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(Luke 24)

**Intro.** Seeing all these children help lead us in worship this morning reminds me of the way some kids perceive Easter. Five-year-old Brian had a pivotal verse to recite in an Easter program: “*He is not here, he is risen*” (Luke 24:6). Unfortunately, he could not remember what to say, and the director had to quietly remind him of his line. He then confidently grabbed the microphone and triumphantly shouted, “He’s not here; He’s in prison!” (*Mature Living*, April 2011). Similarly, a man and his five-year old son were driving past a cemetery and noticed a large pile of dirt next to a freshly dug grave when the little boy said, “Look, Dad, one got out!” Next time you drive past a cemetery, think of the One Whom the grave could not hold. As we continue our series today on “Jesus the Messiah,” we look at Luke 24 and “The Resurrection of Jesus the Messiah.”

Theme: Jesus’ resurrection

Background: The previous week in the life of our Lord was a busy one as He entered Jerusalem on a donkey, proclaimed as the King by the people. He cleared the temple of the money-changers, stumped the religious leaders with His questions, preached against their hypocrisy, taught the disciples about the end-times, took the Last Supper with His disciples & prayed in the garden, was betrayed by Judas, arrested, tried, crucified & buried.

➤ You know this story well, so let me just make a **few observations about Jesus’ crucifixion & resurrection:**

**1. Don’t be surprised about the empty tomb because the Messiah had to be crucified before He would rise just as Jesus said (24:6-7)**

- On 3 different occasions, Jesus told His disciples that He would be killed & rise on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day (Luke 9:22, 44; 18:32-33)
- Jesus knew His destiny—this was the sole reason for His coming to earth—to die for the sins of the world

Illus: Many in our world make a big deal about Nostradamus, the 16<sup>th</sup>-century French seer known for making numerous prophecies. The problem with his prophecies is they are so cryptic, leaving interpreters to force a number of fulfillments. Jesus, however, was crystal clear about being handed over to be beaten, flogged, killed & then rise from the dead

**2. Don’t be surprised about the empty tomb because the Messiah had to suffer before entering His glory just as the Scriptures say (24:22-27)**

- These two men on the road to Emmaus knew all about what Jesus did & even heard a report from the women about His resurrection, but they hadn’t seen Him so they were doubtful these things were true
- When you read the OT Scriptures, you come across prophecies about the Messiah’s suffering, as found in Psalm 22; Isaiah 53; Zechariah 13—the vast majority of Jews have been taught to overlook these prophecies in favor of the ruling Messiah

Illus: Oftentimes in life we see humility come before victory, whether a player or team will come short one year only to learn from it & win it all the next (the great hope of the Chicago Cubs fans is that more than 100 years of humility will eventually end in victory, but they shouldn’t get their hopes up!). The Messiah came in humility the 1<sup>st</sup> time & will come in victory the 2<sup>nd</sup> time, but if you are waiting to trust Him, it will be too late when He comes again

**3. Don't be surprised by Jesus' appearances because they are proof of the Messiah's resurrection just as the Scriptures say (24:36-46)**

- Not only did Jesus explain verses about His suffering as the Messiah, but He also pointed to verses about His resurrection, which probably included Psalm 16:10; Isaiah 53:10-12; Daniel 12:2; Jonah & others
- Many critics of Christianity try to dismiss the resurrection, but it isn't that we just believe in an empty tomb, but there were numerous appearances of the risen Lord to others—Mary Magdalene, Peter, most of the disciples without Thomas, then those with Thomas, on the Sea of Galilee, to some 500 at once, to Paul & more

Illus: Some critics try to claim mass hallucinations, but psychologists tell us groups of people don't have the same hallucination. Moreover, the disciples actually touched Him, so they weren't hallucinating.

**4. Don't be silent about these things concerning the crucifixion & resurrection of Jesus the Messiah (24:47-49)**

- The best kept secret about the resurrection of Jesus is that most of His followers aren't telling people today & yet we've been commissioned by our Lord to do that very thing!
- Notice how repentance & forgiveness of sins come through the proclamation of the good news of Jesus' sacrificial death & glorious resurrection—you aren't forgiven simply because Jesus died for your sins, you must hear the story & respond with repentance in order for forgiveness to be granted

Illus: The British minister, W. E. Sangster, began to lose his voice and mobility in the mid-1950s. He had a disease that caused progressive muscular atrophy. He recognized the end was near, so he threw himself into writing and praying. In the midst of his suffering he pleaded, "Let me stay in the struggle, Lord. I don't mind if I can no longer be a general, but give me just a regiment to lead." Sangster's voice eventually failed completely, and his legs became useless. On Easter morning just a few weeks before his death, he took a pen and shakily wrote his daughter a letter. In it he said, "It is terrible to wake up on Easter morning and have no voice with which to shout, 'He is risen!'—but it would be still more terrible to have a voice and not want to shout." (Zuck, *The Speaker's Quote Book*)

- Christ has given His people the power of the Spirit to tell this good news, so let's be faithful & spread the message with our voices while there is still time!

**Conc.** A story is told of an African Muslim who became a Christian. His friends asked, "Why have you become a Christian?" He answered, "Well, it's like this. Suppose you were going down the road and suddenly the road forked in two directions, and you didn't know which way to go. There at the fork were two men, one dead and one alive—who would you ask which way to go?" (Henry & Mel Blackaby, *Experiencing the Resurrection*). So who will you trust? The world is full of religious leaders who have offered their best wisdom only to end up in a grave & then you have Jesus the Messiah who lived a sinless life, gave His life in the place of sinners & then rose from the dead to prove He is the Messiah & Lord. Will you turn from your sins & trust in Him?