

Daily Discipleship

Luke 24:1-12

Prayers of Discipleship: *To Proclaim the Good News*

Focus Question: *How do we tell and live the Good News of the resurrection?*

word of life

“Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen’ Then they remembered his words, and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest.” (Luke 24:6, 8 NRSV)

Read Luke 24:1-12

On this festival Easter Sunday, the gospel reading may be either from the Gospel of John or from Luke. This *Daily Discipleship* will focus on Luke’s account of the resurrection of Jesus.

The previous chapter in Luke’s Gospel ends as we expect any life to end – with death. Jesus has been crucified; his lifeless body has been laid in a rock-hewn tomb. The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee (Luke 23:55) witness where and how the body is laid in the tomb. It is Friday near sunset, the beginning of the Sabbath – a day in which no work is allowed (certainly not the handling of a corpse). So the women return home to prepare ointments for burial and to observe the commandment of keeping the sabbath. They will have to wait until Sunday to offer their last gesture of love for Jesus by anointing his body in the tomb.

1. *What are some gestures of love you have seen expressed at the time of loss?*
2. *What impact do these actions have on those who are grieving ... and on those who offer the gestures?*

Our Easter Sunday reading begins with sunrise that Sunday morning. And it begins with a simple three-letter word: “But” “But on the first day of the week, at early dawn ...” (Luke 24:1). As predictable as the previous chapter had been – the finality and certainty of death – this new dawn is filled with perplexing, unexpected surprises.

3. *Take a few minutes to look at the first twelve verses of Luke 24, and note the number of times the word “but” is used. (The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible is helpful for this exercise.)*
4. *What is so significant about this little word?*

Luke’s account of the resurrection does not mention the anxiety of the women wondering how they will move the stone sealing the opening of the tomb. The women are “perplexed” that the corpse is gone (Luke 24:4). Then two men appear in shining clothes (in Matthew it is an angel; in Mark it is a young man) and ask a question unique to Luke’s gospel: “Why do you look for the living among the dead?” (Luke 24:5) We will see two men in white robes appearing at the ascension of Jesus in Acts asking a similar question, “Why do you stand there looking up toward heaven?” (Acts 1:11) In both settings, the men answer their own question, pointing to a living Lord, triumphant over death and the grave: “He is not here, **but** is risen.” (Luke 24:5). God shatters, overwhelms, and exceeds the women’s expectations and brings forth life from death.

5. *Share the memory of a time in your life when God surprised you, shattered, or exceeded your expectations.*
6. *In what ways does the Easter message shatter expectations?*

The women leave the tomb to go and tell the disciples and all the rest the good news. Christ is risen from the dead!

word among us

On holidays like Easter Sunday, we have certain traditions and rituals we come to expect. We expect the sanctuary to be a bit more crowded than usual. We expect jubilant hymns (maybe even a trumpet or two). We expect to see lots of flowers and folks dressed up more than usual.

1. *What are the traditions and expectations you have in your congregation on Easter Sunday?*
2. *How about in your family or your community?*

Easter Sunday is a day of great expectations. Some might say these are foolish, wishful expectations. After all, we know what to expect in life. Only two things are for certain, the saying goes, and one of them is death. We are reminded of that every day in the local newspaper. We read of tragic deaths, deaths of heroes and celebrities. And on a more personal, profound level, we not only read but we experience the deaths of loved ones, family, and friends. We know only too well the power of death. We expect it and know it to be true for every one of us.

And so we come to this day with our very real experiences of death, pain and loss. Like the women at the tomb that first Easter morning, we have stood at the opening of the grave of a loved one. It is a common experience, a common, shared expectation that this life will one day end.

3. *What might it feel like for the women to go to the tomb early in the morning?*
4. *What are the feelings related to death?*

But in the common, early dawn that first Easter morning, the women's expectations were shattered by a life-changing, life-giving, life-transforming proclamation: "He is not here but has risen!" God has brought hope from despair, joy from sorrow, and life from death. God has obliterated our expectations and has destroyed the power of death in Jesus' resurrection.

5. *What does it feel like to hear "Jesus has risen!"?*

It makes all the difference in the world, because it is God's love **for** the world that gives Jesus **for the sake** of the world. Through the resurrection of Christ, our expectations are transformed. We look for and expect to see light, even in the darkest times of our life. We look for and expect to see possibility, even when the outcome seems inevitable. We look for and expect to see life, even in the face of death – our own, and our loved ones' as well.

6. *How does the Easter message change your expectations and your view of the world?*

It's a day of great expectations! Christ is risen! HE IS RISEN INDEED!

We gather to celebrate with great expectation. And we go forth to tell the world the Good News!

Prayer

We praise you, O Christ, as we celebrate the good news of the resurrection. Inspire us and fill us with joy, that we might be shining witnesses to you, our risen Lord. Amen

Dig Deeper

John 20:1-18

last word

Look expectantly this week
for examples of hope and life,
even in the midst of loss.



Daily Discipleship

Written by John and Robin McCullough-Bade

Copyright © 2007 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

May be reproduced for local, non-sale use provided the above copyright notice is included.

www.elca.org/evangelism/dailydiscipleship