

Tommy Meador / General

The Gospel of Luke / Luke 23:50–24:12

Introduction

- Russia: Bag fool of batteries and baby dolls... <https://www.npr.org/2024/02/12/1230711926/mummified-monkeys-boston-airport-bushmeat>
- When a dead body is laid in a tomb, you don't expect to find the tomb empty three days later.
- The resurrection of Jesus is THE defining event of human history. If Jesus rose from the dead, then His death did accomplish the forgiveness of our sins. If Jesus stayed dead, we would still be dead in our sins ([1 Cor. 15:17](#)). Without the resurrection, Jesus just another religious teacher/guru.
- Resurrection of Jesus proves that He is God.
- **Nothing more hopeful than the resurrection of Jesus Christ - resurrection is our guarantee of everlasting life.** Jesus is the firstfruits of the resurrection ([1 Cor. 15:20-22](#)). What is true of Jesus will be true for you. Someday, your dead body will rise from the grave.
- Two truths: 1. The hope of the resurrection is for people who think they have everything. 2. The hope of the resurrection is for people who know they have nothing.

Story:

- In the final hours of Jesus life, Luke has been introducing us to people who had faith encounters with Jesus: Simon of Cyrene, the criminal on the cross, and the Roman centurion. Now, Joseph of Arimathea.
- After death on cross, common for criminal to hang on cross for days. But, Jews would not leave a dead corpse hanging on a cross. Even for those who were executed for violent crimes, **Jews made sure the criminal had a proper burial.** ([Deut. 21:22-23](#))
- Jesus had to be buried before the Sabbath - to bury on the Sabbath was to profane the Sabbath.
- Joseph of Arimathea asks for the body. A member of the Sanhedrin who did not agree with their plan.
- Sanhedrin made up of Jewish elites - the highest court in the land - legislative body and supreme judicial court over Jewish people.
- As a member of the Sanhedrin, Joseph was influential and wealthy. In Jewish culture, he had it all. But unlike the other members of Sanhedrin, knew there was more than what he had.
- He was looking for the Kingdom, and he didn't find it in the religious system. He did not consent to the decision of the Sanhedrin to crucify Jesus, but he kept his faith to himself. ([John 19:38](#)) A covert disciple of Jesus along with Nicodemus. Imagine the conversations Nicodemus and Joseph had - believed but didn't want anyone to know they believed.
- Joseph believed Jesus but also concerned about what would happen to him if Sanhedrin found out about his faith. He would lose it all
- **Joseph likely overwhelmed with grief and guilt:** Why hadn't he been bold enough to publicly associate with Jesus while Jesus was alive?
- Joseph no longer cares if the Sanhedrin knows he's a follower or not. **Joseph realizing that while he had it all, he really had nothing** - he

needed more than power and prestige, wealth and influence. He needed Jesus. What he saw in Jesus - kindness, love, sacrifice - he didn't see in the Sanhedrin.

- After the death of Jesus he finally makes **a bold step of faith**. Joseph publicly associates with Jesus. He goes to Pilate and asks for the body of Jesus to give Jesus a proper burial in his own tomb.
- Courageous move - a member of the Sanhedrin - the group that wanted Jesus dead - asking for His body? The Sanhedrin had condemned Jesus. What would his fellow council members think when they discovered Joseph had buried Jesus in his own tomb? It didn't matter to Joseph anymore what they thought.
- Joseph wrapped him in a shroud and laid him in a tomb. [John 19:39](#): **Nicodemus helped him**. An act of devotion - a man of means taking care of a convicted criminal's dead body that had been beaten to death. Joseph humbling himself.
- **All 4 Gospel writers report the burial of Christ. Want us to know Jesus was dead; really dead.** While Joseph finally associated with Jesus publicly, wonder if he regretted not associating with Jesus while He was alive. Did fear of losing his influence and power keep him from doing it sooner?
- The women - the polar opposite of Joseph. They didn't have power and prestige. **They had nothing**. While they were with Jesus to the very end. They didn't have much courage, or really much faith for that matter. Instead, they had fear.
- On Sunday morning, they go to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus. Could not anoint the body on the Sabbath - they waited until the first day of the week.
- On the way, wondering who would remove the stone ([Mark 15:3](#)).

- Arrive - stone already rolled back. Imagine the shock. They go into the tomb, and it's empty. No body! Was it stolen? A cruel joke?
- Aside - **More proof that this really happened.** If this was a legend or fairy tale, you wouldn't read of women being the first to witness the empty tomb! In an ancient court of law, women could not even serve as witnesses. Luke simply records what actually happened regardless of how absurd it sounded.
- Perplexed - then two angels stood by them - women are terrified! You would be too!
- A simple question: "Why are you looking for the living among the dead?" Or, "You're in the wrong place." A simple announcement: "He's not here, but He has risen!" Don't you remember what He said? **Notice: no indication that they thought that maybe the tomb would be empty even though Jesus had told his followers on several occasions that he would rise on the third day (e.g., [Luke 9:22](#)).**
- Not one of the the twelve disciples goes to the tomb on Sunday morning. They all fled. Not one curious to see if Jesus had risen from the tomb. Why? After what they had witnessed at the crucifixion - how could resurrection even be possible? Resurrections don't happen! If you've ever said, "I can't believe that a dead man would rise from the dead" you're in good company. Those closest to Jesus didn't believe it either until they saw...
- BUT... the tomb WAS empty. Jesus was alive, and if Jesus was alive there was real hope for these women, and there was real hope for the disciples. Jesus' death was not in vain.
- Women return to tell the apostles, but the apostles did not believe (vs.11). Except for Peter - He had to see for himself that the tomb was empty. If the tomb was empty, if Jesus was alive, there was a chance for Peter to be restored to Jesus after he had denied him three times.

- Peter ran to the tomb, and when he looked in, all he saw was the linen cloths. He was amazed! The tomb was empty!

The hope of the resurrection is for people who think they have everything.

- Joseph - Life similar to many of us in an American culture - he had everything and at the same time nothing.
- We have everything in our culture - wealth, 2 cars in the garage, abundance of food, phones in our pockets, 17 streaming services, AI doing our jobs for us, vacations, sports, fishing, Tanger Outlets, etc.
- We have everything, but we're struggle. According to a major Harvard Medical study from 2023, one out of two in the world will develop some type of mental health disorder over the course of their lifetime.
- In an American culture, we have everything, yet we struggle with burnout, stress, depression, anxiety, etc. Is there any hope? Yes, the empty tomb is our hope.
- Think you have everything? You know better. You know that in spite of all you have, until you have Christ, you have nothing.
- Three choices this morning. How will you choose to associate with the resurrected Lord?
- **Courageous association**
 - This is what was missing from Joseph's life until Jesus died because of fear - because of what he didn't want to lose.
 - A public acknowledgement that Christ is Lord without worrying about what others think.
 - Reorganizing priorities around God's purpose
 - Choosing His will over yours.

- **Weak association.**
 - **A covert disciple.** You like Jesus, but you like everything else in this life much better.
 - **Jesus as an accessory.** You want to believe enough to get out of hell, but not enough where someone might think you're a religious nut. You want to serve the church, as long as it doesn't interfere with your schedule. This is not biblical Christianity!
- **No association.** You could care less about Jesus because you're too busy pursuing everything.
- How would you describe your association with Jesus?
- Think you have everything? You know better. You know that in spite of all you have, until you have Christ, you have nothing.

The hope of the resurrection is for people who know they have nothing.

- Throughout Luke's Gospel, Luke has shown us that Jesus treats women well. Reality - a male driven culture - women had little value outside of motherhood.
- These women certainly felt like they had nothing after the death of Jesus. Jesus had cared for them, loved them, elevated them, shown them significance. Now, Jesus is gone. If Jesus was dead they would go back to a life of relative insignificance.
- But, if Jesus is alive, these ladies have everything.
- You might not feel like you have everything. Instead, you feel like you have nothing. Everything seems to be falling apart. Remember [Ephesians 1:3](#): Blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. Spiritual blessings? Eternal life, forgiveness of sins,

spiritual gifts, purpose, wisdom, power of God, love of God, etc. You have everything!

- **Stop with the pity parties** and start rejoicing! Incredible joy! Jesus is alive for you! Alive in you! There's always hope for your present life and future life. Jesus is alive to empower you to have wisdom to reconcile your marriage, to disciple your children, to overcome that sinful lifestyle, to live out His will! Stop throwing a pity party and start rejoicing in who you are in Christ!
- **Stop giving up so easily.** [Ephesians 4](#) - New life belongs to you, but are you willing to pursue it? Some of us give up far too easily. We refuse to walk in the new life.
- **Time to realize WHY you have been given everything.** Go tell Peter... ([Mark 16:7](#)) Peter needed forgiveness. Women were the first to witness the resurrection so they could be the first to witness about the resurrection. Mission of your life has not changed - and so important. Given everything to give everything for the sake of the Gospel. Who is God telling you to go tell?
- This morning you can have everything if you believe that Jesus died and rose again.