



Why Do You Seek the Living Among the Dead?

LUKE 24
SERMON BASED SMALL GROUPS

Sunday, April 27th, 2025

This Week's Lesson

This week's lesson is based on the sermon from Sunday April 20th, 2025, by Pastor Tim Brigham. This sermon is not part of our ongoing series in Isaiah but instead is a special message for Easter.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this week's lesson is to encounter the resurrected Christ. This requires us to intentionally seek Him with a right heart attitude (surrender) and with a right mind (listening to His Word). We can easily miss Jesus if we ignore His words – He tells us where to look for Him.

MEMORY VERSE FOR APRIL

John 15:9-10 – As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love.

MONDAY DEVOTION – INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Recall the story Pastor Tim read:

I read a story about a man who lost his keys one night. It was dark out and he was out searching for them underneath a streetlight. A police officer saw him and stopped to help. He asked the man what he was looking for. "I'm looking for my car keys," he said, "I just can't find them!" The police officer nodded and helped him look around the area underneath the streetlight. They looked all over the area but couldn't find them. After several minutes, the police officer asked the man if he was sure he lost the keys in this spot. The man said, "No, I lost them in the park." The officer said, "Well then why are you looking for them on the street?" "That's simple," the man said, "There's more light here. Wouldn't be able to find anything in that dimly lit park!"

This story shows, as humans, we know we're missing something precious, but we don't want to look for it where the search is hard. Instead, we search where it's easy, but where the precious thing we're looking for can't possibly be found.¹

¹ <https://www.stmatthewavon.org/post/why-do-you-look-for-the-living-among-the-dead-luke-24-1-12>

Why is it hard to look for Jesus where He says He will be? What is it about our human nature that makes us want to look anywhere and everywhere except where Jesus says?

TUESDAY DEVOTION

Point 1 – Life is too short and eternity too long to look for the living among the dead. (5-6)

Like the women mourning the crucified Jesus, we too should mourn the results of sin in our lives and the lives of others. We must do this by going to the tombs made for that which was lost. **This is *part of true repentance*.**

Like the women mourning who brought prepared spices we, too, should be willing to make amends and bring comfort to those we've sinned against. **This is *part of true restitution*.**

But...the gospel does not stop at the crucifixion and tomb. It's only the valley on the way to resurrection.

This is where the truth becomes perplexing to the human mind. **Heaven must intervene to speak directly to our spirit.** Heaven's messengers (The Holy Spirit, angels, and preachers of the gospel) do for us what the world cannot do: deliver a message of eternal hope, full redemption, and indestructible life.

We do this all the time. We say we believe in God and yet, because of our unbelief in what He has said, we seek the living Jesus among the dead.

Where do we seek the living among the dead in our lives? Here's a few disappointing "tombs" I return to find myself searching for the living God:

- False Religion
- Ungodly Relationships
- Pleasing people for their benefit rather than God's glory in Jesus
- Romantic Fantasy (yes, even in marriage)
- Success at work, sports, or things I put my energy into
- More security to insulate against hardship.

ACTION STEP: Take a moment and underline or highlight areas on the list above that you struggle with. If needed, add items below. Then take time to confess, repent, and if necessary, make restitution for the sin of looking for Jesus in these wrong places and things.

WEDNESDAY DEVOTION

Point 1 – Life is too short and eternity too long to look for the living among the dead. (5-6) - Continued

Individually and collectively, we humans have always looked for life and fulfillment where it can't possibly be found. For all of human history we've sought to find fulfillment in the building up of empires, of bolstering our own tribe at the expense of other tribes. And more recently in human history, it's been the building up of our individual egos and identities at the expense of other individuals.

On a societal level, we seek safety by using violence and war. For far too long our world has searched for the living among the dead by believing war will bring peace. We use violence to achieve our goals. We trust in dominant power structures to bring order to the world.

On a personal level, we seek fulfillment in the promise of money and materialism to give us happiness. In the unending chase to gratify all our desires and instincts. In vain attempts to gain affirmation from others, to enhance reputation and popularity, to gain self-worth by what others think of us. We seek to have power and control over our own life because we don't trust God. So, we try to force things to fit into our model of the way things should be, rather than surrendering to God. We seek endless affection and esteem from a place of anxious groundlessness. And expect human relationships to fulfill our deepest longings for love and meaning. We seek security by storing up treasures for ourselves—too afraid to share out of our abundance because of the perception we never have enough. We're insecure in our sense of self, so we feel compelled to defend our identity against any perceived attack that threatens our fragile self-conception. We let our insecure ego call the shots, and become trapped in the tribalism that divides nations, religions, political parties, churches, and groups of all kinds.²

When we realize these tombs are empty, we also realize our hearts are empty. Only when we experience this kind of disappointment is there room to hear what God is speaking.

“Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here but has risen. **Remember** how he told you....”

² <https://www.stmatthewavon.org/post/why-do-you-look-for-the-living-among-the-dead-luke-24-1-12>

They remembered the prophecy that Jesus said this would happen. Then they returned to the gathering of disciples and shared with the forming church.

ACTION STEP: Consider how you respond to news headlines, political struggles, and even conflict in your work or family relationships. Are you guilty of wanting to “go to war” to make peace? Are you seeking personal gratification instead of building up the church? Take time to confess, repent, and make amends where needed, and ask God to help you make the necessary changes to find your way out of those empty tombs.

THURSDAY DEVOTION

Point 2 – Life is too short and eternity too long to not investigate the gospel like Peter did by running the tomb. The others did not believe...but Peter was inspired to investigate. (11-12)

The women encountered the risen Lord and were told to go back and tell the disciples. They go back and tell, but no one believes them! Peter and John, while skeptical, at least wanted to see for themselves. John saw the empty tomb but didn't go in. Peter, however, wants the whole truth and is willing to personally investigate the claim that Jesus has risen.

The women heard, “remember how He told you,” and they relayed that to the disciples. Their testimony had to match what Jesus said, not exceed it nor leave anything out.

When you hear the claims of Jesus in His Word through preaching or in someone's testimony, how do you respond? Are you always skeptical? Do you investigate? Do you know scripture well enough to know if their claims align with God's character and promises? Do you let the words of skeptics diminish your belief in what Jesus has said? Do you value Jesus' words more than you value others?

Remember the Bereans in Acts? Paul commended them because they did not accept Paul's teaching on face value; they investigated how his teaching aligned with scripture. (Acts 17:11)

FRIDAY DEVOTION

Point 3 – Life is too short and eternity too long to not marvel all the way home. (13-34)

The Road (to Emmaus)

When our hope is in Christ, we are never walking alone. He is with us.

Cleopas and the other disciple were talking about all these things that had happened...and then Jesus drew near. Yet they did not recognize Him.

“What happened? What things?” - Jesus is the master of lead-in questions! He doesn't need your information, just your attention.

Jesus broke the bread in communion fashion. “Do this in remembrance of me.” Their eyes were opened.

(Acts 2:42)

Their hearts burned as they talked with Jesus not knowing it was Him. This is the impact of the Spirit of Truth at work.

QUESTION: Do you know who you're talking to? If Truth is being shared, God is talking to you whether you recognize Him or not. Be humble.

The Return (of the wandering)

Do you see the empty tomb? The human heart is empty like that tomb. The fact the tomb was empty was that Jesus had risen leaving a void. If your heart is empty like the tomb, this also means that Jesus is alive, and you were made for Him and to be communing with Him.

They rose the same hour they recognized Jesus and returned to the community of worshippers.

- They invited Jesus to stay and prepared the meal...but the guest blessed it!!
- Those on the road thought they were making progress, but when they realized what REALLY happened and who they were REALLY talking to, they turned around and began to make real progress by returning to Jesus Word and His Church.

“While they were perplexed...as they were frightened...remember how He told you...return from the tomb and tell the rest” - Luke 24:1-12

Blessed are those who dwell in God's house (The Gathered Church)

Blessed are those whose strength is in God and delight (highway of the heart) in Him and His people.

The path to the house may include weeping (carrying your cross as a disciple of Christ doing what is not easy or normal), but He uses the tears accrued in this process to turn barren valleys into places of fruitfulness. (The process will bless you and those around you)

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. (Among His people)

“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”

2 Corinthians 3:17 ESV

Take the next step. Go back to church.

“We all want progress. But progress means getting nearer to the place where you want to be. And if you have taken a wrong turn then to go forward does not get you any nearer. If you are on the wrong road progress means doing an about-turn and walking back to the right road and in that case the man who turns back the fastest is the most progressive man. There is nothing progressive about being pig-headed and refusing to admit a mistake. And I think if you look at the present state of the world it's plain that humanity has been making some big mistakes. We're on the wrong road. And if that is so we must go back. Going back is the quickest way on.”

— C.S. Lewis, [The Case for Christianity](#)

During life's trials we tend to think God is dead and we, like the disciples heading to Emmaus, are walking alone, or at best, with other people discussing life's challenges. Truth be told, in our hardest moments Jesus is with us and carrying us though we do not recognize him. Jesus is alive.³

SATURDAY DEVOTION

Review this week's devotions and then prepare for the sermon tomorrow by reading the passage for this Sunday.

SERMON PREP

Take a few minutes today and read Isaiah 42:17 through chapter 43. What stands out to you? If you were going to make a three-point sermon, what would your points be?

WORSHIP PREP

Having read the passage, what songs does God bring to mind? Write one or two down and see if we sing them Sunday.

Conclude by praying for your small group meeting tomorrow.

³ <https://secondcitychurch.com/sermons/guestspeaker>

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SERMON BASED SMALL GROUPS

1. Use the sermon notes you have taken along with this handout to discuss the sermon with your family in your home as part of your daily devotions.
 - We would love to hear about conversations you have in your home around the table with your family – how is the Bible impacting your daily lives?
2. Use these resources to help you apply the sermon in your daily life, at work, school, home, at Walmart and Waffle House, etc. Remember, sermons aren't events to be attended. The Word is not for information, it is for transformation. The sermon is meant to be obeyed.
 - Talk with your family about how to successfully apply the sermon in your daily life. Look for "teachable moments" when real life events happen and discuss how we should react and respond according to Scripture.
 - When you are successful at applying Scripture in a real-life situation, share it with one another.
3. Use these resources and your daily experiences with your small group the following week; discuss what God showed you through applying the sermon; discuss how you have grown, and areas you are struggling and want the small group to pray for you in and hold you accountable.
 - Be a confidant for your fellow class members. Don't' ever let a matter of prayer become a morsel of gossip. Be trustworthy and watch how God uses your integrity and faithfulness as a group to help you grow closer to Him and to one another.