

**Third Day Truths
Luke 24**

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April 21, 2019 (Easter Sunday)

Text: On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came to the tomb, bringing the spices they had prepared. ²They found the stone rolled away from the tomb. ³They went in but did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men stood by them in dazzling clothes. ⁵So the women were terrified and bowed down to the ground.

“Why are you looking for the living among the dead?” asked the men. ⁶“He is not here, but he has risen! Remember how he spoke to you when he was still in Galilee, ⁷saying, ‘It is necessary that the Son of Man be betrayed into the hands of sinful men, be crucified, and rise on the third day?’” ⁸And they remembered his words.

⁹Returning from the tomb, they reported all these things to the Eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them were telling the apostles these things. ¹¹But these words seemed like nonsense to them, and they did not believe the women. ¹²Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. When he stooped to look in, he saw only the linen cloths. So he went away, amazed at what had happened.

¹³Now that same day two of them were on their way to a village called Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴Together they were discussing everything that had taken place. ¹⁵And while they were discussing and arguing, Jesus himself came near and began to walk along with them. ¹⁶But they were prevented from recognizing him. ¹⁷Then he asked them, “What is this dispute that you’re having with each other as you are walking?” And they stopped walking and looked discouraged.

¹⁸The one named Cleopas answered him, “Are you the only visitor in Jerusalem who doesn’t know the things that happened there in these days?”

¹⁹“What things?” he asked them.

So they said to him, “The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet powerful in action and speech before God and all the people, ²⁰and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him. ²¹But we were hoping that he was the one who was about to redeem Israel. Besides all this, it’s the third day since these things happened. ²²Moreover, some women from our group astounded us. They arrived early at the tomb, ²³and when they didn’t find his body, they came and reported that they had seen a vision of angels who said he was alive. ²⁴Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they didn’t see him.”

²⁵ He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Wasn’t it necessary for the Messiah to suffer these things and enter into his glory?” ²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted for them the things concerning himself in all the Scriptures.

²⁸ They came near the village where they were going, and he gave the impression that he was going farther. ²⁹ But they urged him, “Stay with us, because it’s almost evening, and now the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them.

³⁰ It was as he reclined at the table with them that he took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, but he disappeared from their sight. ³² They said to each other, “Weren’t our hearts burning within us while he was talking with us on the road and explaining the Scriptures to us?” ³³ That very hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem. They found the Eleven and those with them gathered together, ³⁴ who said, “The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!” ³⁵ Then they began to describe what had happened on the road and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

³⁶ As they were saying these things, he himself stood in their midst. He said to them, “Peace to you!” ³⁷ But they were startled and terrified and thought they were seeing a ghost. ³⁸ “Why are you troubled?” he asked them. “And why do doubts arise in your hearts?” ³⁹ Look at my hands and my feet, that it is I myself! Touch me and see, because a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you can see I have.” ⁴⁰ Having said this, he showed them his hands and feet. ⁴¹ But while they still were amazed and in disbelief because of their joy, he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” ⁴² So they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, ⁴³ and he took it and ate in their presence.

⁴⁴ He told them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ He also said to them, “This is what is written: The Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ And look, I am sending you what my Father promised. As for you, stay in the city until you are empowered from on high.”

⁵⁰ Then he led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. ⁵¹ And while he was blessing them, he left them and was carried up into heaven. ⁵² After worshiping him, they returned to Jerusalem with great joy. ⁵³ And they were continually in the temple praising God.

Introduction: We have read Luke’s version of the resurrection this morning. I want to show you some things in this glorious chapter, so turn to Luke 24. We won’t read the chapter again, but will refer along the way, so keep your Bibles open. But notice the reference to “third day.” You will notice these references in verses 7, 21, and 46. The first is from the angel at the tomb. The angel is quoting what Jesus said to them about his death and resurrection. The second mention is from those who were walking unknowingly with Jesus along a road to village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus. The third time is from Jesus speaking to the disciples as He had appeared to them alive.

Third Day! We are here today because of the third day after the crucifixion of Jesus. Consider these words from pastor and author, Tim Keller.

If Jesus rose from the dead, then you have to accept all He said; if He didn’t rise from the dead, then why worry about any of what He said? The issue on which everything hangs is not whether or not you like His teaching but whether or not He rose from the dead.”¹

So, here we are. I want to share with you from this passage some “Third Day Truths.” Most of you know these things already, but I pray that we will be blessed, encouraged, inspired, and called to greater surrender and devotion to Him by examining them in the context of Jesus’ resurrection. Third Day Truths!

The resurrection causes us to . . .

Remember the Promises of Jesus.

Look at verse 6 and verse 8. “Remember how he spoke” and “they remembered his words.” Both of these are powerful phrases. Christmas is the reminder that God keeps His promises, and Easter is another reminder that He keeps His promises. The Old Testament prophets prophesied of exact details of Jesus’ coming, but Jesus prophesied of His death, and even declared that He would rise three days later.

So, the resurrection is a road of believed promises. Seeing that the resurrection (just as He said) is real, we can count on all of the other promises. Let’s talk about one. We need the promise of eternal life. We need the promise of eternal life because each of us has a problem—sin. “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” The further problem with sin is that sin leads to death—eternal death. But the promise is that the free gift of God is eternal life.

The resurrection causes us to . . .

Run to the Proof about Jesus.

Upon hearing of the tomb being empty, Peter got up and ran to the tomb. Others believed these words to be nonsense, but Peter ran. Notice what the text says in verse 12. “So he (Peter) went away, amazed at what had happened.” Notice—not amazed at what he had heard. Not amazed even at what he had seen. Amazed at what had happened. He believed.

¹ Preben Vang, Teach the Text Commentary Series, 1 Corinthians Volume, p. 205.

I realize that for some (and maybe even some of you) all of this seems like nonsense. You laugh at the thought of Jesus. You laugh at the thought of Christians believing that He rose again. You say, “How foolish! How simple! Those poor Christians believing such a lie.” I get that you don’t believe. But, you know what I don’t get? I don’t get that some won’t examine the evidence. I don’t get how some have died because of their belief in the resurrection, yet others have decided not even to examine the evidence. Mention of even the possibility of a resurrected Jesus ought to cause us to run toward the proof of the evidence.

Listen to how Lee Strobel, atheist turned Christian puts this idea:

“I didn’t become a Christian because God promised I’d have an even happier life than I had as an atheist. Rather I became a Christian because the evidence was so compelling Jesus really is the one and only Son of God who proved His divinity by rising from the dead.”

Having set out to examine the evidence to disprove the claims of Christianity, Strobel became convinced of the certainty of the resurrection.

God said, as recorded by the prophet Jeremiah, “You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart.” (Jeremiah 29:13) The reason that some have never found God is that they have made a decision to not look at the evidence.

The resurrection causes us to . . .

Recognize the Power of Jesus.

Here is the third “Third Day Truth.” After walking with Him unknowingly, two people, one named Cleopas, had their spiritual eyes opened and they recognized Him. “They said to each other, ‘Weren’t our hearts burning within us while He was talking with us on the road and explaining the Scriptures to us.’” (Luke 24:32)

What Jesus did for them, He wants to do for us. He wants us to recognize Him—His power. He wants our hearts to burn within us. He wants us to know His power. He wants us to know His resurrection power.

The resurrection causes us to . . .

Rest in the Peace of Jesus.

Some of you need most this fourth truth. In fact, we all need this fourth truth. Those of us who have believed for a long time need this fourth “Third Day Truth.” Notice verse 36.

As they were saying these things, He Himself stood in their midst. He said to them, “Peace to You.”

We need those words peace. These are the words of the resurrection. Some of you are really worried about this, that, or the other. Would you let these Easter words sink in to your soul? “Peace to you!”

We have peace because of the resurrection. Do you know what this means?

- The tomb is empty.

- The throne of Heaven is occupied.
- The Holy Spirit has come to be with us forever.

Peace to you!

The resurrection causes us to . . .

Realize the Passion of Jesus.

Verse 46 and 47 give us the succinct reason for His coming, dying, and being raised again.

⁴⁶ He also said to them, “This is what is written: The Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Here is His passion! Why did He come? He came to die. He came to die so that through belief and repentance forgiveness of sins could be offered to every one. Once we have believed this, we are led to the sixth “Third Day Truth.”

The resurrection causes us to . . .

Reaffirm the Purposes of my life.

- Life of Witness

Before our Southern Baptist missionaries leave for their assignment, the International Mission Board requires appointees to write a letter and leave with their pastors in the event that they die while serving. I have had the hard task of receiving these letters. Thankfully, I have never had to open and read one of those letters. Karen Watson’s pastors had to read her letter.

Karen Watson was a 38 year old missionary who died in Iraq when her vehicle was ambushed on March 15, 2004. She had written out her wishes to her pastors if she was killed. Her letter went like this:

Dear Pastor Phil & Pastor Roger,

You should only be opening this letter in the event of death.

When God calls there are no regrets. I tried to share my heart with you as much as possible, my heart for the Nations. I wasn’t called to a place. I was called to Him. To obey was my objective, to suffer was expected, His glory my reward.

In regards to any service, keep it small and simple. Yes, simple; just preach the gospel. Be bold and preach the life saving, life changing, forever eternal Gospel. Give glory and honor to our Father.

There is no joy outside of knowing Jesus and serving Him.²

- Life of Worship

My favorite Easter story comes from the life of British minister, W. E. Sangster.

“Margaret Sangster Phippen wrote that in the mid-1950s her father, British minister W. E. Sangster, began to notice some uneasiness in his throat and a dragging in his leg. When he went to the doctor, he found that he had an incurable disease that caused progressive muscular atrophy. His muscles would gradually waste away, his voice would fail, his throat would soon become unable to swallow.

Sangster threw himself into his work in British home missions, figuring he could still write, and he would have even more time for prayer. ‘Let me stay in the struggle, Lord,’ he pleaded. ‘I don’t mind if I can no longer be a general, but give me just a regiment to lead.’ He wrote articles and books, and helped organize prayer cells throughout England. ‘I’m only in the kindergarten of suffering,’ he told people who pitied him.

Gradually Sangster’s legs became useless. His voice went completely. But he could still hold a pen, shakily. On Easter morning, just a few weeks before he died, he wrote a letter to his daughter. In it, he said, ‘It is terrible to wake up on Easter morning and have no voice to shout, ‘He is risen!’ – but it would be still more terrible to have a voice and not want to shout.’”³

Some years ago, I was preaching on Easter Sunday. In the spur of the moment I said, “For some of you this is your defining moment.” It is not something that I necessarily planned to say. When we extended the invitation to respond, the first person to come forward said, “This is my defining moment!” I pray that there will be those who say that right now.

²Copied from *The Baptist Message*.

³ *Leadership Journal* edited by Craig Brian Larson.