

The Sunday of JESUS' PASSION WEEK, April 12, 2020

Turn off the outside "noise" for a couple of minutes and consider this message from God's Word.
I am praying that it calms your spirit and encourages your heart.



**"Why do you look for THE LIVING among the dead?
He is not here;
HE HAS RISEN!
LUKE 24:5-6 (NIV)**

TWO DAYS AGO was GOOD FRIDAY. A day we **weep**.

One day ago was HOLY SATURDAY. A day we **wait**.

Today is the Third Day. It's EASTER SUNDAY! **On this day, we wonder!**

And we **celebrate**: **"Christ is RISEN! He is RISEN *Indeed*, and ALIVE Forevermore!**

Listen again to Luke's account of the Resurrection of Jesus.

LUKE 24 (TNIV)

¹On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and **went to the tomb.** ²**They found the stone rolled away from the tomb,** ³**but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.**

⁴While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. ⁵In 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? ⁶*He is not here; HE HAS RISEN! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ⁷'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'*"**

⁸**Then they remembered his words.**

⁹ When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others.

¹⁰ It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles.

¹¹ *But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.*

¹² *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 world's leading New Testament scholar Tom Wright wrote:

"We shouldn't be surprised, then, at how surprised they were on the first Easter morning. It wasn't just a lack of faith that had stopped them understanding what Jesus had said in Galilee about his rising again. It was simply that nobody had ever dreamed that one single living person would be killed stone dead and then raised to a new sort of bodily life the other side of the grave, while the rest of the world carried on as before."

TOM WRIGHT, *Luke for Everyone*

Just so.

Wright continues: "The women, obviously, weren't expecting it. They knew well enough that dead people remained dead.

The eleven (the Twelve without Judas...) certainly weren't expecting it."

And the Twelve didn't believe the women's account.

"If Luke had been making this story up a generation or more after the event, as people sometimes suggest, not only would he not have had women going first to the tomb (women were not regarded as credible witnesses in the ancient world, as this story itself bears out); he would have had the apostles believe the story at once, ready to be models of faith and to lead the young church into God's future. Not so: it seemed to them a silly fantasy, exactly the sort of thing (they will have thought) that you'd expect from a few women crazy with grief and lack of sleep."

So what is happening here?

"The opening mood of Easter morning, then, is one of surprise, astonishment, fear and confusion. Yes, Jesus did say something like this would occur; he told us so all right. But we still don't know what's going on, what it all means, what will happen next...."

**Easter is always a surprise,
whether we meet it in celebrating the feast itself,
or in the sudden surges of God's grace
overturning tragedy in our own lives or in the world."**

TOM WRIGHT, *Luke for Everyone*

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May the shock and surprise of Easter morning wash over you again today. May "the sudden surges of God's grace" touch and bless you in new and fresh ways today!

Pastor Doug

P.S. Can't wait to "see" you this morning at 10:30 A.M. for our first **online EASTER CELEBRATION!** Join us at www.bethanyonline.net and then select the link to either FACEBOOK LIVE or YOUTUBE LIVE. Please be praying for God to pour out His love, kindness and grace on our guests and visitors today!

FOR FURTHER STUDY, INVESTIGATION & REFLECTION

WILL YOU CHECK OUT THE EVIDENCE? Many others have!

MARK 15:39 (NIV)

And when THE CENTURION, **WHO STOOD THERE IN FRONT OF JESUS, SAW HOW HE DIED**, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"

MICHAEL R. LICONA, *The Resurrection of Jesus: A New Historiographical Approach* (IVP Academic 2010), 718 pgs. Scholarly.

N.T. WRIGHT, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (CHRISTIAN ORIGINS & THE QUESTION OF GOD, VOL. 3) (Fortress Press 2003), 740 pgs. Scholarly.

N.T. WRIGHT, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, & the Mission of the Church* (HarperOne 2008), 352 pgs. More accessible than the above.

CRAIG A. EVANS & N.T. WRIGHT, *Jesus, the Final Days: What Really Happened* (Westminster John Knox 2009), 128 pgs. Very readable.

LEE STROBEL, *The Case for the Resurrection: Investigating the Evidence for Belief* (Zondervan 2010), 96 pgs. A former journalist examines the evidence.

LEE STROBEL, *The Case for the Resurrection of Christ*. [VIDEO.]
Ex-atheist Lee Strobel explains his conversion to Christianity by investigating the resurrection of Christ.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z5wKYcK_kUs

LEE STROBEL, *The Case for Christ: A Journalist's Personal Investigation of the Evidence for Jesus* (Zondervan 1998), 304 pgs. A great read.

LEE STROBEL, *The Case for the Real Jesus: A Journalist Investigates Current Attacks on the Identity of Jesus* (Zondervan 2007), 320 pgs. Follows up the previous book.

JOHN DICKSON, *A Doubter's Guide to Jesus: An Introduction to the Man from Nazareth for Believers & Skeptics* (Zondervan Academic, 2018), 252 pgs. Tim Keller said of this book that "it promises remarkably balanced, even-handed, fair-minded presentations of Christian beliefs about Jesus Christ — all deeply informed by the primary sources. I can't recommend this book enough."

MICHAEL GREEN, *The Day Death Died: Did Jesus Christ Really Rise From the Dead?* (InterVarsity Press 1982), 121 pgs. Easy to read.

MICHAEL GREEN, *The Empty Cross of Jesus* (InterVarsity Press 1984), 249 pgs. Thought-provoking.

MICHAEL GREEN, *Jesus for Skeptics* (a bethinking book) (SPCK, 2013), 100 pgs. A clear and simple read. Green said, "I have written this book because I am tired of meeting people who dismiss Jesus Christ with a wave of the hand but have never looked into the evidence for themselves. There are many weighty tomes on the subject. I wanted to offer you something brief but accurate and arresting. You must decide whether or not I have succeeded."

MICHAEL GREEN, *Sceptical about the Resurrection: Isn't That Wishful Thinking?* [VIDEO.]
Clear, compelling. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sBZ5Z_4edsE

P.S. We would love to hear from you! How are you doing right now? And we would love to pray for you! Email us at info@bethanyonline.net

P.P.S. Keep checking our "ENCOURAGEMENT FOR TODAY" at www.bethanyonline.net — we will try to post fresh encouragement **every day** during this crisis!

P.P.P.S. And watch our **LIVE-STREAM Worship Service** this coming Sunday at 10:30 A.M. for more encouragement.