

THE RESURRECTION

Scripture: Luke 24:1–12

Today, you're going to hear about a moment that changed everything. And it's amazing! Because it was the moment God flipped the script on death. He proved, Jesus was who He claimed to be - His Son. And it confirmed, Jesus was Messiah, the Savior of the world. Now, anyone can die! But to come back from the dead? The bodily resurrection of Jesus was how God brought death to a whole different level. Without Easter, Jesus could be remembered just as a good teacher. Or a moral leader. But, because He rose from the dead, it changed everything! 1 Corinthians 15:14 says, *"If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith."* Before Easter, death was the end of everything! But when He walked out of that tomb, that changed the script!

Now, I am going to describe Jesus' tomb in order to help bring His resurrection story to life. Based on Scripture and archaeology, Jesus' tomb was cut from a solid rock. It wasn't like a modern grave dug into the ground 6 feet deep. That's where we get the phrase "six feet under." An earthen grave is 3 feet wide and 7 feet long to fit a standard adult casket. Originally, six feet deep was enough to protect a body from animals and reduce the risk of disease being spread. But Jesus was buried in a rock-cut tomb. Not an earth-dug grave. It had a low entrance through which you had to stoop to enter. It had inner chambers where bodies were laid in burial cloths on stone benches. Family tombs had space for multiple burials.

Jesus' tomb was a borrowed tomb that belonged to Joseph of Arimathea, a wealthy man who gave Jesus a dignified burial fit for a king. Joseph was a respected member of the Sanhedrin, the highest Jewish ruling council. It was a mix between a Supreme Court, a Senate, and a religious council that held religious, legal, and political authority over Jewish life, especially in Jerusalem. Joseph of Arimathea was a secret follower of Jesus, so offering his personal tomb was a bold, honorable act. Luke tells us Joseph of Arimathea, lovingly buried Jesus' body with care, wrapping Him in a linen cloth, a common Jewish burial custom. (23:50–53)

Many believe a linen cloth about 14 feet long and 3.5 feet wide that is currently kept in the Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist in Turin, Italy, is the burial shroud of Jesus. The Shroud of Turin bears the faint image of a crucified man. The front and back image appears to have suffered crucifixion, with wounds on the wrists and feet, bloodstains around the head that suggest a crown of thorns. A pierced side and whip marks are consistent with Roman flogging.

Now, the fact that the tomb was new and unused, fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 53:9. It put emphasis on the sacredness of Jesus' burial. *"He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death, though He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth."* To seal the tomb, a large, round stone in a carved groove was rolled across the tomb entrance. It would have taken several strong men to move it. The Gospel of Matthew says Roman guards were placed at the tomb. (Matthew 27:65–66) And the stone was sealed to prevent tampering. So, when the women found the stone was rolled away, it wasn't just surprising. It was shocking! It cried out: *Something Divine has happened here!* A place of death had become a *Symbol of Life*.

And when the women entered the tomb, they didn't find silence and sorrow. They found two men standing beside them who were in clothes that gleamed like lightning saying: *"He is not here; He has risen!"* (Luke 24:6) Remember, that tomb was to be the final stop. But God turned it into the launchpad of hope! Because the most important thing about Jesus' tomb was, it was *empty!*

Now you can visit tombs of kings, prophets, and religious leaders around the world that are filled with relics and mummified bodies. But the tomb of Jesus Christ? There's nothing there! Because He lives! And because He lives, we have hope beyond this life. Christians don't just believe in life after death. Christians believe in the bodily resurrection. Real, restored, eternal life! *"Death has been swallowed up in victory."* (1 Corinthians 15:54) Because on the cross, Jesus paid for your sin. And Easter is the receipt! It shows your payment has cleared. The resurrection means your forgiveness is real! You're not stuck in guilt or shame any longer. You're free!

But let's get real. Life can be hard. Grief. Loss. Injustice. Pain everywhere. But Easter says, *"Death is not the end of your story. God is making all things new!"* You see, hope isn't just a dream. Hope is secured by an empty tomb. It changed what's possible for you. It turned tragedy into triumph. Sorrow into joy. Fear into faith. And the world has never been the same since! So, early in the morning, on the first day of the week when the air was still heavy with sorrow, those three women went to the tomb not with hope. But with grief. They carried spices. Not for celebration. But for embalming. Their world had ended on Friday. But, God was just getting started. These women didn't have all the answers. But they had love! Because in their sorrow, they still showed up!

Sometimes, faith isn't about having strength. It's about showing up! Even when your heart is broken. And in their confusion and despair, they remained devoted. And what did they find? The stone was rolled away. The body was gone! God was ahead of them! Those angel words still echo through the ages. *"Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here. He has risen!"* Now, let's pause here. Why do you look for the living among the dead? How many times have you searched for hope in dead things? Your old habits? Your past relationships? Things that can never again give you hope. The resurrection is a reminder life is not found in tombs of regret, shame, or sin. Because Jesus is alive! He's calling

you out of your graveyard of memories into a garden of grace. But sometimes we forget. Remember, during the whirlwind of your life's heartbreaks, God said His promises do not fade into the background. Unlike human words that can weaken with time, God's promises remain bold, clear, and alive. And the women remembered the words Jesus had told them. *He would rise!* His resurrection wasn't a surprise to Him... it was a promise fulfilled! His words came rushing back. And in the midst of your own trials, remember He is faithful! He is risen! His Word will never fail! The women ran to tell the others. They couldn't keep the Good News to themselves. But when they told the disciples what just happened, *"They did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense."* Sometimes, resurrection does sound like nonsense to a world that only knows death.

But Peter?... Peter ran to the tomb! He saw the burial wrappings that had been around Jesus' body. A separate piece of linen used to cover His face was folded neatly and not discarded with the other wrappings. It had been deliberately folded and placed aside. There's a teaching in 1st-century Jewish culture about the way a master left his napkin at the table carried a message. If the master wadded up the napkin and left it on the plate it meant: *"I'm done. You can clear the table."* But if the master folded the napkin neatly and placed it beside the plate it meant: *"I'm coming back."* So, when John 20:7 mentions the folded face cloth in Jesus' tomb — it's interpreted symbolically like Jesus subtly saying: *"I'm not finished — I'll be back."*

If someone had stolen Jesus' body, they wouldn't have taken time to unwrap it and then fold up the grave cloths neatly. Thieves don't do that. The fact that the linen was just *laying there* testifies to the truth of the resurrection. It shows a calm, purposeful exit. This wasn't chaos. This was order. This was victory. This was dignity. Jesus wasn't unwrapped by others. He got up, removed the grave cloths, and left death behind! The linens are a quiet announcement: *"He's alive. He's not in a rush. Death didn't hold Him."* That's why Peter didn't leave shouting. He left *wondering*, a Greek word that implies deep amazement and confusion. His heart began to stir. His grief was giving way to hope. The linens represented death, burial, and finality.

But Jesus left them behind! Jesus now had a real, physical body that was glorified and different in some ways. He ate food. He ate fish and bread with His disciples. (Luke 24:42–43, John 21:13) Over 40 days, He physically appeared several times to His disciples and followers. He still bore His wounds. Doubting Thomas said, unless he touched the nail marks, and the spear wound in His side he would not believe. Jesus said to Thomas, *"Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."* (Luke 24:39) (John 20:27) So He wasn't just a spirit or a ghost. He was fully alive. In a transformed body. He appeared to Mary Magdalene. (John 20:11–18) To the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. (Luke 24:13–35) He appeared to more than five hundred at one time. (1 Corinthians 15:6)

Now, whether you came here today like the women—faithful, but grieving—or like Peter—curious, but unsure—know this — the stone can be rolled away! Not just from a tomb. But from your heart. You don't have to stay wrapped in the garments of your past. New life is possible. Grace is offered freely because of the resurrection. You don't just get a second chance. You get a new beginning! Jesus didn't come to make bad people better. He came to make dead people alive! (Ephesians 2:1–5) *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone. And the new is here!"* (2 Corinthians 5:17) New life means your past doesn't define your future. It means your brokenness can be healed. Your addictions can be cured. And what felt lost forever can be restored. God doesn't recycle your old story. He writes you a new one! *"It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves. It is the gift of God..."* (Ephesians 2:8) Grace means, you don't have to get your act together before coming to God. You come just as you are! And He changes you from the inside out. It's not about trying harder. It's about trusting Him more. And the best part is, God's grace never runs out. If Jesus was still in the tomb, then hope would just be wishful thinking. But because He rose, everything changed! He's not a memory. He's a living Savior! He heals. He speaks. He walks with you. He calls you by your name.

So go now—like those first witnesses. Not in fear. But in joy! Tell the world what you've heard today. And if you haven't believed it yet, keep seeking, because the best is yet to come! Billions have come to faith because of the resurrection. That kind of world-changing power is hard to explain without something real behind it. Yes. Christ is risen. He is risen indeed! The living, risen Christ is closer to you than you think. Let us pray.

Risen Savior, thank You for the empty tomb— for the stone that was rolled away. For the victory that shattered death. For the hope that now lives in us. Jesus, You are alive! And because You live, we have new life. Because You rose, we can rise. Because You conquered the grave, we can face tomorrow without fear. Lord, help us to carry Easter with us—not just today, but every day. May we leave this place not as people who merely heard the Good News—but as people transformed by it. Filled with joy. Marked by peace. And sent out to share Your living hope with the world. In Your powerful and precious Name, we pray, Amen.