



THE STORY OF *Everything*

LUKE 24:27

When someone close to you is suddenly missing from your life, what happens? Maybe they're missing because they've died. Or maybe you've lost a close friendship. Maybe someone has moved away. And suddenly, there is this gaping hole. You feel it. They've been there. You've talked with them regularly. You've spent time together. And then...they're not there.

Ask anyone who has lost a loved one what it's like and they will tell you – their absence doesn't stop you from thinking about them. They're on your mind. You want to talk with them. You want to pick up the phone and call them. The reality that they aren't there takes time to sink in. And the ache goes deep.

All throughout Luke's gospel, Jesus has been ever present. From the opening account of his birth, to his growth as a child and his wisdom in the temple, to his teachings and miracles, Jesus has been ever present. Yet the one place he is conspicuously absent is when we would expect him to be present. It was the third day since he had been crucified, died, and buried. He had said that on the third day he would rise again. And yet here we are – the third day – and in the most dramatic of moments, where is Jesus?

And this is the question people continue to ask. Where is Jesus in the hard times? Where is Jesus when I'm grieving? Where is Jesus in the chaos?

Find Jesus By Faith

We begin the search by discovering a small group of women who were the last ones at the cross and the first at the tomb. They had seen where Jesus' body had been laid. They knew the exact location. Waiting for the Sabbath day to be over, they came to pay their respects to the One they had loved. But instead of finding the body of Jesus, they found the stone rolled away and an empty tomb.

They had come at early dawn – before the sun was even up. They were awake. They were missing their Lord. They were prepared to finish the task of preparing the body for burial, even if the stone was in front of the grave. They were eager to honour their Master. And what they expected to find was Jesus dead in the grave, the stone in front.

But to their shock, they found the stone rolled away. An empty tomb. Jesus had been absent, now his body was missing! In their grief, in their exhaustion, in their sorrow, the body of their Lord was now missing. So it's no wonder that Luke tells us that they were perplexed about this (v. 4). But soon, their perplexed state was met by the fear because of two men standing in front of them in dazzling apparel. These holy messengers, clothed in glory, asked the women a question. "Why do you seek the living among the dead?" They assumed that Jesus was dead,



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and this was the reason they were up so early with spices and oils to prepare his body. They believed Jesus was still buried.

"He is not here, but has risen," (v. 6) they were told. And the story of the Bible had been pointing in this direction. When you have eyes of faith to see, when your eyes are opened to God's pattern of redemption, it becomes clear that God loves to do the impossible when there seems to be no way forward. God loves to bring life out of death. He brings a baby into the womb of a barren couple not once, not twice, but multiple times. He raises up a people from the land of slavery and death and brings them into a land of life by parting waters and delivering them from death. He takes a people dead in sin in exile and raises them to life by bringing them home by a divine Word.

So when the angels say, "Remember how he told you...that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise." Jesus had told his followers this pattern over and over (Lk. 9:22, 44; 18:32-33) because this is the pattern of God's redemption in the Bible. God loves to work in the impossible situation to show that only he can make a way. He loves to bring deliverance out of deathly situations to show that his power does not rest on the wisdom of men but in his own power.

"Remember," the angels said. What they were to remember was not only his words, but how his words were rooted in the very pattern and promises of God throughout Scripture. Jesus was not speaking something that was surprising. The pattern of resurrection is throughout the OT. It is displayed through God taking dead wombs and bringing life, bringing a people dead in slavery out into a land of life. The pattern of Jesus' words is the pattern of Scripture. And if we have eyes to see and ears to hear, we will find that Jesus is not absent, but very much present.

Recall Jesus' Words by Remembrance

How could the women know that the angels were speaking the truth? How could they know that they were not being deceived? People have asked this question over and over. In fact, year after year, some major news publication seems to present a "fresh" take on the questions around the resurrection. One year it was a Newsweek article questioning if the resurrection was truly physical. Another year they published an article examining the question afresh if Jesus "became" God. One year it was a documentary that claimed that the bones of Jesus and his family had been found. Year after year, claims have been made. The disciples had visions about Jesus. They were hallucinating. Jesus' body had been stolen.

And yet, people have staked their lives and deaths on the claim that Jesus is risen from the dead. The women at the tomb didn't demand evidence for proof. Instead, the angels told the



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women to remember. Remember Jesus' prophecies. Remember the pattern of the OT. Remember that everything has happened just as he said. Crucified, dead, and buried.

Now, on the third day, Jesus' words were true. He was not there. He is risen. And this resurrection isn't like that of Lazarus who was restored to life but would die again. No, Jesus has been raised and clothed with the imperishable so that death cannot touch him ever again.

So the women ran back to the disciples in full assurance of faith. Yet Jesus has not yet been seen! They are not going based off of evidence. They are going in remembrance which fuels faith. Where is Jesus when everything seems chaotic? Where is Jesus when you can't see him?

You remember his very promise, and the promise of Christ fuels faith. Christians eat and drink in remembrance of Christ's death so that we are fueled by faith. And our faith is fueled by remembrance. We recall his words. We remember his promises. We see the pattern of Scripture over and over, and we believe. We remember that he was crucified, died, buried, and raised to forgive our sins and bring us into newness of a life that has been raised from the dead. The pattern of Scripture – God bringing that which is dead to life – is the pattern of his saving work. From empty wombs to enslaved people to suffering sinners – he brings life where there is no life by creating faith.

Run to Christ

What amazes me about the disciples' response is that when the women come to them, five women in total, all bringing the same news, they believe this to be an "idle tale." It's like it's a made up story. A fairy tale. One person has suggested that this word "idle tale" is also used to describe what happens when people are sick and have a high fever and are in a state of delirium (see Geldenhuys, *Luke*, NICNT, p. 626).

And this is what many people think about Jesus. He's a good moral teacher. He has wise things to say. But a dead man coming back to life? That seems too good to be true. It doesn't seem scientifically possible. And so the disciples' response is no surprise – it just doesn't seem possible.

Except for Peter. He can't just dismiss what the women have said. He must go himself. He must see. While the others think these women are in a state of delirium, Peter goes for himself. He won't let the claims of delirium dissuade him. So Luke, telling his orderly account, full of factual detail and investigative reporting, shows us Peter running, stooping, looking, examining. Peter must make every effort to make his calling and salvation sure. He must run to Christ.



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And this is the response of faith. It refuses to let skepticism win. It refuses to let others dissuade you. Instead, it seeks out Christ. It runs to him. It looks by faith. It makes every effort. It examines the facts. It doesn't settle for anything but Christ himself.

But here is the thing: in this entire gospel, Jesus has never been absent – until now. Yet he is very present. He is not among the dead, but among the living. Death is not the end of the story. Resurrection is. For when you believe that Jesus has died for your sins and raised for your life, then every baptism, every Easter, every gift of life reminds us that the ache of our souls that longs for someone to be there after they're gone is a reminder that we were made for resurrection. So will you find the Christ who has been raised for your life?