

# Jesus is alive!

Luke 24:1-12

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Can you imagine what it must have been like for the followers of Jesus on Saturday, the day after Jesus had been crucified? All was lost. Jesus was dead. They had given up everything to follow Jesus. Everything in them had sensed that He was truly who He said He was. They believed with all of their hearts that He was the promised Messiah and Savior who had been prophesied about for hundreds, even thousands of years.

Yes, they had run away when Jesus was arrested. Yes, they feared death as much as the next person, but they truly believed. Every verse of prophecy that had been foretold about the Messiah came true in the life of Jesus Christ. It was beyond imagination.

For those who had ears to hear and eyes to see there was no mistaking that Jesus Christ was the promised Messiah. He made the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to walk and the mute to speak. In addition He had turned water to wine. He had fed thousands with just a few loaves and fish. He healed a leper. He cast out demons. He calmed the sea. He even raised the dead to life again. Truly the Savior had come. . . And now He was dead.

It must have been like a nightmare that you keep trying to wake up from, but you can't. Jesus of Nazareth, their Messiah, the Messiah, was dead.

Now what? How could this have happened? He was God in the flesh. Even though Jesus had warned them, it was as if they never saw it coming (John 2:18-22; Matthew 12:39-40; Matthew 16:21; Matthew 27:62-64).

Even with the fulfillment of all of the Messianic Prophecies and Jesus' predictions of His own death, burial and resurrection, Jesus' followers must have been devastated on that Saturday as Jesus Christ lay dead in the tomb.

Have you ever experienced a "Saturday" in your life when everything goes wrong and you are devastated? When God seems to be gone and life seems to be hopeless? In those moments what do we do? We climb into the loving arms of God and wait.

So there they were, in hiding. Scared for their own lives and devastated that Jesus was gone. But then we read about the courageous women who, regardless of fear, went to the tomb on Sunday morning to put spices on Jesus' body.

Luke 24:1-12 says it like this:

*"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."*

They remembered. They were familiar with the prophecies. They had heard Jesus' words about his upcoming death, burial and resurrection, but in the midst of the struggle and devastation they had "forgotten" the truth that they had built their lives upon.

So many times we do the same. Life has suddenly become so difficult that we focus our attention on the storm that rages around us and we forget the rock that our life is built upon (Matthew 7:24-27). We forget the promises of Christ and the character of God. We begin to worry and doubt like one who has no God, but that is not who we are. We will never be left alone.

Jesus was alive! It did not happen in secret where there would be no witnesses. The Apostle Paul writes in Acts 15:3-6:

*"He (Jesus) appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive."*

In Acts 1:3 Luke adds this:

*"He (Jesus) presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God."*

Sin had been paid for and Jesus had emerged victorious. Death has been conquered, but what does that mean for us?

Christ's resurrection affects the way we face death. Throughout history this has been the ongoing struggle of mankind. We want to live forever. Death is our ultimate enemy. Death is no respecter of man. Regardless of money, or power, or fame, or beauty, or intelligence, or personality, everyone will die. . . unless Christ returns first. That should bring fear to our hearts because God is holy and we are not. What should a holy and just God do with people like us? That should be a terrifying question. Because of our lust, greed, pride, gossip, lying, self-righteousness, selfishness and unbelief, what should a just God do to sinful people like us?

*"We all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)*

*"We are each destined to die once and then face judgment." (Hebrews 9:27)*

That thought of judgment should terrify us, but John 5:24 says this: *"Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life."*

Most people hate, fear and despise death, and rightfully so. . . but as followers of Christ **that is not who we are.**

I once spoke with a retired pastor who had done many funerals. He told me that the worst hopelessness and worst grief that he had seen was those who die without Christ. There is nothing more that can be done. Yes, you can minister to the family and share the hope of salvation for those who attend the funeral, but for the one who has died there is utter hopelessness.

But for those of us who believe in Jesus Christ we do not come into judgment. We have passed from death to life.

In John 11:25-26 Jesus said, *"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"*

As followers of Christ we have already crossed over from death unto life (John 5:24). Yes, there will be a day that this temporal physical body will cease to function and we must trust that God's grace will be sufficient to carry us through that day. At the same time we must stand on the fact that our spirit, which was dead in sin, is now alive in Christ and will live forever. For every follower of Christ who has been born again, eternal life has already begun. Yes, this shell of a body will die, but our spirit will pass from this life to the next.

2 Timothy 1 tells of, *"Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."*

Our confidence is in that fact that our heavenly Father who raised Jesus from the dead is able to raise us from the dead. He has proven his dominion over death and sin and promised salvation through Jesus Christ. This is the answer to man's greatest need. We no longer have to be afraid.

*“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” (Romans 8:11).*

*“God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power” (1 Corinthians 6:14).*

Eternal life has already begun and the Father will raise us up as He did Christ. Because of this, live for eternity. Remember the truths we know. Persevere through “Saturday” trusting God’s faithfulness. We don’t need to fear death as others do. We have passed from death unto life. Rejoice! Jesus Christ has risen indeed!