

“Seeking Death and Finding Life!”—Luke 24:3-7

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, “Seeking Death and Finding Life!”, is Luke 24:3-7 → *When the women went into the tomb they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how He told you, while He was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.”* This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord (cf. 1Timothy 1:2). Amen.

P Christ is risen!

G He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Walking through doors and immediately being brought into the reality of sickness with the medical smell of the hospital, you struggle as you walk the long corridor to your spouse’s room. Even though the hospital is a place for healing you usually strive to avoid it because it also reminds you of your frailty and mortality. You know that even though one

comes there to seek life many times they find death. Even though the medical staff deal with life and death everyday they too are there seeking life, not death.

You park your car and start walking down the path. In the midst of your grief you come to this place, not by choice but by compulsion. You have come seeking the life you had with your spouse, cherishing the way in which he brought purpose and meaning to everything in life for you. As you approach the grave with the desire to talk with him, see him and be together all you can find is a lifeless silence. The reality strikes you that you cannot find life amongst the dead.

But what else would one expect when coming into a cemetery? As the women came to the tomb of Jesus early in the morning they were looking for the dead body of Jesus. That's what one should expect to find in a tomb. Surprised to see the stone rolled away from the entrance of the tomb *they went in* seeking death but *did not find the body of the Lord Jesus* (cf. Luke 24:3). Of course, the stone had been rolled away for them, not for Jesus. As true God Jesus was not limited by space or physical boundaries. Matthew's account tells us *an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone* (cf. Matthew 28:2), not so Jesus could get out but so that His followers could get in and witness life in the midst of death.

Naturally, they were perplexed, thinking someone had stolen Jesus'

body (cf. John 20:2). What kind of conclusions would you come to if you approached a grave only to find a deep hole with an open casket that's empty? Grave robbers would probably be the most logical conclusion. Resurrection most likely wouldn't even be a thought. Jesus' death would have been enough to fill them with feelings of hopelessness in terms of Jesus's deliverance in their lives, let alone be reinforced by His empty tomb.

So, in the midst their hopeless conclusions and feelings God sent His angels to "clear things up" for them. According to verses 4-5 of our text, in the midst of their perplexity *two men stood by them in dazzling apparel*. Oh great! A beatific vision on top of it all?! Naturally *they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground*. Then these angels (cf. Luke 24:22-23) asked a most curious question: *Why do you seek the living among the dead?*

"Uh . . . who said we were seeking *the living?*" The question seemed so out of place just as much as going to a cemetery to find strength for living may seem rather strange to many people. Then came the good news: *He is not here, but has risen*. (verse 6) Notice, these women did not immediately respond with, "He is risen indeed! Alleluia!" In order for that to happen they needed to be reminded of Jesus's words because faith is based upon the Word of God, not personal experience (cf. Luke 16:27-31; 24:25-27,32,44-46). The angels told them in verses 6-7 of our text:

Remember how He told you, while He was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise. Even with such explanation and reminder, confusion still ensued as they returned *from the tomb* and *told all these things to . . . the apostles, but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them* (cf. Luke 24:9-11). They still kept looking at their life with Jesus only according to a worldly perspective.

This is not unusual. It is only natural that people define life in the sense of its quality, meaning and purpose in the midst of the happiness or contentment they think it should give based upon physical dynamics. They look to their jobs, hobbies, things and relationships, searching to find “life,” only to feel “dead” and hopeless many times in unfulfilled expectations. Many who are seeking life in such ways find death because life is not something you “find.” Rather, life is something that’s **given** to you. And it’s given to you in the midst of death—the death of Jesus which led to His resurrection.

The fact is that we share the same struggle with Jesus’s followers, being *dead in our trespasses and sins* (cf. Ephesians 2:1). However, *God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, **made us alive together with Christ**—by **grace** you have been saved* (cf. Ephesians 2:4-5). Your life physically, both now and in “the world to come” eternally, is a gift of

God's grace by faith in the Person & Work of Jesus. Thus, you must die with Christ by repenting of your sins and receiving His forgiveness based upon having died and been raised with Christ in your baptism. Referring to your baptism, Romans 6:6-7 says: *We know that our old self was crucified with Christ in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin.*

As you live in this new life as a gift of God's grace in Jesus you will seek your meaning, purpose, joy and quality of life in death as you daily die to sin in repentance, trust in the death **and** resurrection of Jesus, and are raised to *walk in newness of life* (cf. Romans 6:4). Your perspective of life and death changes. You realize it is only God Who can give life and fill it with the proper meaning and purpose by the power of His Holy Spirit. Your jobs, hobbies, activities and relationships are received with thanksgiving as gifts of God. They are now avenues within which you can show Christ by the words, concepts and actions you display. Because out of death came life in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, out of your death to sin comes life in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The resurrection of Jesus caused those women at His empty tomb to receive and live a new life. Not only did they seek death and find life, **they received a new life**. They were killed and made alive in faith by the power of the Holy Spirit! They were given life in God's way and received

it by faith as it certainly did not make sense to them or His apostles. Remember, they thought the women were telling *them an idle tale, and . . . did not believe* their story. However, after receiving the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost Jesus's death and resurrection gave them a life governed by faith, filled with joy in Jesus's life and death, confessing that He lives and reigns to all eternity! You too have the privilege to confess:

P Christ is risen!

C He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!

According to His great mercy,

He has caused us to be born again to a living hope

through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading,

kept in heaven for you, who by God's power

are being guarded through faith

for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time . . .

. . . Though you have not seen Him, you love Him.

Though you do not now see Him, you believe in Him

and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory,

obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

(1 Peter 1:3-5,8-9)

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