**March 31, 2024 Luke 24:1-12**

***Nonsense***

**Scripture:** *Luke 24:1-12 NRSV*

*(1)But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. (2)They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, (3)but when they went in, they did not find the body. (4)While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. (5)The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. (6)Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, (7)that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again." (8)Then they remembered his words, (9)and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. (10)Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. (11)But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. (12)But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.*

**Notes:**

1. Did all the disciples ***abandon*** Jesus in his hour of need?
   1. The stories are about Jesus’s ***male***disciples.
   2. We often overlook his ***female*** disciples.
   3. ***Women***, who stayed until the bitter end.
2. The ***women*** kept vigil.
   1. They left to gather supplies to ***anoint*** Jesus’s body.
   2. They left “in obedience to the commandment” about the ***Sabbath***.
   3. They ***returned*** at the absolute earliest opportunity,
3. The ***stone*** had been rolled away.
   1. They found the tomb ***empty***,
   2. They got the ***message*** and ***charge*** to tell the others.
4. The ***women*** went immediately to tell the others.
   1. Luke admits that he and the other men were ***wrong***.
   2. It’s a Kingdom for ***all***.
5. The ***Nonsense*** of the resurrection is our hope.
   1. Women’s testimonies weren’t ***valid*** in court.
   2. Women were treated as ***unclean***.
   3. Women were ***first*** to share the message.
   4. Women were the firstrecipients of the truth.
6. Resurrection is a ***gift*** available to everyone!
   1. Embrace the ***gift*** of resurrection in our own lives.
   2. Jesus’s ***death***and ***resurrection***is sufficient to bring us life.
   3. ***Resurrection*** is for all of us!
   4. ***Celebrate*** the amazing love and power of God.
   5. Life has the final say; ***life*** in ***Christ***.

**Script:**

Have you ever been abandoned? Have you ever experienced a moment in time when you felt as if all who had known you had abandoned you, that those whom you thought loved you, left you to suffer at the hands of fate? I remember one time in my life when I felt as if all hope was gone. All who I thought were my friends, were not there to help and I felt so all alone. I felt as if there was nowhere else that I could turn to find relief. Yes I was surrounded by people, many who cared for me, but from my vantage point, there was nobody there for me.

In many people’s own lives, they have at one time or another felt this way. Perhaps you are one. Perhaps you felt that nobody really cares. Perhaps you have felt that there was nobody there to help you. Perhaps you have felt that all that you do is give, give, give; and there is nobody there to offer to give to you. And, you have to ask, “Why do I even try?”

I am certain that in the final hours of Jesus' life, he was tempted to believe many of these same lies that we often tell ourselves. Facing the cross to die alone for the sin of the world; I am sure that the temptation Jesus endured was fierce, as he was forced to bear that cross to the top of Golgotha, as they drove the nails into his flesh, and as his body weight pulled and exerted pain in every part of his body. And then for the disciples, the one they called Rabbi, their leader, that one who had brought so much hope he was now gone, taken away by the brutality of the Romans. They struggled to hold onto the last ounce of hope that they had. On this Resurrection Morning, we turn to Luke 24:1-12 and we hear the story of the first believers to arrive at his tomb. Stand with me and hear the word of the Lord, shared in Luke’s Gospel.

*Luke 24:1-12 NRSV (1)But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. (2)They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, (3)but when they went in, they did not find the body. (4)While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. (5)The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. (6)Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, (7)that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again." (8)Then they remembered his words, (9)and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. (10)Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. (11)But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. (12)But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.*

There’s a common belief in the church that all the disciples of Jesus abandoned him at his hour of greatest need. We do see some examples that support this theory: Judas facilitates Jesus’s arrest for thirty pieces of silver (Matthew 26:14–16); Peter denies Jesus in the courtyard right outside Jesus’s trial (Matthew 26:69–75); the remaining disciples are said to have “deserted him and fled” especially after Jesus is arrested (Matthew 26:56; Mark 14:50).

But when we characterize Jesus’s disciples in these narratives, we are forgetting something key: these stories are about Jesus’s *male* disciples. We often overlook his disciples who were women, Those who stayed until the bitter end, according to Matthew 27:55–56; Mark 15:40–41; and Luke 23:49. These same women are described as following Joseph of Arimathea to Jesus’s tomb so they could see where his body was laid (Matthew 27:57–61; Mark 15:46–47; Luke 23:55–56).

These three Gospels all take pains to note the presence of the women disciples all the way through Jesus’s crucifixion, death, and burial. Which leads us to today’s text,

“On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb.” The texts show us that the women kept vigil. They were there through the entirety of Jesus’s crucifixion, death, and burial. Luke 23 tells us that the only reason the women left the tomb even briefly was to prepare spices and perfumes for anointing Jesus’s body and “in obedience to the commandment” about resting on the Sabbath (v. 56). They returned to the tomb at the absolute earliest opportunity, we believe that it was just at or shortly before sunrise.

The first thing they noticed was that the stone The one they witnessed being rolled in front of the tomb to seal it had been rolled away this detail alone would’ve put them on immediate alert. Then of course we know that they went into the tomb and found it empty, They then encountered depending on which Gospel account you read either two men in clothes that “gleamed like lightning” (Luke 24:4), or “an angel of the Lord” (Matthew 28:2), or “a young man dressed in a white robe” (Mark 16:5), or Jesus himself (John 20:14–16). How the specific details played out is not important. What matters is that the women got the message that Christ was risen along with the charge to tell the other disciples (see Matthew 28:7; Mark 16:7; John 20:17).

The Women’s Proclamation The women went immediately to tell the disciples what they learned at the empty tomb. The disciples had trouble believing what the women said “…because their words seemed to them like nonsense” (Luke 24:11). We don’t blame the other disciples for doubting the women at first. We would all be doubtful about a claim like that! But notice that Luke is willing to admit in his Gospel that he and the other men were wrong. This news must be significant if Luke is willing to confess the men’s error publicly and admit the women were right. (Remember that in this culture, testimonies of women were not valid in court.)

The way this story unfolds illustrates something about the kingdom of God: it is not just for men or any other single identity; the kingdom of God is open to everyone. It is a kingdom for doubters People like Thomas, and like the men who didn’t believe the women, for women, for outcasts, for the afraid like the disciples staying hidden in locked rooms. It’s a Kingdom for all. Jesus’s death on Good Friday brought atonement for all, and his raising to life on Sunday brings resurrection for all!

It would’ve been easy for Luke or any of the Gospel writers to revise history, erasing the parts where they didn’t look good Judas’s betrayal, Peter’s denial, their desertion of Jesus at his arrest, their inability to believe the women at first and pretending they were the ones who found the empty tomb first. But instead, they have boldly proclaimed not only their own shortcomings but also the women’s steadfast presence through Jesus’s darkest hours as well as the women’s faithful preaching of the empty tomb demonstrating that truly all are invited to experience resurrection!

The Nonsense of the Resurrection Is Our Hope Let’s revisit why it is noteworthy that the Gospels are clear about the women’s presence and role in Jesus’s death and burial and the message of his resurrection. Women’s testimonies weren’t valid in court. Women were viewed as a lower class at best, as property at worst. Because of their menstrual cycles and their tendency to give birth, women were treated as unclean multiple times throughout every year.

The fact that women were the first to share the message of resurrection hope might just be the biggest statement of inclusion we can find in the Gospels. History is usually told from the perspective of the victors and the powerful but women in this culture had no power! Yet their story was told, and they were *named*, even when the details made the men writing the story look foolish. The women were merely the *first* recipients of the great truth that the resurrection was for them.

We celebrate that resurrection is a gift available to everyone through the grace of Jesus! Who are the outsiders in our world today? Who are the unclean? Who are the outcasts? What “nonsense” message are they trying to share that we are not hearing because it is arriving in the wrong package?

How are we communicating that the hope of resurrection is for them? Resurrection is a gift for us—do we believe that? Does the power of the resurrection seem like nonsense to us? Because our lives are in the throes of death? Because hope seems fleeting, or pointless? What would it look like to embrace the gift of resurrection in our own lives? Where do we need to see the power of the resurrection? How might our lives be transformed if we believed that not only is Jesus’s *death* sufficient but also his *resurrection* is sufficient to bring us life?

Resurrection is for everyone. Resurrection is for all of us! It is not just for someday; it is for now! We get to be like the women we get to share the nonsense message of love beyond measure and a hope that dispels hopelessness. We can be the ones sitting vigil day in and day out, anticipating hope. We can be the ones running with good news to others who desperately need to hear it because resurrection is for us, and it is for them. For all corners of the earth, for all people.

So we celebrate today the all-encompassing, amazing love and power of God. The same love and power that brings hope and resurrection into our lives. We remember the pain and suffering of Christ, and we know God is a God who suffers with us. But we also remember that death doesn’t have the final word not in our lives, not in our homes, nor in our communities. Life has the final say; life in Christ.

The resurrection has begun and is ongoing! The day of celebration has arrived! He has Risen!!! He has risen indeed!!!