



BIBLE STORIES EVERYONE OUGHT TO KNOW

Main and Oklahoma Church of Christ ^ Adult Bible Studies ^ Winter-Spring 2010

April 4, 2010

Resurrection of Jesus, Luke 24

Getting Started

It is a new day, Sunday, the first day of the week, and God's power raises Jesus from the dead, but who will believe this spectacular event? Will Jesus' apostles believe? What about the women who supported and cared for Him? What about the two disciples returning home from Jerusalem after Jesus' death? Who will believe?

The Story

Instead of highlighting details of Jesus' resurrection, Luke's account highlights the reactions of various groups to Jesus' resurrection. Luke focuses on belief in and witness to the resurrection of Jesus. Luke describes three sets of witnesses. All ultimately believe, but take different paths to faith.

Luke 24 begins with a group of Galilean women going to Jesus' tomb to anoint His body. They include, among others, Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James. With Jesus' death on Friday afternoon, just before Sabbath, the women could not prepare the spices or go to the tomb until the Sabbath ended on Saturday evening. Therefore, it was not until early Sunday morning that they went to the tomb. When they arrive, they not only find the tomb open, but empty. Two men in clothes gleaming like lightening ask them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; He has risen!" (24:5-6). The men remind the women of Jesus' predictions of His own suffering, death, and resurrection. The women remember Jesus' words and believe Jesus is alive. They take this good news to Jesus' apostles who think the women are speaking nonsense. The apostles do not believe...yet. Peter runs to the tomb to check out their story but finds no body and no Jesus.

That same day, on the road to Emmaus, two of Jesus' disciples meet the risen Jesus, but do not recognize Him. They tell Jesus about all that has happened in the past three days, including the perplexing events of that Sunday morning and the claim of the women that Jesus is alive. Jesus explains the scriptures about Himself and how the Christ must suffer before entering glory. The disciples invite Jesus to eat with them. At the meal, when Jesus blesses the bread, they recognize Him as the risen Jesus. Jesus then vanishes from their sight, but they now believe in the risen Jesus and take this good news to the apostles. Before the men from Emmaus can share their good news, the apostles tell them the Lord has indeed risen and appeared to Simon (Peter). Next, while the men from Emmaus share their story, Jesus appears to all in the room and says, "Peace be with you."

Stunned, apprehensive, and yet joyful, those in the room think Jesus is a ghost. To calm them, Jesus shows them His hands and feet and asks them to touch His risen body. Jesus explains that He has flesh and bones. Jesus is hungry, so they provide Him broiled fish. Jesus then explains

that His new life is the fulfillment of what he himself had predicted, as well as of prophecies in the Law, Psalms, and Prophets. Jesus opens their minds to accept the Scriptures about His suffering, death, and resurrection. He urges them to be His witnesses to all nations, starting in Jerusalem. He also promises they will be clothed with power from on high. The Gospel of Luke ends with the risen Jesus ascending to Heaven, alive.

What the story tells us about God?

God wants His followers to believe in the risen Jesus and share that belief with others. God calls forth witnesses because everything depends on the reality of a risen Jesus. Jesus' resurrection represents the "first fruits" of those who have died in Him (I Corinthians 15:20). Jesus' resurrection is proof of Jesus' claim to be the Son of God (Romans 1:4) and everlasting High Priest who intercedes for all believers in all ages (Hebrews 7:24-25). Finally, Jesus' resurrection fulfills God's promises and secures God's continuing faithfulness toward us. The resurrected Jesus conquered death, both His and ours. Praise God!

Now, what about our faith?

We take different paths to belief in the risen Jesus. Some, like the women in Luke 24, believe immediately. Others need time and explanation, like the men from Emmaus. Some, like the apostles, need proof. In the end, all watch and wonder at the Son of God among us, asking for contact, offering peace, casting out fear, and promising new life. Regardless of the faith path we take, God accepts us and asks us to become His witnesses. Because He is alive, we live.

Monday: Read Luke 24:1-12

1. Who were the women who came to anoint Jesus and why did they do what they did?
2. Put yourself in their place. How would you react to the news he is alive? Would you doubt or believe?
3. Why did the apostles disbelieve them?

Tuesday: Read Luke 24:13-34

1. Who were the men on the road to Emmaus and what do you suppose was their state of mind?
2. What scriptures do you think Jesus shared with them?
3. What ultimately drove their belief in Jesus' risen state?

Wednesday: Read Luke 24:35-49

1. Imagine the sentiment in the room of those gathered with the apostles and describe what they might be saying and thinking.
2. Why did those in the room react to the Risen Jesus with wonder?
3. Did they really need proof Jesus was alive and human?
4. How would you have reacted if you were in their place? Do you need proof?

Thursday: Read Luke 24:50-53

1. Why does the disbelief of the apostles turn to worship?
2. Do you doubt the reality of a risen Jesus? Why or why not?

Friday: Read I Corinthians Chapter 15

1. In verse 17, Paul says, "And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins." What does he mean?
2. What is the relationship between Jesus' resurrection and our resurrection?
3. Ponder the "resurrection body" Paul discusses in verses 35-57. Now consider Jesus' risen body. With these in mind, consider what your raised body might be like. Does this offer encouragement and hope and if so, why?