

# **Sermon: Jesus Has Risen**

**Text: Luke 24:1-12**

**Gary L. Wackler**

**April 4, 2010**

**Introduction:** It had been a horrible three days, but the followers of Christ were eventually going to be vindicated and saved. And joy *would* return. Everyone, especially the women, had witnessed the terrible scenes of mockery, false testimony, prosecution, beatings, and six hours of crucifixion followed by a rushed interment by two newly acquired followers. There had been no time to even catch one's breath. No words of comfort were offered that Friday afternoon, but *Sundays* would never be the same.

On the third day following Jesus' death, on the first day of the week, there would be some unusual, although, maybe predictable responses.

## **I. The Women Were Responsible (v. 1)**

**Luke 24:1 (NIV)** <sup>1</sup>On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb.

Have you ever started out to do one thing and ended up doing something unexpected? I remember going up to Horseheads, NY just outside of Elmira to run an errand and on my way home, it started to rain. While it was raining, the sun was still shining, and where Route 17 cuts through the hills - there was the most magnificent rainbow. It went from hilltop to hilltop, a complete, full rainbow. And I remembered God's promise in the OT.

In the gray light of that Sunday morning the women were responsible:

A. By doing their work as soon as possible.

Do you suppose on the way to the tomb, the women may have been talking about better days, telling stories of their own healings and exorcisms (**Luke 8:1-3**), even remembering How Jairus' daughter had been brought back to life (**Luke 8:54-55**) or the widow's son in Nain (**Luke 7:15**)?

I have to believe they would have avoided talking about all the gory details that I've heard some preachers talk about. The fact was: Jesus was dead. The *how* is only important as it relates to fulfilling prophecy made hundreds of years before.

Have you ever seen the movie: “What Women Want” with **Mel Gibson, Helen Hunt, Marisa Tomei**? How many of you remember the scene where Gibson is doing a hot-wax treatment on his hairy legs? It is kind of like that. It is nothing you want to do, but it needs to be done to produce a good result.

The women going early to the tomb was one last way to demonstrate their devotion to Jesus:

B. By wanting to provide a complete burial preparation.

Jesus’ crucifixion had been rushed because of the fast-arriving Passover Sabbath. Once it was known Jesus was dead, his body had been asked for by Joseph of Arimathea (23:52). John’s gospel fills in the story:

**John 19:39-42 (NIV)** <sup>39</sup>He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. <sup>40</sup>Taking Jesus’ body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. <sup>41</sup>At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. <sup>42</sup>Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

But the women were arriving on Sunday morning to finish what had been started by the men. They had bought spices Mark tells us (16:1) that morning. The Greek word there is **αρωμα** (aroma). Taylor says this was “probably perfumed oils rather than aromatic herbs.” - Rienecker, p. 134

This would have helped seal up what the men had started.

Next, you’ll notice:

## **II. The Women Were Startled (vv. 2-8)**

**Luke 24:2-8 (NIV)** <sup>2</sup>They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, <sup>3</sup>but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. <sup>4</sup>While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. <sup>5</sup>In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? <sup>6</sup>He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: <sup>7</sup>“The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.”” <sup>8</sup>Then they remembered his words.

**The women were startled:**

**A. By what they saw.**

**The first thing they saw was the stone was rolled away. Mark tells us (16:3) that they had been worried about how they would be able to get the stone moved. And the stone, we know, was not rolled away so Jesus could get out, but for the soon-to-be witnesses to have access and see for themselves the tomb was empty.**

**What they saw was no Jesus anywhere.**

**What they saw next: were two men who “suddenly” appeared beside them. These men were dressed “in clothes that gleamed like lightning.” Their clothing and presence must have lit up the dark tomb. The word used to describe the clothing is similar to how Jesus is described at the transfiguration. These were not ordinary men, but angels as we see later in v. 23. They had been sent from the very presence of God and still reflected his glory.**

**The women saw themselves and their companions going to their knees in fear and amazement. This was a typical response to being in the presence of God’s messengers.**

**The women were startled:**

**B. By what they heard.**

**The angel said: “Why do you look for the living among the dead?” This was a bit of a rebuke as well as an encouragement to remember the words of Jesus. Faith comes by hearing, not miracle. And faith needs time to grow.**

**It is good to remember the words of Jesus. [Verses 6-7](#) read like a creedal statement. This is what we believe: [‘He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: <sup>7</sup>‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.](#)**

**The idea of remembering is more than being able to recite words from the past, it carries the idea of insight and finally understanding.**

**Some of you recently finished a course on how to present the “Good News” to others. The author of the program talked about the importance of “soak time.” It takes time and thought to accept the reality of the resurrection.**

When we tell others that Jesus has risen from the dead, our hearers many times can't believe it either. Someone must have taken the body, they said.

Sometimes we are all startled by what we see and hear.

**Illus.** You remember September 11, 2001, don't you? I was in St. Mary's Hospital in Peoria, Illinois. I was watching the TODAY Show when the report interrupted the normal programming. Many people could not believe their eyes. It was not until the second tower was hit by yet another airplane that people recognized what had happened. Later, news people went back to uncover clues and even words that made more sense afterward.

It took seeing and hearing and divine help to remember the importance of Jesus' words.

Once over their initial shock:

### **III. The Women Were Willing (vv. 9-12)**

**Luke 24:9-12 (NIV)** <sup>9</sup>When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. <sup>10</sup>It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. <sup>11</sup>But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. <sup>12</sup>Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

The women were willing:

A. To be rejected.

Under Jewish law, women were not considered qualified as witnesses (William Lane, *Commentary on the Gospel of Mark* [Eerdmans], p. 589).

In their culture and even in some circles today a woman's testimony is not always considered equal with that of a man's. Even though our tradition does not allow for females to preach or be elders, that is not true in other groups.

I know of a number of examples in this area where the denomination ordains women, and still there are those of both genders who would prefer a man as their minister or pastor. Yet here in our text, being witnesses who were also female was not the issue. It was the report that seemed like "nonsense." The word translated "nonsense" (*ληρος*) means idle talk. In medical language it was used to describe the patient who was talking wildly and was delirious. - see Rienecker, p. 214

**The women were willing:**

**B. To be a catalyst for investigation.**

No matter how amazing the story seemed, Peter was instigated to go check it out for himself so he could set this fantastic story to rest.

Peter runs to the tomb (with another disciple, **John 20:3**), and Peter goes in to see what he can see. Jesus was not there - just as it had been reported. What was there: was strips of cloth lying there on the stone shelf where Jesus' body had been placed. And Peter was still uncertain as to what had transpired. In fact, in **verse 12**, the word translated "wondering" in the NIV, I believe is a little weak. The Greek word (ἠπιστοῦν, from ἀπιστεῶ) is imperfect tense and could easily have read that Peter continued *not* to believe or have faith.

I know it does not say, but I have to believe there would have been questions for Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus to verify their part in Jesus' burial and the placement of the stone to seal the tomb.

Faith comes through God from the testimony of reliable witnesses, but it blooms and bears fruit through the results of personal investigation. Believers must tell the story of Jesus' resurrection no matter how unbelievable it may sound. For some it will be just what is needed to push them to investigate the church's claims for themselves.

**Conclusion:** Something changed in the minds of these early investigators. The disciples preached an empty tomb and a risen Christ. Jews who believed in the holiness of the sabbath (Saturday) were very soon worshipping on a work day (Sunday), the first day of the week. It became known as the Lord's Day.

**I John 1:1-4 (NIV)** <sup>1</sup>That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. <sup>2</sup>The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. <sup>3</sup>We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup>We write this to make our (your) joy complete.

**"If Christ is raised, nothing else matters. If Christ is not raised, nothing matters."**  
—Jaroslav Pelikan

**“Nothing matters but Christ’s resurrection. And because nothing matters but Christ’s resurrection, everyone and everything matter.”** –Robert Lowery

**Darrell Bock writes, “Without resurrection, Christianity is just another human approach to reach God; it is emptied of transforming power and hope; it is a mere shell, not worth the energy one devotes to it... To believe in Christ is to believe not merely in his example, but in the power of his resurrection to grant new life” (*Luke* [Baker], 2:1881).**

**There is still plenty of skepticism in the modern world regarding the historical resurrection of Jesus Christ. We should not be surprised by that because even Jesus’ closest friends took a while to take it all in and believe. But one thing is clear:**

**“The resurrection was not created by the church; rather the church was created by the resurrection.” Bock, *Luke*, p. 606**

**God raised Jesus from the dead. When we put our faith in God through Jesus, we believe the same experience awaits us.**