

Today we celebrate the defeat of death. Jesus' resurrection gives us hope that we will live forever.

Hope is a light in the darkness of our present circumstances. This week we tried to envision the darkness and hopelessness in our Holy Thursday and Good Friday events. Jesus died a real death, crying out 'Father, I place my life in your hands (Lk 23:46 MSG)! Those who watched 'were overcome with grief (Lk 23:48 MSG).'

Those three days between Friday and Sunday were very confusing and discouraging for Jesus' followers. These men and women have left everything to follow Jesus, now they were scattered, alone, and thought they had been deceived or misjudged Jesus.

- Jesus tried to prepare his disciples for his death. For example, the night he was betrayed, he said 'You will grieve, but your grief will suddenly turn to wonderful joy. ²¹ It will be like a woman suffering the pains of labor. When her child is born, her anguish gives way to joy because she has brought a new baby into the world. ²² So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again; then you will rejoice, and no one can rob you of that joy (Jn 16:20-22 NLT).' He tried to get them to look beyond the darkness and pain of the cross, but to them, death was final.

Let's pause for a moment. I would like to give an important word-picture for today's message. This winter on a Sunday morning we had a pressure valve failure in our Administration Building. That basement stores a lot of stuff for various ministries; it is very full and messy. There was 2-3" of water throughout the basement.



- We have such a great church. Immediately someone shut off the water. Then, after church, members of the outreach team and others went over and got most of the valuable items off the ground.
- The next day an army of volunteers showed up to sort through the mess, throw things away, and get the basement dry and clean.
- A professional fixed the faulty valve. We took measures so that the basement will not flood again.
- Like a master plumber, Jesus came to 'fix the broken' pipes of our life. But more than 'fix' our broken pipes, Jesus' resurrection **makes us new** so we can live a life of joy that brings glory to God. We are purposefully created.

In today's message we are going to look at Luke chapter 24.

Joy of the Resurrection

Luke 24



Since Christmas we have used some tools from literary analysis and discovered that Luke wants us to see an underlying theme of joy in Luke-Acts.

- I have had a lot of fun looking at joy in Luke-Acts; it is a major underlying theme.
- Today, the disciples' fear, confusion, and doubt turned to 'great joy' because of the resurrection.

Today, the finale, we will look at four resurrection appearances in Luke 24.

- Luke is not concerned with a timeline. He makes it sound like all four of today's stories occurred on the same day, when we know it occurred over at least 40 days.
- Like a good storyteller, he is building to crescendo: great joy!!!

Joy is a very **important emotion** and attitude. Over these four months, I created a list that helps us understand why joy is important. You have seen this list before, but not in this order.

Joy is ...

- A life connected to Jesus. **We were created for joy**. Such joy is only found in relationship with God. 'Remain in my love ... I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your *joy may be complete* (Jn 15:11 NIV).' We were created for joy and relationship with God.
- Begins with repentance. 'There is joy in the presence of God's angels when even one sinner repents (Lk 15:10 NLT).' Joy starts when, like the prodigal son, we turn from our sins and return to what we were created to be.
- Expressed in community.¹ Joy can *only* be expressed in relationships. You can be happy by yourself, but deep joy is communal. 'Rejoice *with me* (Lk 15:6, 9) ... *We must celebrate* (v. 23 NLT).'

¹ See, Pamela Ebstyn King and Frederic Defoy, 'Joy as a Virtue: The Means and Ends of Joy', in *Journal of Psychology and Theology* (2020), 1-24.

- Attractional. Joy is **missional**. We *need to be people* who have an attractional joy. ‘They stood there in disbelief, filled with joy and wonder ...⁴⁸ You are witnesses of all these things. (Lk 24:41, 48 NLT).’
- A **downpayment of our future**. Joy is the evidence of God’s kingdom breaking in and a promise of what is to come. ‘You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you *forever* (Ps 16:11 NLT).’ **God’s kingdom is both here and yet is not fully here until the end of time.**

Today’s stories begin with a spark of hope.

1. The Women, Lk 24:1-12.

‘But very early on Sunday morning the women went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. ²They found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. ³So they went in, but they didn’t find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴As they stood there puzzled, two men suddenly appeared to them, clothed in dazzling robes. ⁵The women were terrified and bowed with their faces to the ground (Lk 24:1-5a NLT).’

Numerous times Luke ‘portrays people transitioning from fear to great joy.’² Luke uses the phrase ‘great joy’ at the beginning and end of Jesus’ story in Luke. For example, (both at one time are fine, Ray).

- Angel to the terrified shepherds – ‘I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people (Lk 2:10 NLT).’
- The people at the ascension – ‘They worshiped him and then returned to Jerusalem filled with great joy (Lk 24:52 NLT).’ The disciples being filled with great joy is the climax and finale of the biography.

‘Then the men asked, “Why are you looking among the dead for someone who is alive? ⁶He isn’t here! He is risen from the dead! Remember what he told you back in Galilee, ⁷that the Son of Man must be betrayed into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and that he would rise again on the third day.” ⁸Then they remembered that he had said this (Lk 24:5b-8 NLT).’

- The appearance of the angels, the explanation of the empty tomb, and the rebuke of looking for Jesus among the dead, *changes* their fear to hope.
- Though the text does not mention joy, their actions reveal a radical change.

They remembered what Jesus taught. At the time, Jesus’ teaching sounded so strange they dismissed it. But like a burst of revelation, they understood ...

² J. Lyle Story, *Joyous Encounters: Discovering the Happy Affections in Luke-Acts* (New York, NY: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2018), 115.

- ‘The Son of Man came ... to give his life as a ransom for many (Mk 10:45 NLT).’ – Just like the Passover lamb, Jesus took their sins to the cross.
- Like plumbing, Jesus’ death and resurrection fixes the problem of sin.³ ‘For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith ... it is the gift of God (Ep 2:8 NIV).’ Praise God!
- ‘For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life (Jn 3:16 NIV).’ – Their sins are forgiven because they believed.

Wonderful. The broken plumbing of our lives is fixed, but why? For what purpose are we fixed?

- Jesus’ resurrection makes us new so we can live a life of joy that brings glory to God. We are made new to love God and to be loved by him.
- ‘So that my joy may be in you and that your *joy may be complete* (Jn 15:11 NIV).’
- ‘For we are God’s handiwork ... to do good works (Ep 2:10 NIV).’

‘So they rushed back from the tomb to tell his eleven disciples—and everyone else—what had happened.¹⁰ It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and several other women who told the apostles what had happened.¹¹ But the story sounded like nonsense to the men, so they didn’t believe it (Lk 24:9-11 NLT).’

- Luke contrasts the believing women – who had seen an empty tomb and seen the angels – with ‘the dismissive attitude of the male disciples.’⁴

‘However, Peter jumped up and ran to the tomb to look. Stooping, he peered in and saw the empty linen wrappings; then he went home again, wondering what had happened (Lk 24:12 NLT).’

- Hope is powerful.
- ‘Something about the women’s joyful report prompted Peter to satisfy his curiosity ... he took the women’s report seriously.’⁵
- Clearly, there is a double standard here as later, v. 34, the disciples believe that Jesus had appeared to Peter.

The next story highlights a sudden appearance and disappearance of Jesus.

2. Two Men, Lk 24:13-35.

‘That same day two of Jesus’ followers were walking to the village of Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem.¹⁴ As they walked along they were talking about everything that had happened.¹⁵ As they talked and discussed these things, Jesus himself suddenly came and began walking with them.¹⁶ But God kept them from recognizing him (Lk 24:13-16 NLT).’

³ Makoto Fujimura, *Art and Faith: A Theology of Making* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2020), 30.

⁴ Story, *Joyous Encounters*, 119.

⁵ Story, *Joyous Encounters*, 120.

- Though they are talking about Jesus, they do not recognize him. Luke frames the mystery of them not recognizing Jesus, so there is a moment of revelation.

Jesus walked with them and asked them what they were talking about. They replied ...

- Haven't you heard, v. 18.
- He was a prophet and teacher who did powerful miracles, v. 19.
- He was put to death on a cross by our Jewish religious leaders, v. 20.
- We hoped he was the Messiah, v. 21.

“Then some women from our group of his followers were at his tomb early this morning, and they came back with an *amazing report*.²³ They said his body was missing, and they had seen angels who told them Jesus is alive! ²⁴Some of our men ran out to see, and sure enough, his body was gone, just as the women had said.” ²⁵ Then Jesus said to them, “You foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures. ²⁶ Wasn't it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his glory?” ²⁷ Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself (Lk 24:22-27 NLT).’

- Amazing report in v. 22 is literally an ‘astonishing report.’
- **Next Sunday**, I am beginning a series that looks at questions a skeptic might have. It is easy to have questions like, ‘how do we know Jesus rose from the grave?’ Invite your friends or children who doubt.
- Knowing that the sealed and guarded tomb was empty is astonishing.
- Jesus goes back through the Scriptures and explains that the Messiah would have to die and would be raised from the dead.

They entered Emmaus and sat down for a meal. ‘He took the bread and blessed it. Then he broke it and gave it to them. ³¹ Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And at that moment he disappeared! ³² They said to each other, “Didn't our hearts burn within us as he talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?” ³³ And within the hour they were on their way back to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven disciples and the others who had gathered with them, ³⁴ who said, “The Lord has really risen! He appeared to Peter (Lk 24:30-34 NLT).”’

- Again, no mention of joy, but their ‘hearts burnt within’ as Jesus spoke.
- Hope – that powerful emotion - like a burning ember in their hearts was being fanned into flame. First the empty tomb, women’s testimony, the Scriptures, and the sudden revelation and disappearance – wow!
- Like the women, revelation prompts action. Within the hour, even though it was late and dangerous, they hurried back to Jerusalem.

In Luke’s retelling so far, there is a brief appearance of the risen Jesus, and then he disappears. The next story is the climax.

3. The Disciples, Lk 24:35-49.

'Then the two from Emmaus told their story of how Jesus had appeared to them as they were walking along the road, and how they had recognized him as he was breaking the bread. ³⁶ And just as they were telling about it, Jesus himself was suddenly standing there among them. "Peace be with you," he said. ³⁷ But the whole group was startled and frightened, thinking they were seeing a ghost! ³⁸ "Why are you frightened?" he asked. "Why are your hearts filled with doubt? ³⁹ Look at my hands. Look at my feet. You can see that it's really me. Touch me and make sure that I am not a ghost, because ghosts don't have bodies, as you see that I do." ⁴⁰ As he spoke, he showed them his hands and his feet (Lk 24:35-40 NLT).'

- They are frightened and believe they **are seeing a ghost**.
- Jesus **proves he is not** a ghost by showing them his hands and feet, by eating with them, and by explaining the Scriptures to them.

'Still they stood there in disbelief, filled with joy and wonder (Lk 24:41 NLT).'

- They are 'too overwhelmed to really "believe,"'⁶ they have so many emotions – among them joy.
- Jesus is right here with them, but in a new way. The old Jesus has been recreated – we can see the wounds – but he is new.
- The Bible says that anyone who believes that Jesus died for their sins, is a 'new creation: The old has gone, the new is here (2Co 5:17 NIV)'

It was also written that this message would be proclaimed in the authority of his name to all the nations, beginning in Jerusalem: 'There is forgiveness of sins for all who repent.' ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of all these things. ⁴⁹ "And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as my Father promised. But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven (Lk 24:47-49 NLT).''

- Luke ties the resurrection to the mission of new life.

My plumbing word-picture is so **insufficient** compared to the great grace that has been lavished on us (Ep 1:8). We are made new, we are 'fixed,' so ...

- That the **Holy Spirit can empower** us to help others be fixed.
- That the new heavens and earth **will be populated with a new and 'fixed' people** – people whose imperfections are covered in the blood of Jesus.
- Jesus' resurrection makes us new so we can live a life of joy that brings glory to God.

Jesus showed himself for forty days (Acts 1:3), but here Luke is racing towards this finale:

⁶ Story, *Joyous Encounters*, 126.

4. The Ascension, Lk 24:50-53.

'Then Jesus led them to Bethany, and lifting his hands to heaven, he blessed them. ⁵¹ While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up to heaven. ⁵² So they worshiped him and then returned to Jerusalem filled with great joy. ⁵³ And they spent all of their time in the Temple, praising God (Lk 24:50-53 NLT).'

- Note: 'great joy,' v. 52. Luke's finale is great joy.
- Jesus promised to be with them always (Mt 28:20), so his being taken up into heaven 'is not so much an absence as it is a presence in a new and more powerful mode.'
- Their 'great joy' overcomes their sadness at the physical loss of the risen Jesus. Their joy now rests on a foundation that no trouble or sorrow can shake

Conclusion.

Holy week is busy for pastors. I had two flat tires, forcing us to meet some local Uber drivers. The first one on Monday – a nail - required me to buy four new tires due to wear and tire rot. Thursday night I had a low-pressure warning on one of the tires. I brought it back. It was a bad seal between the rim and the tire.

Maybe you are here and your life is broken and in need of repair. Paul wrote, 'For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. ²⁴ Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus (Ro 3:23-24a NLT).'

 (Keep slide up until next passage please).

- There is nothing to be embarrassed about – everyone in this room is broken.
- That second clause, 'falling short of God's glorious standard,' is what I tried to alert you to today. We will get to that in a moment.
- Verse 24 is about Jesus 'fixing' our sin issue.

The wonderful news is that Jesus delights in fixing our broken lives. 'If we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness (1Jn 1:9 NLT).'

When you get the point of giving up trying to repair yourself and ask God for His help, then there is hope. The Bible calls it repentance or dying to self. God extends his grace and 'makes us right.' This is why Jesus went to cross and died. He took all our failures upon Himself and paid the penalty.

But just that broken valve was not made to just be repaired, nor were my flat tires manufactures just to be repaired, you and I were created for a wonderful purpose: Jesus' resurrection makes us new so we can live a life of joy that brings glory to God.

John, one of the disciples closest to Jesus, wrote: 'Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is (1Jn 3:2 NIV).'

Altar Call.

Prayer.