

THE GREATEST NEWS EVER!

(Luke 24:1-12)

...I don't know what you think is the best news you ever personally heard, perhaps it was you passed, you graduated, you won, you're hired, you're husband and wife, it's a boy/girl, your team won, or the surgery was successful. All of these are wonderful words and fill our hearts with great joy.

...The reality is that all of these are short-lived, they do not endure long, for we are moving quickly through life and headed for the grave. We do not now live in "The land of the living," but rather we live in the land of the dying. All because of Genesis 3 and the fall of our first parents, death has reigned. We live in the land of the dying and are moving to the land of the living...and this is made possible through the tunnel of an empty tomb.

...Christianity is not just another idea, among the thousands that float around, rather it is NEWS. Something really happened at Calvary, Jesus died...and something really happened on Sunday morning, Jesus returned to life. As we go forth we are to bear this news, the "Good News" that God has provided eternal life through His Son.

TWO OBSERVATIONS UPON A CONVERSATION AT THE LORD'S EMPTY TOMB PROVIDING US WITH THE PROMISE OF LIFE FOREVER

...For the NEWS told at the empty tomb was the Greatest News Ever! Let's eavesdrop and listen...

I. A Probing Question: "Why do you seek the living among the dead?" (vv.1-5)

- A. It was very early on Sunday morning when the ladies came to Jesus' burial place. (vv.1-3) (v.10)
1. They had been at His tomb on the evening of His death and had begun to prepare His body for burial. It had been late, so they planned to wait until after the Sabbath to return and finish the work.
 2. They had no hope of any resurrection as they came carrying 100 pounds of spices to finish preparing His body. They did not expect Him to be alive, but dead.
 3. When they arrived, the stone was moved away, and Jesus' body was not in the tomb. ...They were grieving deeply, depressed, and now utterly upset by the empty tomb.
 4. Dr. Luke wrote his Gospel account focusing entirely upon Jesus. He is everywhere throughout the book. But now, all of a sudden, Jesus is missing. What a shock!!!
- B. At just the right moment, two angels appeared to the women, who are given a mild rebuke. (vv.4-5)
1. "Why do you seek the living among the dead?" You are operating upon the basis of a faulty assumption. (Most people do) They assumed that Jesus was dead, and therefore were looking for Him among the dead.
 2. It is true that we are living on a planet that is a virtual spinning graveyard holding the bones of all who have gone before us. God had said to Adam, "In the day you eat of the forbidden fruit, you will die indeed." Since Adam, that is the story of human life. "It is appointed unto man once to die, and after that, the judgment."

II. A Thrilling Answer: "He Is Not Here, But Has Risen, Remember..." (vv.6-12)

- A. The angels announced that Jesus is alive, that He has risen from the dead.
1. They rebuked the women because Jesus had told them repeatedly that He would be killed and be raised to life again on the 3rd day. They should have been waiting. (They should have had a tailgate party waiting just outside His tomb!!!) But no...
 2. Jesus' body was actually raised from the dead. He is the author of life, and death could never chain Him. He rose victoriously over death. He is the mighty victor.

- B. The angels did not try to convince the women by the surrounding evidence of the tomb. ...Such as the huge stone rolled aside, the seal broken, the absence of a body, and the burial cloth folded neatly in the tomb. No! The angels simply pointed to Jesus' words by saying: "Remember how He told you...and they remembered." (vv.6-7)
1. Now it was the third day, the promised day. The women were perplexed because they did not yet believe what Jesus had said. They had His Word, did they need more?
 2. This is often the case: unless and until we believe in the Word of God, life is all too perplexing. But when we do believe, everything starts to fall into place.
 3. Jesus is still missing in this passage, but His Word is certainly there. He would appear to them later, but now they were to believe and trust His word.
- C. The women responded in faith, and became the first "Deliverers of the greatest of all News." (vv.9-10)

SO WHAT? WHAT DIFFERENCE SHOULD THIS MAKE IN MY LIFE?

1. Today is the most wonderful day of the year, as it holds promise for those of us who know Jesus as Savior and Lord. We sing, "Because He lives, I can face tomorrow..." even our own death, knowing that Jesus through His own resurrection blew the door off the prison of death. Rejoice and sing for death is defeated, and is now the doorway to heaven. We now live alive in Christ in the dark land of the dying.
2. Dear Christians just like in elementary school, we are to participate in "show and tell," by allowing Jesus to be seen in our daily life and by our words as we tell the Greatest News ever. Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and rose to life on the 3rd day.
3. Because the resurrection of Jesus is true, "Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for you know your work in the Lord is not in vain." (1 Corinthians 15:58)
4. The gift of eternal life must be received. According to the Bible, everyone is born lost in sin and face hell at death. You must hear of the greatest news ever, and respond by agreeing with God that you have sinned, and believe upon the Lord Jesus as your personal Savior. Pray this way, "Lord be merciful to me a sinner, thank you for dying to pay for my sin, I receive you Jesus as my Savior and Lord."

Life Group Questions

1. It seems clear from the sermon that the women who came to the grave did not believe Jesus' words about His 3rd day resurrection. They knew Him, had been with Him for years, yet they seem to be stumbling in unbelief. Why do you think they were? Have you had similar times when knowing God's words found in Scripture, yet you really aren't sure if you can trust and believe them? Can you relate to this? When have you had trouble resting-trusting in God's Word? Any thoughts on what might be the solution?
2. Do you agree that the angels' words amount to "the greatest words ever?" If not, what other words might compete with being the greatest? How do their words personally touch your life?
3. Have you stood by the grave of a dear loved one? How have these verses and others like them provided any difference to you? Can you recount a time...
4. Since we are to engage in a kind of "show and tell." How did you do it? How do you show the love of Jesus to those lost and bridge into the telling of the greatest news ever?