



## 'Getting the message!'

Luke 24.1-12

### Background

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is, for very obvious reasons, a major focal point of the New Testament. The four evangelists give substantial space to the narrative of what happened. The apostle Paul regularly references it, devoting a whole chapter of his letter to the church at Corinth ([1 Cor.15.1-58](#)) to an exposition of the event. And the other New Testament writers have the resurrection of Jesus as the backdrop to all they teach.

Broadly speaking, the New Testament writers address the theme of Jesus' resurrection in three main ways.

First, and most foundationally, they see the need for a clear understanding of what actually happened: hence there's the record, narrated in a variety of ways, of the actual event. Their intent is plain – they mean their readers to know that, whatever else was going on, this was a real historical event.

Beyond that, of course, alongside the actual *narrative* of Jesus' resurrection, the central concern of the writers is to help explain its *significance*: that's to say, their concern is to set out for their readers what His resurrection from the dead tells us about who Jesus is, what He's effected, and why He matters so much.

And consequent on that, in a variety of ways, the writers are careful to engage in a pastoral *application* of this central truth – sometimes in terms of sombre warning, sometimes in terms of warm encouragement, sometimes in terms of compassionate comfort and care.

The gospel writers, of course, do the initial spadework, setting the scene, explaining what all took place, and providing the various pieces of the jigsaw which when properly placed together enable us to get the picture and see why this message is indeed such good news.

Luke is a most careful historian, noted for his thorough research and his remarkably constant accuracy. If he brings you 'edited highlights', John is your educated 'pundit': he's adept at zooming in on key moments of the narrative, slowing the whole sequence down and helping you see what you might easily have otherwise missed.

Read both passages in full, and if you're short of time concentrate on '**days**' **(3)**, **(4)** and **(5)**

## 1) Monday 1<sup>st</sup> April – love the Lord

Read [Luke 24.1-3](#)

*“.. they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus ..”* (Lk.24.3)

The devotion of these women was rooted in their love for the Lord – but it could never have prepared them for the revolution of their lives in which it would issue! Love the Lord your God – and you may find a future beyond your wildest dreams open up!

How does your devotion to the Lord Jesus find expression?

What experience have you had of encountering a situation completely different from what you'd expected?

**Prayer:** *O most merciful Redeemer, Friend and Brother, may I know Thee more clearly, love Thee more dearly, and follow Thee more nearly, day by day* (Richard of Chichester)

## 2) Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April – remembering His words

Read [Luke 24.4-8](#)

*“.. Why do you look for the living among the dead? ..”* (Lk.24.5)

‘Remember how He told you ...’ Death seems so very final: that anyone could be raised from the dead seems so unlikely that the promise of God and the testimony of His requires repetition! But when the truth dawns that Jesus is risen, everything changes!

What steps do you take to ensure that you are reminding yourself constantly of the words the Lord has spoken to us?

‘How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken!’ ([Lk.24.25](#)): how might we learn to be quicker to believe?

**Prayer:** *Lord, I believe: help my unbelief! Help me to remember who You are and what You've done, and cultivate in me a greater expectancy regarding what You will yet do.*

## 3) Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> April – passing on the message

Read [Luke 24.9-12](#)

*“.. because their words seemed to them like nonsense ..”* (Lk.24.11)

The message of the gospel runs counter to our finite and flawed logic. It sounds crazy, bizarre, too good to be true; and those who proclaim it seem weird and off their heads! But examine the evidence and by God's grace doubts may start to disappear!

Many today view the gospel as nonsense: how can those who take such a view be helped to see the sense of it all?

Some remarkable stories are told today of what the Lord has seemingly done: how do you get the right balance between being overly sceptical on the one hand and foolishly gullible on the other?

How important have you found personal testimony in prompting others to look into the claims of Christ in the gospel?

Are the Community Groups as good a context as any for the sharing of 'testimony', telling others the sometimes strange and sometimes quite dramatic ways in which the Lord has been at work in our lives?

**Prayer:** Grant me by Your Spirit, Lord, the boldness, wisdom and grace I need to share the good news with those I'll meet today. May I be a channel of Your grace to them.

#### 4) Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> April – God with us

Read [John 20.19-23](#)

".. Jesus came among them and said, 'Peace be with you!' .." (Jn.20.19)

The hostility of the Jewish leaders was very real. The hazards of their situation were great. The fear they felt was understandable. But the presence of the risen Jesus puts everything in a new and truer perspective. A peace and joy which nothing can dispel.

Read [Phil.4.4-9](#): how does Paul suggest that, in the midst of our fears and worries, we may experience the peace which Jesus wants His people to know?

Why did Jesus at this point breathe on His disciples in this way?

What did Jesus mean by stating that "if you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven .."?

Was this instruction only for the 11 disciples gathered in the upper room, or does it have application to all who trust in Jesus as Lord and Saviour?

**Prayer:** Thank You, Lord Jesus, for the peace which You impart to Your people. Grant me that peace today and enable me to be a channel of Your peace to others I meet.

#### 5) Friday 5<sup>th</sup> April – help my unbelief

Read [John 20.24-25](#)

".. unless I see the nail marks in His hands .." (Jn.20.25)

The refusal to believe on the part of Thomas (and many like him) may have had less to do with a sinful perversity than with a history of disappointment and a fear of being hurt. Stick with His disciples, and things will become clearer. Jesus makes sure of that!

How do you react when your friends are all raving about a significant event which (for whatever reason) you have missed?

Is it reasonable for a person to insist on some ‘proof’ before believing that Jesus is risen – and if so what sort of ‘proof’ might you be able to give?

‘Doubt is not the opposite of faith, unbelief is.’ Do you agree? And how can you best help a believer who’s plagued by all sorts of doubts?

To what extent should you share your own doubts as a believer when speaking with unbelievers voicing their doubts?

**Prayer:** Give me grace to rejoice with those whose experience of You has been richer and fuller than my own: keep me from the festering sores of envy and resentment.

## 6) Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> April – seeing and believing

Read [John 20.26-29](#)

“.. blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed ..” (Jn.20.29)

‘Jesus knows our every weakness,’ we’re glad to sing. And He does. What a Friend He is indeed! He doesn’t fault Thomas for what some would see as weakness: instead He ministers to that weakness. He’ll be the same with you. Persevere with Him and see!

What illustrations can you think of in your own life where it’s been evident that Jesus clearly knows the desires of your heart?

How might people today be helped to ‘stop doubting and believe’?

**Prayer:** You have searched me, Lord, and You know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; You perceive my thoughts from afar. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me.

## 7) Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> April – abundant life

Read [John 20.30-31](#)

“.. that by believing you may have life in His name ..” (Jn.20.31)

Life in all its fulness is what Jesus came to bring. It’s yours to enjoy as you learn to live by faith. John’s gospel, like all four gospels, is written to help you rejoice in who He is, to rest in what He’s done, and to receive what only He can ever give – eternal life!

What does John mean by ‘believing’ in v.31?

Why does John use the dual designation (‘Messiah’ and ‘Son of God’) here with reference to Jesus?

**Prayer:** I once was dead, Lord, in my transgressions and sins, but You, in the riches of Your mercy, have made me wonderfully alive by the power of Your Holy Spirit!