

NOT SOME DAY, BUT TODAY!**Luke 24:1-12****(Read Luke 24:1-12)**

INTRO: You've probably experienced a time or two of what can only be described as too-good-to-be-true. Like when you're promised a big payout in some get-rich-quick-and-easy scheme and you end up in the hole instead. I know you've heard, like I have, the adage, "If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is." And it's a good policy about 99% of the time. The 1% is rare and worth it.

Back in the Fall of 1983 my parents drove from their home near Philadelphia, PA to my sister's home in Beaver Falls near Pittsburgh for a weekend visit. We were living here in Ashland, and so, it being only about two hours to Beaver Falls, a trip to visit them was a no-brainer. After all, if we wanted to visit with them in Eastern PA it was an eight hour trip from Ashland to their home. But this time we had another reason to go see my parents, we had an announcement for them – Kathy was pregnant. Here was the perfect opportunity to give them the great news. So off we went, and when a good opportunity presented itself the next day, we sprung the news. My dad got a happy grin on his face, but my mother seemed unfazed by our announcement – which, as I recall, was pretty clear. I mean, how can you take "We're going to have a baby in May of the next year." any other way than "We're going to have a baby in May of the next year."? And we knew she had heard us; that was unmistakable. My dad looked at me and said "*I don't think she believes you.*" That was it, she simply didn't believe us. I'm not sure why, but that was the case. So I had to be more forceful and convincing, and finally, it hit her, she was going to have a 19th grandchild and she was ecstatic. It took a while for the happy news to sink in, but when it did, it was great.

You see, lots of good news falls into the category of "*Too Good to Be True*" and that is how the disciples looked at it as the women told them about an empty tomb. Verse 11 in our scripture says that the words of the women, "...*seemed to them like nonsense.*" The implication in the use of that particular word is they figured their sisters had simply slipped over the edge of delirium in their grief. So they, essentially, blew the good news off.

A lot of people miss the point of Easter. Even people who call themselves Christian. And when they do, they miss out on all the hope, joy, and promise Easter holds. And it's not just a hope, joy, and promise for some time in the future – it's today. Not some day, but today Church! If you don't hear anything else I say this morning, I want you to hear and absorb this, as Christ Followers . . .

We need to see Easter for what it is

- And I can't describe it any better than this from commentator Donald Miller: "*The Resurrection is the central fact of the gospel. Without it, the words of Paul would stand as the epitaph of a dead Christianity: "Your faith is futile and you are still in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15:17). Without the Resurrection, Jesus would have been standing testimony that man always destroys the best he knows. With the Resurrection as fact, however, final tragedy becomes victory. God has triumphed over evil. The worst has yielded to the best. God has the last word, and it is good.*"
- The women had the undeniable good news – JESUS IS NOT DEAD! HE IS ALIVE! HE IS RISEN! Good news cannot be blown off. It wasn't something that would make sense someday, or redeem itself someday, after the numbing of grief wore off. NO! It was true that day and it is still true today. Jesus is risen and death is now dead; not some day, but today! Or in the words Bishop William Willemon, "*Easter is about a whole new world, not some day, but today.*"
- But, in a way it's understandable, like Jesus's friends in our text . . .

We get distracted by our own perceptions

- The women came to the tomb to prepare Jesus's body for burial. Yes, this WAS the third day he had been in the tomb, but they wanted to give him one last loving gift.
- But when they arrived at the very tomb into which they had seen him placed on Friday, they found it open and empty. The Message says "*They were puzzled...*" v. 4 (The Message) which is quite an understatement. And we would be too. About as quick as they make that realization, two angels appear and ask them a great question, it's the question every Christ Follower can ask as they lower a saint into the grave – "*Why do you look for the living among the dead?*" (v. 5b) or as Peterson puts it, "*Why are you looking for the Living One in a cemetery?*" Friends, this is why we don't grieve as others do who do not have the hope of the

resurrection. Oh, we grieve, that is for sure—but we don't grieve the same way. Because it might be a cemetery we are walking through, but it contains only the shells of the people who are buried there – their eternity is somewhere else.

- In this case, Jesus was not there. He had risen – as he said. But they had forgotten that. Perhaps when he had mentioned he would be raised on the third day, they just thought he was making a figure of speech. Or maybe their grief and terror had made them forget it outright. But they had forgotten, and now it all came back. He was raised – not some day, but TODAY! So, they did as they were instructed and went to tell Jesus's friends.
- But Jesus's friends didn't remember what Jesus said. Either that or they disregarded it. Yes, he'd promised he'd be back on the third day, but what had he really meant?! And how can a dead man honor his promises anyway?! Donald Miller writes that, not only did the disciples disregard the good news from the women BECAUSE they were women, but they simply were not in the mood to believe. They were wrong on both counts. Luke adds their names in verse 10 to show they were women of integrity in the early church – to show how off-base the disciples were. The truth was, in their grief, it was true – they just weren't up to believe Jesus was alive.
- Fortunately, one of them, the one who had denied Jesus three times in the early morning of Jesus's illegal trial, had a glimmer of hope. Peter ran to the tomb and saw for himself – Jesus was not there. John tells us in his Gospel that it was he and Peter who ran to the tomb and they both saw and believed and it made all the difference.
- That's the point I want to get across today . . .

Following Jesus is not something that will make a difference some day, it makes a difference NOW – Today!

- No matter who you are and what you've done, there is deliverance now. Peter turned his back on Jesus, not just once, but three times. But he knew in his heart of hearts of God's grace and he was among the first to believe. In John 21 we have the account of how Jesus beautifully restores Peter to full ministry. God's grace is, in the words of the old song, greater than all our sin. Deliverance is now – take it now!
- There is the promise of eternal life now – not someday, now. Oh, we have to wait, but when it's time we will enter into eternity. Paul tells the Colossians and Ephesians of the hope of glory we have. And it's for everyone who receives him as Savior.
- So, live for him now. Not some day, but now! Don't put it off. We're in the midst of a series on holiness that began on the first Sunday of Lent. Holiness is being set apart for the Lord. It is, indeed, living for God. Live for him today.
- And finally, tell people now. About 40 days later Jesus would be immanently returning to his heavenly Father and he would commission them with . . . *go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.* Matthew 28:19-20. That commission was for his disciples – all them, you and me included – tell people, not some day, but today.

Conclusion: That is the reality of the Resurrection – it's not some day, it's today! Amen.