



The Reverend Dr. David V. Silvernail, Jr.  
Luke 24:1-12

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English Standard Version

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## *“The Resurrection of Christ!”*

### **Luke 24:1-12**

*“But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. <sup>2</sup> And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, <sup>3</sup> but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. <sup>4</sup> While they were **perplexed** about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. <sup>5</sup> And 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? <sup>6</sup> He is not here, but has risen. Remember how He told you, while He was still in Galilee, <sup>7</sup> that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.” <sup>8</sup> And they remembered His words, <sup>9</sup> and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. <sup>10</sup> 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, <sup>11</sup> but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. <sup>12</sup> 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.”*

*Heavenly Father, thank You for giving us the Scriptures and making us Your people. You have brought us to this amazing Gospel to learn more about your Son, Jesus. We know that everything about Christianity depends on the truth of the resurrection. And yet we are people filled with doubts and are often skeptical. Make us people who marvel at Your truth. Make us people who respond with wonder at the resurrection of Your Son. We ask You this Easter morning to give us the grace to understand who Jesus is and what Jesus has done on this Resurrection Day. So, by Your Spirit open this Gospel to us and help us to see Jesus, we pray in Jesus' name, Amen.*

## INTRODUCTION: “*Unthinkable and Unexplainable.*”

If you’ve ever followed any of the Gospel accounts of Jesus’ life, or if you were here for the sermon series on **Luke** in 2002-2003, or **John** in 07-08, or **Matthew** in 13-14 (we haven’t done Mark yet – but it’s coming – January 2020). Anyway, in a careful reading of Jesus’ life, you would see repeated episodes of dramatic healing, powerful teaching, amazing miracles, harsh rebukes, terrible prophecies, and true “*shock and awe*” in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

The crucifixion of Christ was **unthinkable** to the disciples. Jesus followers believed He was the Messiah, that He would overthrow Rome, and usher in God’s kingdom. But now Christ was dead! When the crucifixion happened, even though He predicted it, none of His followers said, “Everything is going according to plan.” All four of the Gospels give us very unflattering portraits of what happened when He died. His disciples were **disheartened**, **dismayed**, **disappointed**, **disillusioned**, and **dispirited**. They were filled with **doubt**. The **unthinkable** had happened. And all His followers could see was darkness and gloom. Not one of Jesus’ followers had even the slightest glimmer of hope.

God Himself bore testimony to Christ’s death, as **Matthew 27:51-54** tells us, “*And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split.* <sup>52</sup> *The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised,* <sup>53</sup> *and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many.* <sup>54</sup> *When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, “Truly this was the Son of God!”* And Joseph of Arimathea played out the last act in **Luke 23:52-54**, “*This man [Joseph] went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.* <sup>53</sup> *Then he took it down and wrapped it in a linen shroud and laid Him in a tomb cut in stone, where no one had ever yet been laid.* <sup>54</sup> *It was the day of Preparation, and the Sabbath was beginning.*”

As far as the disciples could see, it was all over! They had come up against a blank wall. They hadn’t believed it would end like this, and they hadn’t yet grasped the truth of Jesus’ prophecies of **resurrection**. There was nothing left except a recurring sense of utter **helplessness** and the **shame** of their **denials** and **desertions**. The disciples didn’t know they were about to experience a greater joy than they had ever known. **Luke 24** is the story of **discovering that joy**.

In this passage, we see how the truth of the **resurrection** brings both **doubt** and **wonder** to the followers of Christ ... including us. Their experience is our experience. Let’s look again at the last few verses of our text for today, starting at **verse 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,* <sup>11</sup> *but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.* <sup>12</sup> *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.*”

The passage ends with the Apostle Peter “**marveling** at what had happened.” Some versions say, “**wondering** at what had happened.” It was an **unexplainable** phenomenon. I mean, how would you explain it? The angels told the women that Jesus had risen from the dead just as Jesus had told them. So, the women went back to tell the men. The men were all hiding behind closed doors, fearful, and these words seemed to the men **to be an idle tale**, one version translates that as, “*the story sounded like nonsense.*” So, I looked up the definition of “**an idle tale**” and it means “empty talk,” or “a silly story,” or “a foolish yarn,” or “utter nonsense.” They

simply didn't believe the women.

But Peter got up and ran to the tomb. He stooped, looked in, and saw the linen grave clothes by themselves. Then he went home "*marveling at what had happened.*" So, what we have here is **doubt** and **disbelief** on the one hand, and **marvel** and **wonder** on the other. We are here because of an **unexplainable** phenomenon. There is one fact on which everyone agrees. Followers and skeptics alike agree that Jesus' body disappeared, but what's the explanation? There are two different perspectives: **doubt** and **wonder**.

How many of you watched, "The X-Files"? Either the older or newer TV shows? Not much difference. It's about two FBI agents, Skully and Mulder. They're assigned to what the FBI calls the X-Files – unsolvable or **unexplainable** cases. I'm no expert on the show, I think I saw it once, but it fell into fairly predictable patterns. Both agents look at the same evidence, but they always respond in different ways. Skully always responds from the **doubt** side. She's skeptical and is constantly thinking there has to be some logical explanation. After all, if you cannot explain it with your mind or measure it by your five senses, then it cannot be real. Mulder, on the other hand, always responds from the **wonder** side. He's open to unlimited possibilities – always open to the **unexplainable**. He understands that we can't possibly explain everything with our limited experiences and understanding. Both sides, **doubt** and **wonder**, are in all of us.

Everyone has both and we choose to act either consciously or subconsciously from one or the other. If you're primarily acting out of your **doubt** side, then you try to understand God through reason or your senses. But if you act out of the **wonder** side, you're always left looking for more. And in the beginning of **Luke 24**, we see both sides. So, let's start with that group of

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#### v. 1-3: **DOUBTING DISCIPLES** <sup>1</sup>

Actually, we'll start with the state of the Galilean women, we must not let our knowledge of the discovery that awaited them dull us to the dark sackcloth covering these women's souls. They were depressed, exhausted, mourning, with **no hope whatsoever**, and according to **Mark 16:3**, fretting over how they would get into the tomb, "*And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?"*" They didn't expect anything except more sorrow. If you take flowers to the cemetery, do you expect to see an empty grave? And if you did see one, would it occur to you that the deceased had risen from the dead? Of course not!" And neither did they, **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.*" <sup>2</sup> *And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb,* <sup>3</sup> *but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.*" Now they were definitely confused and perplexed!

John tells us that Joseph of Arimathea, a secret disciple of Jesus, gained permission to bury Jesus' body. With the aid of Nicodemus, he wrapped Jesus' body in linen and about 100 pounds of spices and laid Him in a new garden tomb. The Lord Jesus lay in that tomb until the **resurrection**, which took place sometime before dawn on Sunday morning. Shortly after He was **resurrected**, certain women came to the tomb to anoint Christ's body with spices,

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<sup>1</sup> **The Introduction and Exposition of the text is adapted from the books, Preaching the Word: Luke, Volume Two, pages 399-403; Preaching the Word: John both by Dr. R. Kent Hughes; The Word Biblical Commentary: Luke 18:35-24:53 by Dr. John Nolland, page 1139; and The New International Commentary on the New Testament: Luke by Dr. Leon Morris, page 365. **My sermon**, "*The Resurrection of Christ*" preached here at Potomac Hills on 4/20/03. **And the Sermons**, "*Living the Unexplainable*" 3/30/97 and "*Fearless Easter*" 4/4/99, both by Dr. Mike Slaughter, Ginghamburg Church, Tipp City, OH, [www.ginghamburg.org](http://www.ginghamburg.org).**

mentioned in all four Gospels. At least four women were there, probably more. Matthew mentions Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of Jesus. Mark tells us Salome was present. Luke includes Joanna.

These devoted women evidently reached the tomb at daybreak, a time when it was difficult to see clearly. But what they could see shook them: the stone had been removed from the entrance! Had someone broken into the tomb? Had Joseph of Arimathea decided upon another tomb? Where were the soldiers?

Finally, the women decided to inform the disciples, and Mary Magdalene left with the message. John picks up the thread of the narrative, **John 20:1-9**, “*Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. <sup>2</sup> So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” <sup>3</sup> So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. <sup>4</sup> Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. <sup>5</sup> And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. <sup>6</sup> Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, <sup>7</sup> and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. <sup>8</sup> Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; <sup>9</sup> for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise from the dead.”*

They apparently assumed Jesus’ body had been stolen – at least that’s what Mary Magdalene thought, **John 20:13**, “*They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.”* The empty tomb intensified their **distress**. So, the women came to all of the disciples with this story of the **resurrection**. What’s their response? “*It doesn’t make sense. People don’t get up and walk out of tombs.*” When we use the expression ‘*it doesn’t make sense*’ we are saying that **it does not compute** according to my five senses. That’s where the word *sense* comes from. If you can’t smell it, see it, taste it, touch it, or hear it, it **can’t** be real.

Have your children ever come to you and asked you to help them with their homework? Especially math. I hate that. When they were getting into fifth and sixth grade math, I couldn’t keep up anymore. Definitely by Middle School I was out of the picture. Now if I can’t understand Middle School math, how am I going to understand God? Jesus said you must become like little children.

Children are born with **wonder**, aren’t they? When a child is born, faith is the **easiest** thing in the world for them. They live out of faith in God. Unlimited possibilities. If you ask a little kid what they want to be when they grow up, it’s amazing the responses you get. There are no limitations. But the older we get the more narrow and limited we become in our faith. What happened?

We become narrow and limited in our perspective because of what we’re told. If you’re told the world is flat, you start acting like the world is flat. You begin to live in a very limited and narrow world. No one ventures too far from home or you sail off the end of the planet. It affects everything ... until someone comes along who shatters that paradigm. We’ve only understood that the earth is not flat for 500 years. People said no one would ever be able to fly. Then someone invented airplanes and that paradigm was shattered.

Easter is about **a shattered paradigm**. Peter looked at these empty body wrappings and

went, “If God can do that, **then that changes everything**. If God can do that, anything is possible.” Easter is about the power of faith. It’s not about defining God by what we can explain. It is about living from the **unexplainable**.

You can’t explain a miracle. **That’s** the point. I don’t understand Middle School math, how am I going to explain a miracle? But if God can do what God did on Easter, then God can do anything. Nothing is impossible with God ... **even if you don’t understand it**. The text says that the women got ...

#### v. 4-8: **PERPLEXING NEWS**

Starting at **verse 4**, “*While they were **perplexed** about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. <sup>5</sup> And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, ...*” The two dazzling men were angels, and they cast an entirely new light on the matter. They radiated the splendor of God (the same words are used to describe shining garments on the Mount of Transfiguration in **Luke 9**). The women were overcome with fear and bowed down until their faces were on the ground as a sign of respect and perhaps avoidance of the bright light. While they were face down, one of the angels voiced the immortal rebuke, verse 5, “*the men said to them, “**Why do you seek the living among the dead?**”*”

Not only does **doubt** cause us to miss opportunities, they also cause us to look for ***the living among the dead***. On that first Easter morning, the women went to the tomb and they met angels there. The angels posed an interesting question, “**Why do you seek the living among the dead?**” There’s nothing living in cemeteries. Living people are not in cemeteries. Do you know what happens when we fail to recognize who’s with us? We look for life **in non-life places**.

Hear me out. We think that **we’ll find life in our achievements**. Surely, I can find life in this job and so we pour ourselves into it. But here’s what happens. We miss life because we live out of great ambition rather than small faith. We miss life because we give life to ambition rather than God. “**Why do you seek the living among the dead?**”

Or we think that **we can find life in relationships**. Surely, I can find life in this person. Well, I’ve known all kinds of people who really have their act together, people of integrity, and then they meet someone. I don’t know what happens to our brains when we meet someone. Some of you come to me and say, “But you don’t understand. No one has ever made me feel this way before.” So, you hook up with this person and suddenly you say, “Oh, you don’t make me feel that way anymore.” And so, we begin to look for another relationship that can give us life. People, there is no other person in the world **that can give you life**. There is no person in the world who can give you life apart from Jesus Christ. We look to people to do for us what only God can do. “**Why do you seek the living among the dead?**”

Or we think we can find life in the next purchase. How many times have you gone out and bought something just because you were depressed? It gets bad sometimes and we think we’ll find life in the next house or the next car. I do this too and it’s dumb. But we don’t find life there, do we? All we do is get into debt up to our ears. Retail therapy. That’s what it’s called. “**Why do you seek the living among the dead?**”

We are all **desperate for life**. We grasp for models for living and we turn to books or web sites or whatever the latest thing is. We grasp for models for living rather than connect with the source for living, “*the men said to them, “**Why do you seek the living among the dead?**”*” The women were accused of coming to anoint a lifeless Jesus when they should have known He would rise from the dead.

It was scandalous to look for Jesus in the grave. If you are looking for Elvis, the proper place is in Memphis in a Doric-style mausoleum with ornate brass and bronze fittings on marble, in his own vault, in a massive seamless copper casket, *“among the dead.”* But if you’re looking for Jesus in the same place, you’ve got it all wrong. All **resurrection**-denying churches look for Jesus *“among the dead.”*

They love the example of the dead Jesus. They preach His courage, His conviction, even His faith. Sentimentality fills their sermons with language about recurrent spring making hope eternal, about a butterfly discarding its cocoon. But the R word ... **resurrection** ... is never used, except metaphorically. The angels’ rebuke set the stage for their proclamation of the Easter message, verse 6, *“He is not here, but has risen.”* With the astounding truth ringing over their now uplifted faces, the angel told them, **verses 6-8**, *“He is not here, but has risen. Remember how He told you, while He was still in Galilee, <sup>7</sup> that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.”* <sup>8</sup> *And they remembered His words,”*

The angel challenged them to **remember** the prophecies of His death and **resurrection** that He’d made back in Galilee. Those prophecies were explicit. Right after Peter’s great confession of Christ, Jesus said, **Luke 9:22**, *“The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.”* And immediately after the Transfiguration, He said, **Mark 9:31-32**, *“The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And when He is killed, after three days He will rise.”* <sup>32</sup> *But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask Him.”* The women remembered Jesus’ words. But Jesus had often spoken metaphorically, and they had probably relegated His words to some such hard to understand interpretation. But now the light began to come on and so they became messengers of what they had seen and heard.

The great truth for us here is that the significance of the **resurrection** is inseparable from Jesus’ prophetic word about His death and **resurrection**. It is the Word of God that makes sense of everything. The very structure of this final chapter of Luke makes this clear. **Luke 24** recounts three episodes — first, the women’s encounter with the angels at the empty tomb (Luke 24:1-12), secondly, the encounter on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35), and thirdly, Jesus’ appearance to His disciples in Jerusalem (Luke 24:36-49). Significantly, all three episodes are structured the same way: **doubt**, rebuke, instruction, and **wonder**.

And the instruction in all three episodes consists of a call to **remember God’s Word**. Here the women are told, starting in **verse 6**, *“Remember how He told you, while He was still in Galilee, <sup>7</sup> that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.”* <sup>8</sup> *And they **remembered** His words.”*

Then on the Emmaus road, Jesus admonished them, **Luke 24:25-27**, *“And He said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to **believe all that the prophets have spoken!**” <sup>26</sup> Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory?”* <sup>27</sup> *And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted to them **in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.**”*

And then in Jerusalem, He instructed the whole apostolic band, **Luke 24:44-46**, *“Then He said to 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 and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” <sup>45</sup> Then He opened their minds **to understand the Scriptures,** <sup>46</sup> and said to them, **“Thus it is written,** that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead.”*

The prophetic word from Jesus is central to the gospel. Jesus' atoning death is fully understood only in the light of the whole teaching of the whole Word of God. His **resurrection** is only understandable when joined with His Word. In fact, those who had rejected the prophetic word rejected the **Resurrection**, just as Jesus taught in **Luke 16:31**, "*He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.'*"

This means that we're to be people of the whole Book. We are to devour the Word of God! Our hearts and minds will begin to embrace the massive dimensions of Christ only through the light of the Scriptures — all of them. And when you are able to "**Remember how He told you,**" then you can't wait to go back to wherever you came from ... back to work, back to school, back to the neighborhood, back home again ... and start ...

#### **v. 9-12: SHARING THE WONDER**

These great women had been perplexed, rebuked, and instructed, but now they would share what they had seen! It's impossible to know how much the women really understood at this point, but they shared what they had seen and heard, **verses 9-10**, "*and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest.*"<sup>10</sup> *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.*" So, these women, some of whom had been with Jesus for a long time now, trusted followers of Christ, rush back from the tomb and are telling the disciples what had happened ... over and over and over.

However, the "wise and lordly males" were not impressed, **verse 11**, *but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.*" They regarded the women's witness as female hysteria — nonsense and babbling. **Idiots!** ... We might say. But we probably would've done the same thing or worse, given our own sin and stupidity. Nevertheless, these were the apostles — the men over whom Jesus had prayed for an entire night before calling them. Their faith would be the foundation of the Church. Jesus had directly taught them numerous times about His death and **resurrection**. But now they dismissed the women's sharing about an empty tomb ... "*nonsense.*"

Like so many of us, **they had heard ... and not heard** God's Word. They never bothered to think that Jesus meant **exactly what He said**. We need to remember that 98 percent of the Bible is intelligible. As Mark Twain once said, "It's not what I don't understand about the Bible that bothers me. It's what I do understand!" The apostles failed to put into practice what they did understand. Jesus had earlier prayed, **John 17:17**, "*Sanctify them in the truth; Your Word is truth.*" Our growth toward spiritual maturity begins by following the Word.

And while the disciples dismissed the ranting of Mary Magdalene as idle talk and nonsense, it's very significant that in **John 20**, Christ first appears to this woman — Mary Magdalene — not to an apostle, not to the great in society, not even to the great in the church, but to this one particular woman. Christ appeared first to one who in the culture of the time was oppressed, a woman who had known great sin. What a great comfort it should be to us that Christ comes first to the poor in spirit. As **Matthew 5:3** says, "*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*" That truth will never change.

How did Mary feel at that moment? She had been on an emotional roller coaster for days, and now she was deliriously at the top. Off she went on another cross-country run to the disciples. It must have been very satisfying to say to the disciples, "Say, Peter, John, **men**, I've something to say — I've seen Jesus!" What a day it had been. Multiple trips to the tomb.

Multiple retellings. Sharing the **wonder** of the Risen Savior again and again. **Even when doubted.**

Now it's to Peter's credit that despite all their **doubt**, he checks things out for himself, **verse 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.*" If God can do this, then anything is possible.

So, what do you do? Act out of **wonder**. I don't know what you are living through, but don't sit in your **doubts**. What did Peter do? Ten disciples just sat there and thought this was nonsense. Peter had **doubts** too, but he didn't sit on his **doubt**. He got up and ran to the tomb. That is what you do, **run to the tomb**. Act out of **wonder**. Act on the **unexplainable** and then experience the miracle. God takes the impossible and makes it possible.

A lot of people think, "I have all this **doubt**. I wish I could believe this, Dave, but I have more **doubts** than faith." Well, first of all, faith is not the absence of **doubt**. I have **doubt** every day of my life. I got up this morning and I had to preach for Easter and I'm thinking, "I can't do this" ... I was dealing with **doubt**.

One of my favorite stories happens in **Mark 9**. A man came to Jesus about his boy who was suffering from some kind of evil spirit, and he asked Jesus for help, **Mark 9:21-24**, "*And Jesus asked his father, 'How long has this been happening to him?'*" *And he said, 'From childhood. <sup>22</sup> And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.'* <sup>23</sup> *And Jesus said to him, 'If you can'! All things are possible for one who believes.'* <sup>24</sup> *Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, 'I believe; help my unbelief!'*"

Do you hear that? All things are possible for one who believes. Jesus says, "Don't act out of your **doubts**, **act out of wonder**." I love what the man said because I relate to this guy. This is one of my favorite passages in the Bible. He said, "**I believe, help my unbelief**." Can you relate to that? Belief and unbelief are in all of us, but he chose to act on his belief. And **Jesus** healed his son.

And Peter's inspection led to **wonder**, and it was the beginning of true faith. He saw the empty tomb, though he didn't entirely understand it. However, he started to **wonder** about it and that would lead him to a complete Easter faith.

The Word was yet to bloom, but it had taken root. And when it did bloom, Peter became a powerhouse. Listen to his explosive sermon at Pentecost, **Acts 2:22-24**, "*Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves know— <sup>23</sup> this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. <sup>24</sup> God raised Him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for Him to be held by it.*" It's the difference between living in your **doubts** or living by faith, even a small faith, even a small faith that can't fully explain everything. So, the question is ... as you look at the empty tomb this Easter morning ...

**CLOSING REFLECTIONS: "Will you live out of doubt or wonder?" <sup>2</sup>**

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<sup>2</sup> The post-resurrection appearances of Jesus are detailed in Matthew 28:9-20; Mark 16:9-20; Luke 24:13-53; John 20:11-31; 21:1-15; Acts 1:3-12; and 1 Corinthians 15:5-7. Boice quote comes from Jesus on Trial by James Montgomery Boice and Philip Graham Ryken, page 116. If you want to read a few books about the evidence for the resurrection, let me suggest these: Risen: 50 Reasons Why the Resurrection Changed Everything by Dr. Steven Mathewson, The Case for Christ by Lee Strobel, Resurrection by Hank Hanegraaff, Who Moved the Stone? by Frank Morrison, and Evidence that Demands a Verdict, Volume 1, (updated and revised) by Josh McDowell.

You see, it's not a matter of how much faith you have. Some of you are thinking that **doubt** is so much bigger in my life than faith. Jesus said in **Matthew 17:20**, "*For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.*" It doesn't matter if most of your life is **doubt**. Everyone has **some** faith, even if it's **tiny**. Your presence here this morning says that you believe the **resurrection** of Jesus Christ is at least a possibility. If you take just that little bit of faith you have, and act on **that faith** and not your **doubt**, **anything** is possible. For nothing is impossible with God. Nothing.

I don't know what you are dealing with. You might be thinking that your marriage is dead. Your senses say, if you look at it, if you smell it, if you hear it, if you taste it, it's **dead**. Your mind knows it. There's **nothing** left in that marriage. Well, you can live out of that **doubt** or with the little bit of faith you have in the tomb being empty, you can cry out to God for **resurrection**. As Christ was resurrected, your marriage can be resurrected, your relationships can be resurrected, your spiritual life can be resurrected, your hope can be resurrected – because **resurrection** means, "*coming back from the dead.*"

A grand truth that emerges from this story is that the disciples **didn't invent the resurrection story**. At first, they neither understood it nor believed it. So how did they resist creatively imagining such a spellbinding story for the Church? They resisted because they were not myth-makers, but witnesses who were simply sharing the **wonder** of what they had seen and heard. From **John 20** we saw that the Apostle John become the first to understand and believe the **resurrection**. It says that he saw the grave wrappings and turban lying just as they had been wrapped on Jesus. The appropriate space was in between, but there was no Jesus, no body! Then John entered the tomb and "*saw and believed*" (**John 20:8**). "Peter, don't you see it? No one has done anything with the body. It's gone right through the grave clothes! Jesus is risen! He's risen! He's alive! The only reason the stone was rolled back is so we can see that Jesus is gone. Praise God! Let's go! Last one home washes the feet!" John understood what had happened.

He's alive! The great goal our text sets before us is to **wonder** and believe as Peter and John believed. If we can act on our **wonder**, our lives will be changed! **A living Christ** is an all-powerful Christ! **A living Christ** is a present Christ! **A living Christ** is a Christ who gives us life now! **A living Christ** is a Christ who gives us life in eternity! **A living Christ** is a Christ who gives victory!

The only reasonable explanation for the apostles' devotion, even at the cost of their own death, is **that they saw the empty tomb. They met their risen Lord. They came to believe the Word of God**. And the Scripture says that when Jesus came back to life on Easter Sunday He didn't show Himself to just one or two people. He showed Himself to His followers and He showed Himself to people who were not His followers ... skeptics and unbelievers and **doubters**. And He didn't show up just once. He showed up a number of times over several weeks. He had dinner with folks, and He did question and answer times. He taught and He walked with people.

And everyone who was an eyewitness to the resurrected Christ, they never forgot it. They went out and spread the word. In fact, when the Roman officials said, "You've got to stop talking about this **resurrection** stuff," they said, "We **can't** stop talking about it. We saw **the resurrected Christ**."

Church history tells us that most of the disciples died for telling the story of the

**resurrection** of Christ. People told them to stop, and they wouldn't. They lost their lives. I mean, they couldn't lie about what they had seen. They were too full of **wonder**. In his last sermon, James Montgomery Boice said, "Easter proves that Jesus is God, that He is the Savior, that death is not the end for anyone, that there is a **resurrection**. Thus, Jesus' **resurrection** proves everything that is essential to Christianity." As **1 Corinthians 15:3-4** says, "*I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me—that Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and He was raised from the dead on the third day, as the Scriptures said.*" And all who believe it, said, "Amen."

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

And that makes everything true! You need to pray.

Take a moment to do that, and then I'll close.

*Dear Heavenly Father, thank You, for giving us **Easter**. We pray for those here this morning that struggle with their **doubts**. Help them to respond to You and Your Word in faith, no matter how small. And this day, **more than any other day**, help us to know and believe the remarkable truth that was revealed to us at the **Empty Tomb**. Lord, thank You that Christ was **raised from the dead on the third day, as the Scriptures said**, proving that **all His claims are true**. Drive these truths deep in our hearts, and help us not to respond in **doubt**, but in **wonder**, this **Easter**, in the Name of Your Son, **who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever. Amen.***

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### **Luke 24:6-9**

*"He is not here, but has risen. 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." And they remembered His words, and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven **and to all the rest.**"*

*Christ is Risen!*

***He is Risen Indeed!***