



## Sent by God: His People on His Mission

### Easter Sunday

#### Resurrection—Luke 24:1-12

“On the first day of the week” an event transpired that changed the face of history. It may have been predicted, but it was not expected. A group of women hurried to the tomb that morning, fully expecting to find the body of Jesus. Rattled by the empty tomb, they fell to the ground in fear as two angelic men questioned why they were looking “for the living among the dead” (Luke 24:5). The angelic message that follows is certainly the kernel of the gospel. “He is not here; he has risen!” The cross and the resurrection are at the core of the Christian faith, hope and experience. Paul says it best when he says that if Christ has not been raised from the dead “we are to be pitied more than all men” (1 Cor. 15:19).

Miracles and eloquent words were not enough. Faced with the death of Jesus, the disciples were in disarray. They had to be reminded that Jesus had predicted his death and resurrection. Testimony by the women was not convincing to the disciples. This passage ends with Peter “wondering to himself what had happened” (Luke 24:12).

#### Disbelief—Luke 24:13-27

Neither the apostles nor the women at the tomb fully recognized the significance of the empty tomb. Luke continues to develop this theme with the narrative of the two men on the road to Emmaus. Jesus travels alongside Cleopas and his companion. The disciples, who are ignorant of the meaning of all the recent events, share their knowledge (Luke 24:18-19). Jesus, who is in the know, feigns ignorance.

Recounting the story, they portray Jesus as a powerful prophet of God who was killed by the “chief priests and rulers” (Luke 24:20). Hope had been dashed for these men. They wonder what use is a

dead Messiah (Luke 24:21)? Ironically, they are discussing Jesus, but do not recognize his presence. Neither do they believe the story of the women, who had returned from the tomb (Luke 24:23-24). Jesus proceeded to teach them concerning the sufferings of Christ from Moses and the Prophets. Cleopas and his companion have now witnessed the life of Jesus, spoken to Jesus after his death and resurrection, and heard what must have been an incredible Bible study from the mouth of Jesus, and still they did not believe.

#### Real Faith—Luke 24:28-31

Jesus never forces himself on anyone. Approaching town, Jesus behaves as if he will be going on without his companions. Still in unbelief, something has begun to affect their hearts. Jesus accurately pointed out that they were “slow of heart to believe” (Luke 24:25). Time with Jesus and in the word has whittled down some of those barriers. Their hearts may not fully recognize or believe in Jesus but they are certainly open to his influence. Inviting Jesus to stay, they sit down at the table with him. Jesus may have been the guest but at this meal, he was also the host. Jesus initiates the giving of thanks and the breaking of the bread. In this moment of table fellowship, their hearts must have finally been the most open. Jesus is now revealed to them. Eyes that were closed are opened; hearts that were slow are quickened. A Jesus that had previously been dead to them is now alive and his presence is real. Then he abruptly departs from them.

#### Real Presence—Luke 24:31-35

It is always easier to see the work of the Lord in retrospect. It was only after Jesus had left that the disciples recognized that their hearts had been “burning within.” Our theology (belief in God) should make room in our hearts for the real presence of Jesus Christ. A burning in our hearts is what sends us back to Jerusalem to share our testimony. A burning

