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Beverly E.C.C., Chicago, IL

**“CHRIST IS RISEN INDEED!”**

**Luke 24:1-12**

{Ro 14:9; 6:9} Today we celebrate Messiah’s victory over death. Jesus “**died and returned to life,**” and “**Since [he] was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him!**”

{Col 2:15, MSG} Today we celebrate Messiah’s victory over evil. “**At the cross**” Jesus “**stripped all the spiritual tyrants in the universe of their sham authority ...and marched them naked through the streets!**”

{Ro 5:10; 8:7-8; 5:8-10} Today we celebrate Messiah’s victory over the guilt and power of sin. For “**when we were God’s enemies**” – when we were “**controlled by the sinful nature**” and “**our “sinful [minds were] hostile to God**” – Jesus “**died for us**” “**that we might be reconciled to [God] through the death of his Son.**”

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

📖 {Ro 1:16} This – is – Gospel. It is Good News, for that is what the word *Gospel* means. The Gospel of Jesus is historical fact, spiritual truth, and “**the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes.**”

Some of us are convinced by the historical and documentary evidence that this is true. We testify not to what we *wish* but to what we *understand*.

❓ But is this conviction inflaming our hearts with passion and fortifying our souls with strength? Is the

breathtaking Power by which the Father raised his Son to life permeating every fiber of our being?

Does the empty tomb ignite within us holy joy and awe? Does it arouse righteous fear? Does it ever make us tremble and go weak in the knees?

{Lk 24:2-3, 12} Or when we come to tomb, “[find] **the stone rolled away,**” fail to “**find the body of the Lord Jesus,**” and “[see] **the strips of linen lying by themselves**” do we placidly observe: Christ is risen.

Some of us are persuaded by the Spirit that this is real. We testify not so much to what we *comprehend* but to what we feel.

{2 Ti 3:17} But is this experience renewing our minds with knowledge and preparing us “**for every good work**”? Is the precious Truth by which God gives us birth transforming us inside and out?

{2 Co 10:5; 1 Jn 3:18; Eph 4:15} Is the empty tomb equipping us to “**take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ**”? Is it inspiring us to love even our enemies with our actions? Is it causing us to be done with immaturity and “**grow up into... Christ**”?

Or when we come to the tomb, look inside, see it is empty, and hear the angel’s message do we get so caught up in emotion that our minds shut down?

☐ Please turn with me to Luke 24:1-12.

✎ The first thing that stands out about our text is Luke’s bare-bones approach to reporting the most decisive event in cosmic history since the initial act of creation.

{Ge 2:7; Lk 8:54} How does the Father accomplish the resurrection? Does he breathe **“the breath of life”** **“into [his Son’s] nostrils”** or command **“My child, get up!”** or refill his empty veins with blood? We are not told.

{Act 2:2; Rev 4:4} Is the Spirit manifested as a rushing wind as at Pentecost, as seven blazing lamps as in John’s vision, or as some other phenomenon? We are not told.

{Ez 19:18; Lk 24:4; Rev 4:3} Is there fire and smoke as at Sinai, a glorious rainbow like the one that encircles the throne in heaven, or unlit darkness? We are not told.

{Lk 2:13-14; 3:22; 1 Th 4:16} Do the angels proclaim God’s praises as at Christ’s birth, does the Father announce his pleasure in his Son as at his baptism, or does Jesus shout in triumph as he will at his Second Coming? We are not told.

Luke records only what the human witnesses see and hear in the moment. There is much he does not say.

{Col 1:27} This is no accident! The details which Luke includes and omits open us to walk by faith as we live into **“the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in [us], the hope of glory.”**

✎ The second thing that stands out about our text is the disciples’ response to the resurrection.

We might expect the empty tomb and the angels to infuse them with sheer joy, unruffled serenity or perfect knowledge. Instead, these things trigger a roiling jumble of conflicting emotions.

■ {Mt 28:8; Mk 16:8} In verses 1-8 Luke depicts the women as **“wondering”** and acting in **“fright.”** Matthew states that they are **“filled with joy”** *and*, at the same time,

**“afraid.”** Mark adds that they are **“trembling”** (presumably with wonder, excitement, and alarm) *and* **“bewildered,”** and they **“[flee] from the tomb... because they [are] afraid.”**

■ {Lk 24:12} Similarly, in verses 9-12 Peter sees the empty tomb and vacant grave linens and he is left scratching his head. He can’t make heads or tails of it.

{Jn 20:20 - Lk 24:37; Lk 24:32 – Jn 20:14; Mt 28:17} It is this way with everyone. Those who view the empty tomb or meet the Risen Savior **“are overjoyed”** *and* **“startled and frightened,”** their **“hearts [burn] within [them]”** *and they* **“[do] not”** even **“realize that it [is] Jesus,”** **“they [worship] him”** *and they* **“[doubt].”**

? *What about us?* Have we seen the profound emptiness of the tomb? Have we heard the angel’s startling message? Have we come face to face with him who was dead but now is vibrantly, eternally alive? If so we will be seized by wonder *and* bewilderment, exuberant joy *and* holy fear, belief *and* ambiguity.

{Jn 20:25} If this has never been aroused within you, please go back and gaze into the tomb. Listen to the angels. **“See the nail marks in [the Savior’s] hands ... put [your] finger where the nails were... put [your] hand into his side”** and feel it!

{Eph 4:14; 1 Co 15:43} But what happens next? Believers who are dominated by powerful emotions and are not disciplined by coherent truth are like **“infants, tossed back and forth by the waves... blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming.”**

{Jn 14:26} So over the next forty days the Lord Jesus opens up to the women, apostles, and the other disciples the Scriptures regarding his death and resurrection. He begins to heal their brokenness. He prepares them to receive the Holy Spirit who will **“teach [them] all things and... remind”** them of what he has told them.

{Acts 2:23-24} Disquieting doubt will give way to certainty. In fifty days Peter will declare to those who collaborated in the crucifixion: **“you, with the help of wicked men, put [Jesus] to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.”**

{1 Pe 1:3} Disturbing confusion will be replaced by theological clarity. In his first letter Peter will write: **“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”**

{2 Pe 3:18} Likewise for us, our initial joy and ambiguity at the resurrection can be a springboard, neither to unrestrained emotionalism nor cold intellectualism but to passionate, enlightened conviction as we **“grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior.”**

Peter’s expression **“a living hope”** is crucial.

{Ro 6:6} It is in this **“living hope”** that we participate in Messiah’s victory over the guilt and power of sin. **“For we know that our old self was crucified with him... that we should no longer be slaves to sin.”**

{1 Pe 5:8; Jas 4:7} It is in this **“living hope”** that we participate in Messiah’s victory over evil. Our **“enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour,”** but if we **“resist him, standing firm in the faith,”** **“he will flee from”** us.

{Ro 6:5} It is in this **“living hope”** we participate in Messiah’s victory over death. For **“if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his.”**

{1 Co 15:43-44} It is in this **“living hope”** that we are **“sown in dishonor”** but **“raised in glory,”** **“sown in weakness”** but **“raised in power,”** sown on the cross but raised from the grave, sown with the Suffering Servant but raised with the King of kings and Lord of lords!

{Lk 24:25; Heb 10:26; Gal 5:7; 3 Jn 8; Lk 1:77; Ro 10:2; 1 Co 1:5} *What about us?* Have we grasped **“the knowledge of the truth”**? Have we been **“transformed by the renewing of [the] mind”**? Have we cultivated **“[obedience to] the truth”**? Have we learned to **“work together for the truth”**? If so our **“zeal”** will be **“based on knowledge”** as Christ **“[enriches]”** us **“with all [the] knowledge”** we need.

{Eph 4:18; Col 1:9; 2 Ti 2:15} If you are still **“darkened in [your] understanding”** ask the Lord God to **“fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives,”** and diligently study the Scriptures in order to **“correctly [handle] the word of truth.”**

May the power of Christ crucified and risen ignite within us holy joy and awe, arouse righteous fear, make us tremble and go weak in the knees!

May the truth of the death and resurrection of the Son of Man renew our minds, enable us to take captive every thought, and cause us to “**grow up into ... Christ!**”

May the Gospel of the cross and the empty tomb bring abundant, eternal life to our bodies, minds, and souls!

Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed!