

Main Idea: If we are to see and savor the good news of Jesus Christ as we ought, we must affirm not only that He died, but that He was buried and raised from the dead on the third day. Luke can help us do that. As Luke tells the story, he invites us to consider three different responses to the empty tomb in Luke 24:1-12.

Key: The burial and resurrection of the Christ took place according to the Scriptures.

A. We see the prediction in the Old Testament (Psalm 16:10; Psalm 110:1; Isaiah 53:11; Jonah 1:17).

B. We see the fulfillment in the New Testament.

I. The women’s response to the empty tomb (1-10)

A. Surprise #1: The tomb was open (1-2).

B. Surprise #2: The body was gone (3).

C. Surprise #3: Two strange messengers appeared (4-7).

1. They revealed what Jesus did.

2. They reminded them of what Jesus said.

•Jesus predicted His crucifixion.

•Jesus predicted His resurrection.

D. Surprise #4: The women became the first witnesses (8-10).

1. They remembered (8).

2. They spread the word (9-10).

II. The apostles’ response to the empty tomb (11)

A. They didn’t believe the witness.

B. They couldn’t make sense of it.

1. This gives us proof for the resurrection.

2. This shows us why we need patience in working with people.

III. Peter’s response to the empty tomb (12)

A. He inspected the evidence.

B. He reflected on the event.

Make It Personal: What does this mean for us?

1. We need to marvel.

2. We need to believe.

3. We need to tell.

We have a gift for you this Resurrection morning. Many have already received it. If you haven’t yet, it’s waiting for you in the foyer after the service. It’s a visual representation of the message we cherish and proclaim at WBC. We call it “The Gospel Panorama.”

This morning, we come to part four in our series, “*The Gospel Panorama: Seeing and Savoring the Good News*.” The gospel is the good news regarding the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We preach this message at WBC. But in order to preach it, we must see it, and savor it, and then share it. This little panorama helps us do that.

Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:3-8

The details matter. A good reporter knows this. When sharing a news report, the details matter. This is certainly the case when reporting this news.

The gospel details matter. If we are to see and savor the good news of Jesus Christ as we ought, we must know and affirm the details, that the *Christ died for our sins*, but not only that He died, but also that He *was buried*, but not only buried, but also *raised from the dead* on the third day. And it all happened, says Paul twice (in verse 3 and again in verse 4), *in accordance with the Scriptures*.

¹ For a previous look at this passage, see the messages preached at WBC in 2002 and 2012.

^{**} Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

Key: The burial and resurrection of the Christ took place according to the Scriptures.

Literally, “the writings.” Which writings? Paul has in mind what we now refer to as the “Old Testament,” written between the years 1400 BC and 450 BC. The Hebrew Bible, the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings, which Jesus later said all spoke of Him and were fulfilled by Him.

Last week we saw the clear prediction of His death in the Old Testament in Isaiah 53. Now it’s time to look back and see the prophecies of His burial and resurrection.

A. We see the prediction in the Old Testament (Psalm 16:10; Psalm 110:1; Isaiah 53:11; Jonah 1:17).

Let’s look first at what David said in Psalm 16. David lived approximately 1000 BC, and the Lord gave Him a special promise. One of His descendants would rule as King forever. He speaks of this coming King in verses 8–11, “I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. ⁹ Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. ¹⁰ For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, *or let your holy one see corruption*. ¹¹ You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”

Notice what David says God will *not* do in verse 10. He will not abandon me to Sheol (the place of the dead, the underworld), nor will He let His holy one see corruption. Who is His “holy one”? He is the coming anointed one, the Christ, who will not be as we are, sinful, but holy. The Holy One. And though He will experience death, He will not experience corruption (NIV ‘decay’). God will not let that happen. God will not allow His Holy One to see corruption. As the NASB says, “Nor will you allow your Holy One to undergo decay.”

You wouldn’t think the Messiah would die, but He will. You wouldn’t think a dead man would not decay, but He won’t. How could a dead man not see decay? There’s only one way. He won’t stay dead. And why not? Because God will resurrect that dead body.

We see another prediction in Psalm 110:1, another psalm of David. “The LORD says to my Lord.” Stop there and notice the two parties in this conversation. Who is speaking? The LORD is (all capital letters, a reference to God Himself, using His covenant name, Yahweh). To whom is the LORD speaking? To “my Lord,” says David, and he uses the term Adonai, a reference to someone far greater than David, a reference to the coming Christ, the King of kings.

And what does God say to David’s Lord? These words, “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.” So the coming Christ, this descendant of David, is going to die, but He won’t remain in the grave. After He dies, He will sit down at the right hand of God on His throne, and God Himself will make all His enemies His footstool. God’s throne is in heaven, and the earth, which now is in rebellion against its Maker, will one day become the footstool of His chosen One.

The whole earth will be His footstool. That’s power! And yet this powerful, coming ruler, before He rules, is going to die first and be placed in a tomb. The prophet Isaiah speaks of His burial in Isaiah 53:9. Consider the details of this prophecy. “And they made *his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death*, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.”

And so it happened. He dies on a cross between two wicked men, and is placed in the grave of a rich man, Joseph of Arimathea.

But Isaiah makes it clear that the Messiah won't stay in that grave. The prophet says in Isaiah 53:11 (ESV), "Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied." Listen to the NIV, "After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities."

Yes, the Messiah will die, and be buried. But He will see the light of life again, and He will be satisfied. Why? Because His death, far from being a tragic loss, accomplished exactly what He intended it to accomplish, the saving of many people, people whose sins He bore.

One more Old Testament text, Jonah 1:17 (NIV). "But the LORD provided a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was inside the fish three days and three nights." This passage is particularly significant because Jesus Himself cited it, saying in Matthew 12:40, "For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."² What happened to Jonah, says Jesus, foreshadows what will happen to me.

And it most certainly did. My friends, Jesus did not die because He failed His mission, but because He succeeded in it. He died, was buried, and raised from the dead, *according to the Scriptures*. And what we see predicted in the Old Testament, we see fulfilled in the New Testament in vivid detail.

B. We see the fulfillment in the New Testament. We could go several places to see the resurrection account. It's in all four gospels, but I've chosen Luke's account in Luke 24. Why? Luke is like us. He never personally saw the risen Christ, at least, not that we know. Luke heard the message from others, like we have. And then he researched, and then recorded for our benefit the fruit of his research.

We are living in an age with a peculiar mixture of skepticism and gnostic certainty. The skepticism? *Who cares?* You can't really know anything for sure anyway. Can you? The gnostic certainty? If I believe something, it's true. You have no right to question it. It's true because I say it's true.

Again, it's a peculiar mixture. When it comes to matters of faith, it doesn't have to be true to believe it. The important thing is that what you believe helps you. So go ahead and believe in Mohammad, or the Jesus that Joseph Smith introduced in Mormonism, or the Jesus of the Bible, or the Easter bunny for that matter. Faith is a personal thing, and you're entitled to believe whatever you want. So we're told.

But Luke, a doctor by training, says, *No, the facts do matter*. By the way, that's what my doctor says too, and so does yours. And I'm glad he does. I'm not interested in hearing my doctor say to me, "Oh, take whatever medicine you want. It's all legitimate, as long as you *believe it's good for you*."

No, the facts matter. This is true for those who take care of our bodies in this life. How much more so is it true for those who seek to care for our eternal destiny. What's going to happen to us once we breathe our last breath and leave this world? The Christian faith rests upon the certainty of Jesus' literal, historical, and physical death *and* resurrection. If He didn't leave that tomb on Sunday morning, we will not leave the ground after we die either, no matter how sincere our belief.³

But He did leave His tomb, and He walked out of that tomb in a body that had still had the crucifixion scars on it. How do we know? The evidence is clear. It happened in

² In Luke 11:30, Jesus says that "Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites."

³ This was Paul's message in 1 Corinthians 15.

accordance with the Scriptures. Our focus in this message will be on the third account, the one recorded by Luke.

In Luke 24:1-12, he tells us the tomb is empty, just like the Old Testament said it would be, and he invites us to consider three different eyewitness responses.

I. The women's response to the empty tomb (1-10)

We meet these very special women in verses 1-3, “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.”

The event occurred, says Luke, on the *first day* of the week. That's Sunday. The previous week began with a bang when on Sunday Jesus entered the city to the wild applause and palm-branch-waving of the crowd. By the end of the week, the city did a 180 and nailed their Messiah to a cross.

Luke says that very early on the following Sunday morning “the women” headed for the tomb. He gives some of their names in verse 10. There was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and some others. Luke just mentioned the same women at the end of chapter 23, and verse 55 says they were from Galilee.

Luke 8:2 tells us that Mary Magdalene had once been controlled by seven demons until Jesus set her free, which He also did with some other women, including Joanna the wife of Cuza, the manager of Herod's household. Out of gratitude these women began to follow Jesus and helped support Him and His disciples out of their means, as Luke explains in 8:3.

Some have tried to explain away the resurrection with statements like, “Jesus didn't come back to life. The women went to the *wrong* tomb. That's why they didn't find the body.”

But that objection doesn't hold. Luke provides a very important detail back in 23:55, “The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and *saw the tomb* and how his body was laid in it.”

Notice that. They *saw* the tomb on Friday. In fact, they not only saw the tomb but also *how his body was laid in it*. What's more, verse 56 says they left that day with the intention of returning so they could anoint the body with spices and perfumes.

Why didn't they prepare the body on Friday? There wasn't time. Jesus died at 3:00 in the afternoon. By the time Joseph of Arimathea obtained permission from Pilate, took down the body from Golgotha, wrapped it, and moved it to the tomb he owned, it was near sundown. The Sabbath began when the sun went down on Friday evening. Work was forbidden until sundown on Saturday evening. The women, then, went home on Friday, prepared the spices, and then began their Sabbath rest. They'd have to wait to finish their work until Sunday morning.

Matthew Henry helps us visualize the women's actions. “As soon as ever they could, after the sabbath was over, they came to the sepulcher, to embalm his body, not to take it out of the linen in which Joseph had wrapped it, but to anoint the head and face, and perhaps the wounded hands and feet, and to scatter sweet spices upon and about the body; as it is usual with us to strew flowers about the dead bodies and graves of our friends,

only to show our good-will towards the taking off the deformity of death if we could, and to make them somewhat the less loathsome to those that are about them.”⁴

I admire these women, don't you? They were devoted to Jesus. They wanted to make sure He received a proper burial. They didn't follow Him merely to get something out of Him, like we're prone to do. They were filled with gratitude for how He had changed their lives and were willing to do anything they could to show their appreciation, even after His death.

So when Sunday arrived, they headed for the tomb. And once there, Luke tells us that they experienced four surprises.

A. Surprise #1: The tomb was open (1-2). According to verse 2, “And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb.” That was odd. Stones don't move on their own, especially huge grave-stones. And this particular stone, according to Matthew's account, had been sealed by the authorization of Pilate (27:66).

The ladies moved forward for a closer look. In fact, Luke says they “entered the tomb (3).” And once inside, they discovered a second surprise.

B. Surprise #2: The body was gone (3). Please realize that when the women went to the tomb that Sunday morning, they fully expected to find a *body*. That's why they were carrying these spices. When a body is placed in a tomb, it stays there. A dead body doesn't get up and walk away, does it?

C. Surprise #3: Two strange messengers appeared (4-7). Verse 4 says (NIV), “While they were wondering about this [the ESV & KJV says they were “perplexed”; the Greek term *aporeo* means “to doubt;” what they saw didn't make sense to them], suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning [ESV “in dazzling apparel”] stood beside them.”

The other gospel writers refer to these unique messengers as “angels,” and so does Luke in verse 23. John mentions there were “two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot (John 20:12).” Luke says the brilliance of their clothing riveted the women, for it “gleamed like lightning,” and petrified them so much that they bowed down with their faces to the ground (verse 5).

At this point, the angelic messengers broke the silence, and spoke to the women (5-7).⁵ They gave the frightened ladies two messages.

1. They revealed what Jesus did. They began with a question in verse 5. “Why do you seek the living among the dead?” Now there's an interesting question! What would you expect to see in a tomb? A dead body. What would you *not* expect to see? A living person, right? So it's a perfect question. Why are you looking for someone who is alive in a cemetery?

The angels don't wait for an answer, but make this announcement in verse 6, “He is not here, but has risen.” In the Greek the verb “has risen” is passive (literally “has been raised”). Why is it passive? It's because someone else was involved in this miraculous event. Someone raised Jesus from the dead.

Who was it? Listen to Paul's explanation in Ephesians 1:19-20, “That power is like the working of his mighty strength,²⁰ which he exerted in Christ when *he raised him from the dead* and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.”

⁴ Henry, Matthew, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Bible*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers) 1997.

⁵ According to the Law it took at least two witnesses to substantiate a legal matter (Deut 19:15). That seems to be the purpose here.

You say, “Wait a minute. I thought Jesus conquered death.” He did. In John 10:17-18 He said He was going to “lay down His life” and “take it up again.” And He did. He certainly exerted His power in the resurrection.

But so did His Father. Other passages tell us that God the Father raised His Son from the dead. Acts 2:24 says, “But God raised him up.” Peter says in Acts 2:32, “This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses.” Romans 6:4 says that Christ was “raised from the dead by the glory of the Father.” We’re told in 1 Corinthians 6:14, “And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power.”

God the Holy Spirit was involved as well, according to Romans 8:11. “If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.”

So each member of the Triune Godhead were involved in this pivotal event in world history. The Father. The Son. The Spirit. The resurrection is the work of Triune God.

Jesus had raised others from the dead, like Lazarus and Jairus’ daughter. But, of course, in time those individuals died again. What happened on this Sunday morning was different. When Jesus left His tomb, He never returned, not to that tomb, or any other.

Is that significant? Indeed it is!

It’s Spring time. Some of you put some seed in the ground recently, didn’t you? What happens to that seed? You put it into the ground, and it’s out of sight. But it’s not gone, is it? In time, if conditions are right, it will produce a harvest, more seed.

Do you want to hear something encouraging? The Bible says that Jesus became the “first-fruits” of a new humanity. Listen to 1 Corinthians 15:20-24, “But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. ²² For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. ²³ But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. ²⁴ Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.”

His resurrection is the guarantee of our resurrection, if we’re in Him.

But the angels have more to say. First, they revealed what Jesus *did*. “He has risen,” they said.⁶ Next...

2. *They reminded them of what Jesus said.* That’s verses 6-7. “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.”

I get the sense that the angels are surprised, that they expected Jesus’ followers to know this was going to happen. “Don’t you *remember* what the Lord told you? He told you what would happen on the third day. Didn’t you believe Him?”

Ironically, the chief priests and Pharisees remembered. According to Matthew 27:63, they went to Pilate and asked for a guard to keep watch at the tomb. Why? “Sir,” they said to Pilate, “we *remember* that while he was still alive that deceiver said, ‘After three days I will rise again.’ So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day.”

So, Jesus’ enemies remembered His words. “Now *you* remember,” the angels told the women. Remember what? These two predictions.

⁶ By the way, the stone wasn’t rolled away to let Jesus out, but to let the witnesses in. If you can overcome death you don’t need help moving a grave-stone.

•Jesus predicted His crucifixion. He revealed ahead of time that He *must* be delivered, and He *must* be crucified.

But why? Why did He have to die? The answer takes us back to something that happened in Genesis 3. The first man and woman, Adam and Eve, disobeyed their Creator. They acted independently of God, and in so doing brought death upon the human race.

Do you remember what God did right after Adam and Eve sinned? As the guilty man and woman were standing there in their shame, God provided them with something. What was it? According to Genesis 3:21, He made garments of skin for them and clothed them. And in so doing He gave them an object lesson. In order to get rid of sin's shame, the death of a substitute had to occur. In Genesis 3, an animal died, but this was only a temporary covering. Years later, the Jews offered thousands of lambs, but this too provided only a temporary covering. And a picture of what was going to happen.

Back in eternity past God devised a plan to rescue a sinful people for His glory. He purposed that a substitute would die in their place, and the substitute would be none other than His own precious Son.

The Son of man MUST be crucified, Jesus had said. And He told His disciples that over and over during His three years with them. He was going to die for them.

But He told them something else, as the angels reminded the women.

•Jesus predicted His resurrection. He told them, not once, but several times. For instance, Matthew 16:21 says, "From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life."

He told them, not only that He would be raised, but when. On the *third day*.

Friends, God takes His word seriously, and He calls us to do the same. To take His Word seriously, we must *know* it. This takes a commitment to study it. And we must *remember* it. This requires reflection. We must *believe* what He said. This takes faith. And we must *live* in light of what He said, and this necessitates obedience.

Do you believe what God says? The test isn't merely what we *say*, but ultimately what we *do* with what He has said. And these women passed the test.

D. Surprise #4: The women became the first witnesses (8-10). Look at verses 8-10, "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."

What did the women do? Two actions...

1. *They remembered (8)*. They remembered His words. Oh, they knew what He had said, but they had forgotten. They needed the messengers to prompt their recall.

We're no different. We tend to forget God's Word, especially when life gets hard and doesn't make sense. We need to be reminded. That's one of the main reasons why we need the church. By God's design, the church is the people with whom we are to assemble each week to be reminded of what He said. To stay away from church is to rob ourselves of something we desperately need, not to mention to rob God of the worship He certainly deserves.

The women remembered. And then...

2. *They spread the word (9-10).* They took off from the tomb, and headed to find the apostles. They just had to tell someone!

It's ironic that God chose women to be the first witnesses of His resurrected Son. I say that because in the male-dominated world of the first century, the testimony of women wasn't given much legal weight. And that's one of the great proofs of the resurrection. If the church had "made up" this story, they certainly wouldn't have said that the first witnesses were women.

But the Bible tells it like it is, for it has nothing to hide. The reason Luke says that women were the first witnesses is because they were, and that by God's design.

These women deserve our commendation, friends. They took great personal risk to be there, first at the site of the cross, and now at the tomb. But they did so because they truly loved their Master.

Do we love Him? Oh, we believe in Him, that's why we're here today. But do we *love* Him? When we love someone, we value them, we esteem them, we want to be with them, and please them.

A few years ago in a Sunday evening service, our sister Joy shared a stirring testimony and said these words. "I thank the Lord for my cancer because the Lord used it to bring me back to His house. Living for His glory is now the most important thing in my life."

I was challenged. Can I say that? Can you?

According to verse 9 the women shared their discovery with "the Eleven" (the remaining apostles) and "all the rest" (which would include people like Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, perhaps Lazarus, and others).⁷ And what effect did their report have?

This brings us to the second eyewitness response. We've considered the women's response to the empty tomb. Next Luke invites us to consider the apostles' response.

II. The apostles' response to the empty tomb (11)

Verse 11 says, "But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them." Interesting, isn't it? These men had spent three years with Jesus. They'd seen His miracles, and heard His predictions. But when they heard the witness of these women, they didn't believe them.

A. They didn't believe the witness. Their hopes were dashed in Gethsemane on Thursday night, and they've been living in despair ever since. So while they heard the women's report, they didn't believe it. Luke tells us why.

B. They couldn't make sense of it. They called it "nonsense" (NIV), an 'idle tale' (ESV). Luke uses a word that the Greek doctors used to describe the babbling of a fevered and insane mind.⁸

The whole thing seemed far-fetched to them. Why had Jesus allowed the mob to arrest Him, jealous leaders to frame Him, and a self-seeking ruler to condemn Him? They knew He had the power to stop it all, but He didn't. In fact, it seemed like He wanted to die. But why would He die if He was going to turn right around three days

⁷ "It does not appear that they were together in a body; they were *scattered every one to his own*, perhaps scarcely two or three of them together in the same lodgings, but one went to some of them and another to others of them, so that in a little time, that morning, they all had notice of it." Matthew Henry

⁸ Barclay, p. 292.

later and live again? This just didn't make sense to them, so they refused to believe the report.

Wiersbe is right, "Had they remembered His words, they would have saved themselves a great deal of sorrow."⁹ But as Matthew Henry suggested, "Good Christians often perplex themselves about that with which they should comfort and encourage themselves."¹⁰

We can relate to these men, can't we? And we can learn from them, too, even their unbelief. I see two lessons here.

1. *This gives us proof for the resurrection.* That's right. The disciples' initial unbelief is actually proof for the resurrection, and here's why.

One theory that critics propose to explain the resurrection is that Jesus' followers had hallucinations and merely *thought* they saw Jesus. But that flies in the face of the evidence. Remember, the women didn't expect to see Jesus alive. And the disciples certainly didn't, even after the women passed on the angels' message. Would this many doubting people create a story about the resurrection?¹¹

Other critics say, "The disciples stole the body and made up the resurrection story." That too is ludicrous. Every one of these apostles would eventually die as martyrs for Christ, except for John who survived being thrown into a caldron of boiling oil. Can you imagine these eleven men being willing to die for a hoax they made up? Again, impossible. They wouldn't even believe the women.

Luke makes it clear that the first skeptics Jesus faced were His *own disciples*. That's right, His *disciples*. The incredible change that took place between Luke 24 and Acts 2 is one of the greatest proofs of the resurrection of Jesus.

2. *This shows us why we need patience in working with people.* The resurrection is a hard doctrine to believe, and apart from the work of the Holy Spirit, no one believes it.

So the next time we share the good news of Christ with someone, and that person balks at it, let's not don't give up on that person. Remember that even the disciples struggled, too. And we ourselves wouldn't believe it until the Spirit of God opened our eyes. So let's keep loving them, and praying for them.

At this point, one of these disciples decided to check things out for himself, and it's not surprising who it was. In verse 12 Luke introduces us to the third eyewitness.

III. Peter's response to the empty tomb (12)

Verse 12 says, "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."

Notice what Peter did.

A. He inspected the evidence. When he got to the tomb, he saw an open door and the strips of cloth, but no body. What struck Peter was the orderliness of the linen strips. If someone stole the body, would they first unwrap it and leave the linen behind? No. To Peter it looked like Jesus' body simply evaporated and left the strips neatly behind.

The evidence made him believe, right? Not exactly.

⁹ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books) 1992.

¹⁰ Henry, Matthew, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Bible*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers) 1997.

¹¹ Wiersbe, p. 278.

B. He reflected on the event. Luke says he left “marveling.” You say, “Why didn’t Peter believe? I mean, he saw the evidence, didn’t he?”

I also saw the evidence when I was in Jerusalem in 1980. Thousands of people have seen it, for the tomb is still *empty*. But we need more than evidence to become a believer.

Why’s that? Because we can reinterpret evidence. Maybe the tomb is empty because they stole the body. Or maybe it was the wrong tomb. Or, or, or.

My friend, apart from sovereign intervention, the natural man will never believe in the resurrected Christ. But the Risen Christ takes care of this problem, too.

Remember His final words to His followers? “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses (Acts 1:8).” What does it take to reach a blind, hard-hearted, unbeliever? It takes power. Power to witness. Power to convict and then convince that sinner, and then power to remove the scales from that blind sinner’s eyes, so that he too sees and savors Christ (John 16:8; 2 Cor 4:6).

I can testify He did that in my life. I was dead in my sins, blind to the beauty of Christ, until God’s Spirit opened my eyes to the truth of what Christ did, and that He did it for me, and gave me a heart to believe it and to believe in *Him*.

Have you experienced that miracle? Do you want to experience it? Then ask Him.

And keep this in mind. Luke 24 isn’t the end of the story for Peter. Sure, he has doubts, but the Lord isn’t done with him yet. He is refining Peter, stripping away things, and preparing him for service. Yes, Peter blew it, but the Lord never gave up on him. And He won’t give up on you, either, if you belong to Him (Phil 1:6).

Take Inventory: What does this mean for us?

Three actions are in order.

1. *We need to marvel.* Most of us live such hectic lives that we do little of this. Peter left “marveling at what had happened.” Let’s do the same today.

My friend, if the tomb is empty (and it is), and if the reason it’s empty is because Jesus has risen from the dead (which He did), then this means we will see Him. Are we ready to see Him? This is why we need to marvel, to think, to ponder.

Do you have questions about Jesus? Good! There are answers, and there are resources to help you find those answers. There’s the Bible, so start reading it every day (I recommend the Gospel of John). And there are people who’d be glad to study it with you. Let me know if you’re interested. Let’s do some *marveling*.

But let’s not stop there. Marveling won’t take us to heaven.

2. *We need to believe.* The Scriptures give this promise, “That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved (Rom 10:9).” To be right with God we must *believe* in Jesus, that He died for us and that God raised Him from the dead.

Do you believe? If not, why not now? And if we do, let’s not stop there.

3. *We need to tell.* Like the women did. Telling is an important evidence that we truly believe, that we truly see and savor Him.

This is the gospel panorama. Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures. Christ was buried, and raised from the dead on the third day, according to the Scriptures. But there’s one more element to consider, which we will do, the Lord willing, next week. Christ *appeared*.

Closing Song: #228 “*Rejoice, the Lord is King*” (all four verses)

April Benediction: 2 Peter 1:2