the angel's testimony. He's seeking answers. Impulsively he wants to get to the bottom of who took Jesus' body, and what is really going on here.

According to **John 20 verse 4** John ran faster than Peter, and arrived at the empty tomb first. *And stopping to look in, [John] saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, ... and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself.*

This was powerful evidence for Jesus' resurrection! Peter and John weren't expecting a resurrection. They

were full of suspicion and anger and grief – trying to just get to the bottom of who took Jesus body. What has happened to Jesus' body now?

But the resurrection turns searching into awe by



Overwhelming suspicion with historical fact.

It wasn't just the fact that the stone was rolled out of its track and laying in the yard. It wasn't just the fact that the body was missing. It was the fact that the linens...the grave cloths...they were lying there – just as if they were wrapped around a body – but now they were laying flat – because there was no body in them.

Grave robbers can't do that! Grave robbers don't cause a body to pass through its grave clothes, and leave the grave clothes undisturbed where they were – caked with all kinds of myrrh and aloes...but emptied of the body.

You see, the presence of the grave clothes lying there – not in a disheveled heap on the floor – but lying in state as it were – and yet emptied of Jesus' body – effectively debunks all the conspiracy theories posited by skeptics

who try to explain away the historical resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Some say the women and the disciples went to the wrong tomb? Well then the angels were at the wrong tomb as well? And so was the grave clothes!

Some say Jesus really wasn't dead... He just swooned on the cross, and then was revived after 2 days of lying in the coolness of the tomb. But Roman soldiers pierced his heart and blood and water came out. And a weak, struggling body after crucifixion could never open the grave stone from the inside, much less levitate out of his grave clothes!

No one robs a body and leaves the grave clothes like this! You see, Jesus' grave clothes preached the same message as the angels: Jesus has risen from the dead indeed! His body was not stolen. He is miraculously alive!

John 20, verse 8 says when John saw the grave cloths, he believed. **Luke 24:12** puts it this way,

Peter saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ turns searching into awe by,

Jesus' resurrection turns **searching** into **awe** (12)

- Overwhelming suspicion with historical **fact**
- Interpreting loss with **faith** in God's promises



Interpreting loss with **faith** in God's promises

Admittedly Peter didn't have all the answers yet. Peter hadn't yet met the resurrected Christ personally. That would soon come.²¹

But while Peter waited for his faith to become sight, he leaned back on all that Jesus had taught him throughout His ministry. It is faith in the goodness of God that help us interpret the historical facts of Jesus resurrection rightly.

So this Easter, do you believe that God is good? Do you believe that Jesus from the dead in order to conquer death and grant everlasting life to all who believe on Him?

²¹ Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5
Page **11a** of 14

Main Point



The resurrection of Jesus truly changes everything for believers!



The resurrection of Jesus truly changes everything for **believers!** Jesus' resurrection turns sorrow into joy. Turns satisfaction into action. And turns searching into awe.

Do you believe history's account of this supernatural miracle?

Application



Believe that Jesus died and rose again to give you everlasting life!



Will you believe that Jesus died and rose again to give you everlasting life?

The historical facts for Jesus' resurrection are overwhelming. Every one of the apostles stayed true to the Gospel even though they were all sorely persecuted

and martyred. Ever since **Acts 20:7** Christians have met on Sunday. Not on Saturday's Sabbath, and not Good Friday, but on Sunday. For Jesus' resurrection validates the cross, changes everything for believers, and effectively guarantees all aspects of our salvation.

In fact, you'll notice on your notes this morning three implications of Jesus' resurrection for us today:

3 Implications of Jesus' Resurrection for Believers

- *The resurrection of Jesus guarantees believers' **justification** – declared righteous by God!*
- *The resurrection of Jesus guarantees believers' **sanctification** – living in spiritual newness!*
- *The resurrection of Jesus guarantees believers' **glorification** – eternal future of glory and rest!*



First, **The resurrection of Jesus guarantees believers' justification.** To be justified is “just-as-if-I’d” never sinned. To be declared righteous by God. Forgiven. All my sins washed away.²²

Romans 4:25 says *Jesus our Lord was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.*

Second, **The resurrection of Jesus guarantees believers' sanctification.** Jesus' empty grave clothes preach a strong message that whosoever believes on Jesus Christ no longer is a slave to sin. *Just as Christ was raised*

*from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*²³ Believers now have received resurrection power to live in spiritual newness!

And third, **The resurrection of Jesus guarantees believers' glorification.** If you're suffering persecution or hardship in life right now...please listen carefully to this one. The fact that Jesus rose from the dead guarantees that all who belong to Christ will also be resurrected at the end of time. **1 Corinthians 15:20** says that Jesus was raised from the dead as the first-fruits of all who die in Christ. In Christ all shall again be made alive.²⁴

For those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, His resurrection truly changes our past, our present, and our future. We are guaranteed an eternal future of glory and rest with our resurrected Lord after this earthly life is over.

So I ask you again this morning, Will you believe that Jesus died and rose again to give you everlasting life? You must repent of your sins. You can't believe in the resurrection of Christ and still be make your home in sin's tomb of death.

Jesus has won the victory! He has overcome death, and revealed Himself to us through His Words. Listen to the preaching of the grave clothes – and believe that Jesus is the Son of God who died and rose again to give you everlasting life!

²² 1 Corinthians 15:17

²³ Romans 6:4; c.f. Colossians 3:1; Galatians 2:20

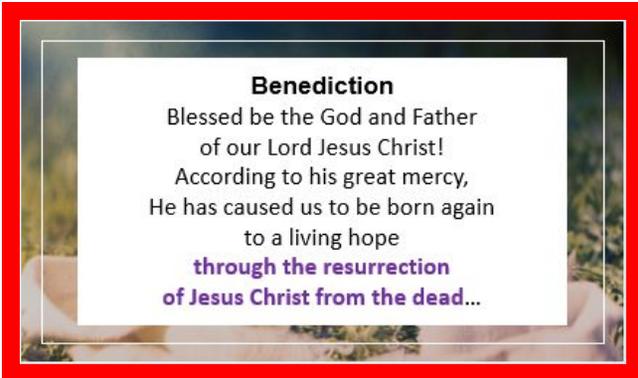
²⁴ 1 Corinthians 15:22



Let's pray.

<<Hallelujah What a Savior!>>

Let's pray our benediction together as we dismiss.



*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
1 Peter 1:3*

Recommended Resources on Jesus' Resurrection:

- Matthew 28:1-15
- Mark 16:1-14
- Luke 24:1-53
- John 11:25; 20:1-29
- Acts 17:31
- Romans 1:4-5; 4:25; 6:4-5
- 1 Corinthians 15:1-9, 12-28, 35-57
- Galatians 2:20
- Colossians 3:1-4
- 1 John 5:11-12

- <https://spreadtruth.com/share-the-gospel/#thestory>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/topics/the-resurrection-of-christ>

- *Easter Uncut*, Carl Laferton
- *Finally Alive*, John Piper
- *Scandalous*, DA Carson
- *The Gospel According to God*, John MacArthur

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you believe Jesus of Nazareth died, was buried, was raised again the third day, and ascended to heaven? What convinces you of these truths?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 15:14-19. What difference does your belief or disbelief in Jesus' resurrection make in your life?
3. Read Matthew 27:55-56, John 19:25-27, and Luke 23:55-56, 24:10. Where were the other 10 apostles when Jesus was crucified and buried? (c.f. Mark 14:50) Why is it so significant that Jesus' resurrection is first revealed to these women?
4. Consider the implications of Jesus' resurrection in each of the following verses, and discuss together: Acts 17:31; Romans 1:4-5, 4:25, 6:4-5; 1 Corinthians 15:17, 19, 20, 55; 1 Peter 1:3-5. Are you among the fellowship of burning hearts? (c.f. Luke 24:33)