

LIFE WILL NEVER BE THE SAME!

(Since Jesus Rose From The Dead On The First Day of the Week)

Luke 24: 1-12 – Pastor Richard P. Carlson

On Tuesday, October 17th, 1989, at 5:04 PM Pacific Daylight Time, the earth shook under the San Francisco Bay area. The Loma Prieta earthquake, measuring 7.0 on the Richter Scale. The quake lasted 15 seconds and killed 67 people throughout northern California, injuring 3,757 and it left some nearly 12,000 people homeless, and was said to have done over 5 billion dollars-worth of damage. The earthquake occurred just prior to the first pitch in Game 3 of the 1989 World Series, featuring the Bay Area's Major League Baseball teams, the Oakland Athletics and the San Francisco Giants. In Candlestick Park, suddenly, the lights flickered. Steel girders holding the upper deck began to sway. Pieces of concrete crumbled down. North of the Candlestick Park in the Marina district of San Francisco, houses shifted off crumbling foundations, buildings collapsed, gas lines exploded, and fires spread. Across the Bay in Oakland, commuters were crushed to death as a one-mile-long section of Interstate 880 fell down on rush hour traffic. Thousands of people's lives were altered forever. Earthquake or not, part of the crowd stayed at the park crying, "Play Ball!" The Lieutenant Governor ordered everyone to go home, delaying the World Series 10 days, which was won by the Oakland A's. Life wasn't the same for a few days. Often, after the 911 attack, Americans were singing "God bless America," for two months, at sports events. Then the God consciousness was over. Americans were back to forgetting God.

Sadly, despite what happens on earth, most events, happy or tragic occur, and after a few weeks or months, life usually gets back to normal. When Jesus died on Calvary's cross, five miracles occurred. (1) Luke 23:44 tells us, "It was now about the sixth hour—noon, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour—3 PM, while the sun's light failed." (2) The temple curtain, the veil was rent in two, from top to bottom. The veil was 4 inches thick. 60 feet long, and 30 feet wide, weighing 4 tons. This rent veil opened access to God for all who come to the Father through Jesus." (Mk 15:38). (3) There was a miraculous earthquake, Matthew 27:51 tells us, "The earth shook, and the rocks were split." (4) The tombs also were opened. (Mt. 27:52) (5) Many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep, raised to life, and coming out of the tombs, after Jesus' resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many." (Mt. 27:52-53).

All these miracles were small compared with the miracle of miracles, Jesus rising from the dead. Our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who died to redeem us, rose bodily from the grave. History will never be the same since Jesus rose from the grave. Things may look the same, but they will never be the same. In Ecuador, in an old prison courtyard is an empty, sunken water tank. For years, that tank was used by prison officials to gain confessions from criminals through almost drownings and waterboarding. Yet 35 years ago, 10 criminals saved by Jesus in prison, stood one by one in that tank. They voluntarily confessed their sins, claimed Jesus as their Lord, and were baptized, identifying with Jesus in believer's

baptism. In that prison, it wasn't business as usual. If life today for any of us is business as usual, we have not come to understand the marvelous resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Lord has moved me by His Spirit to examine the resurrection of Jesus Christ afresh with you. What is there about Christ's resurrection that won't let us go back to business as usual? Since Jesus arose from death, there are at least five elements of our lives that have been totally transformed. They can never be the same. **What are these five transformed elements of life, transformed by Christ's resurrection?** I would remind us that these transformed elements of life are for believers only. Are you a believer in Jesus?

SINCE CHRIST AROSE, THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK WILL NEVER BE THE SAME. (I.) Notice our text in Luke 24:1-3. "But on **the first day of the week**, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus." In John 20:1-3 we read, "Now on **the first day of the week**, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. So, she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them. "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him. So, Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb." In Matthew 28:1, we read, "Now after **the first day of the week**, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb." And in Mark 16:2, we read, "And very early, on **the first day of the week**, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb." Most of us are aware that the Jewish Sabbath is Saturday, the last day of the week. Saturday is the commemoration of the rest of God after the six days of His work of creation. Now for us as Christians, Sunday can never be the same. It is **the first day of the week** on which we forever commemorate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Sunday can never be the same. Never can it be just another day or the beginning of another awful week. These faithful women who had believed in Jesus were going about a grim task on **the first day of the week**.

These women were all prepared now to carry out the last act of love for their dead Master. They were going to thoroughly embalm Him and anoint His body with their spices and perfumes. To their shock and consternation and surprise, the women found the stone rolled away from the opening of the tomb or sepulcher, that Joseph of Arimathea had given for Jesus' body to be buried in. He was a secret disciple of Jesus. Going into the inside of the tomb, these brave women further discovered that the body of Jesus was missing. Matthew 28:1-4 declares that an angel from heaven descended and rolled away the stone and was sitting on it. The tomb was empty. Before the angel opened the tomb, the body of Jesus was alive again, but raised from the dead in a glorious, glorified body. Jesus had already passed unseen out of the grave clothes. Like a butterfly leaves behind a cocoon, an empty cocoon, so Jesus had gone out of Joseph of Arimathea's rich tomb. The angel only came to roll away the stone to show the world that the Lord Jesus was alive, and the tomb was empty. No eyewitness saw the resurrection. Many saw the crucifixion, and many saw the ascension later, but only the Father saw the moment in that stone cold tomb when Jesus sat up, miraculously was out of His grave

clothes, leaving them behind, and He stepped out into the dew of a Jerusalem April spring morning on the first day of the week. The Hebrews up to this time didn't have an official name for the days of the week, except for the seventh day which was the Sabbath. For every believer, the first day has become the Son's day, the day of resurrection, the day when the sun came up to shine on the resurrected Lord and to shine on all those who believe in Him. The Son of God came up from the grave, never to die again. John, who won the footrace to the tomb, was the first to call this day the Lord's Day while he was exiled on the isle of Patmos. He wrote, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day." (Rev. 1:10)--the day of Christ's resurrection.

If you are a believer, this day has to be different for you. The Word of God lets us know that this day is a special day of worshipping Jesus. Paul tells us in I Corinthians 16:2 that every Lord's day, on the first day of the week, each of us should put aside something from what we have earned that week to use to give as our tithes and offerings to God. The amount we give is to be a proportionate amount depending on how much we have earned. A collection of tithes and offerings is part of the new purpose for this first day of the week. We all have differing times to give our tithes and offerings, for many of us it is monthly, for some weekly, for a few semi-annually or annually, but in every case, we give our sacred tithes and offerings on the first day of the week. Acts 20: 7 speaks of this first day being the day when God's people gather together to break bread. We break bread on the first day of the week, on the first week of the month and on a few extra special days like Christmas Eve and Good Friday. We learn from Acts 20: 7 that this first day is a day of preaching, for Paul preached on this first day until midnight. Remember, with many lamps in the room, a young man was sitting in the windowsill, Eutychus, and he got tired, went to sleep and fell down from the third story and was thought to be dead. Paul picked the young man up and said, "He is still alive." Then they went back upstairs, had the Lord's Supper, broke bread, and conversed until daybreak.

The early church was standing room only, some seated on windowsills, even sleeping in church. Don't be caught up in the spirit of this age, in post-Christian and anti-Christian America. Sunday has changed into fun-day or sports day. Jesus arose on Sunday and for believers, Sunday, the first day of the week, can never be the same. This is the day to learn about Jesus, the day for Sunday School. This is the day not only for preaching the Word, but for praising the Lord, testifying, and for a Sunday evening service, that few churches have. Yet Hebrews 10: 25 is clear, "Don't neglect meeting together, as is the habit of some, but encourage one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near." Is Sunday just another day for you, business as usual? 1000 times No! God forbid! Secondly,

SINCE CHRIST AROSE, THE ANSWERS TO OUR ANXIOUS QUESTIONS CAN NEVER BE THE SAME. (II.)

Every age is filled with fear and perplexity, with folk terrified and bowing their faces to the ground. Every age is filled with unanswered questions. Turn with me to our text in Luke 24: 4-6a.

"While they (the women) were perplexed about this (the empty tomb), behold, two men (angels) 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 He has risen.” These terrified women went inside the tomb, v. 2 and their perplexity rose, because this cold tomb was empty, and it lost its significance. This Resurrection day forever shifted the answers to all our questions from a place to the person of Jesus. The angels were saying in effect, “Your hopes and dreams are not to be found in this place. Jesus is not here, v. 5, for He has risen.” Thousands of Christian apologists put all their focus on the historical fact of an empty tomb. I praise the Lord the tomb is empty. I went there with Jinny to see the tomb is empty. But don’t stop there. The answers to our questions aren’t to be found in that empty tomb. Jesus is alive, alive, alive forevermore. Our answers are found in the Lord. He abandoned that cold tomb. He opened up a new and living way for us to know Him personally. Glory! 3rdly,

SINCE CHRIST AROSE, THE REMEMBRANCES OF JESUS’ WORDS CAN NEVER BE THE SAME. (III.) Notice verses 6b-8. “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.” And they remembered His words.” Somehow, the words of Jesus had dissolved and passed out of the minds of the women and the disciples. They had even forgotten His many prophecies of rising from the dead. Verse 8 tells us that as the angel spoke to the women, there came to their minds a flood of memory. This flood of memory was far more now than a recalling of Jesus’ words, His utterances. These memories were changing to eternal reality. Since Christ arose, the words of Jesus are no longer just a recalling of His words and sentences. Jesus’ words came alive Resurrection morning for Jesus was alive. Now it jarred these women. Jesus said He would rise again. Could it be true? Could memory and reality be the same? Memory was starting to mix now with reality. When we take the Lord’s Supper, Jesus left us a command to take real unleavened bread and real fruit from the vine, like we did in our Seder Meal, and to mix memory with reality as one until He comes again. When Jesus’ returns, memory will be forever swallowed up in victorious reality. Symbols, real as they are and full of meaning, the bread, and the cup, will then surrender their importance to being face to face with Jesus. 4thly,

SINCE CHRIST AROSE, THE TESTIMONY OF BELIEVING WOMEN CAN NEVER BE THE SAME. (IV.) Notice verses 9-11. “And returning, from the tomb, the women told all these things to the eleven disciples and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.” That’s a sad commentary on the disciples. The apostles did not believe the women. Paul wrote in Galatians 3: 28, 29, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.” As men and women before God, we are one in position as are Jews and Gentiles, slaves and freemen. In the family and in God’s church, God has a hierarchy of leadership. Yet, notice what Jesus did at the resurrection. The Father sent two angels not to doubting and unbelieving disciples, men, but to women

whose words to them were as from babbling idiots, from crazy women, out of their minds. Why did God do this? I do not know the motivation of Almighty God. I do know that seldom do men do it quite like women did that first day of the week. We as men can be reticent, unbelieving like Thomas, holding out until the last, proudly saying we are more logical and practical. Yet God chose His way, the fastest way. He knew who to tell first. He chose women to get out the good news of the resurrection. The words of the women on Resurrection Sunday can no longer be disputed. God stamped the testimony of these women forever as the first evangelists to tell the truth of His Resurrection. Hear me. The testimony of believing women can never be the same since Resurrection Sunday. Lastly,

SINCE CHRIST AROSE, THE EVIDENCE WE ONCE DOUBTED CAN NEVER BE THE SAME. (V.) Notice verse 12. “But Peter rose and ran to the

tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened.” Luke only tells us about Peter running to the tomb. John 20:4 tells us that John was the track star and not Peter, because John tells us he outran Peter to the empty tomb Resurrection morning. John stooped and looked in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. When Peter finally arrived at the tomb, he barged right on inside the empty tomb. (John 20:5-7) There he beheld the linen wrappings lying there and the face cloth which had been wrapped around Jesus’ head. The face cloth was rolled up in a place by itself. Peter’s going into the tomb led John finally to follow him into the empty tomb. What both men looked at together ended their doubts about the testimony of the women. There in the tomb were the undisturbed windings lying flat. It has to have been one of the most astounding sights a person could ever witness. Just as Jesus in His resurrection body could enter a locked room with the doors being shut, so he could pass through the linen wrappings without unwinding them. When Jesus arose, perhaps He just sat up in his grave clothes and then passed through them, leaving them lying there. Then as simply He passed his head through the face cloth and set it separately in another spot apart from the other wrappings. Even this first-hand evidence that Peter stared at was not all the evidence he needed, but it had Peter marveling. Jesus made His burial bed neatly.

Peter could never be the same. (1) The first day of the week was forever carved and etched into his mind. Now it was the Lord’s Day. (2) All his questions were no longer to be found in a place, but in a person—the Risen Christ. (3) No longer were Jesus’ words fuzzy or forgotten in his thinking. (4) No longer would Peter put down the testimony of the faithful women who followed Jesus. (5) No longer would he spurn the evidence. He had personally seen the empty tomb. Peter finally saw the Risen Lord. Alleluia, Christ is risen! Life can never be the same. All of Jesus’ words are true. He said He would come again at a time when the love of many would grow cold, at a time when the world would turn from summer to fall to winter spiritually. Beloved, it is like the saying, it may be Friday, but Sunday’s coming. It may be winter spiritually in the world, but Spring can’t be far behind. Jesus is alive and He’s soon to return. Are you ready for the King to return? Jesus is alive and life can never be the same. Eternity will never stop proclaiming the glory that He’s alive; He’s alive; He’s alive, Alleluia, Christ is risen! He’s alive!