

EASTER WEEK: PARTICIPANT
 WEEK 8: WEEK OF APRIL 21
THE EMPTY TOMB
 Luke 24:1–11

OPENING

- L Alleluia! Christ is risen!
 C **He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**
 L Almighty God, as the heavens are higher than the earth,
 C **so are Your ways higher than our ways and Your thoughts than our thoughts.**
 L But You made Your way of salvation known
 C **in the proclamation of Your Holy Word;**
 L in the death of Jesus Christ, our Savior;
 C **and in His resurrection from the dead.**
 L Now work in our lives through Your Word and Spirit
 C **that we might be living witnesses of your life-giving work.**
 L Alleluia! Christ is risen!
 C **He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

INTRODUCTION

In this section of the Passion Narrative (Luke 24:1–11), Luke relates the resurrection of Jesus. At the heart of this scene is the contrast between confusion and clarity.

The women go to the tomb with spices to care for the body of Jesus. Upon finding the tomb open and empty, they stand there confused about what they see. When they leave the tomb, however, they have clarity. They run to the disciples, proclaiming the resurrection. What accounts for this reversal?

The words of Jesus.

In the center of the narrative, between the coming and the going of the women, stand angels. Angels are messengers, and these angels bear the message of the words of Jesus.

Thus, Luke reveals to us how the words of Jesus bring clarity to the meaning of His Passion and inspire God's people for witness to the world.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When you read Luke's account of Easter, you will notice that Luke has three events that follow the resurrection: the appearance of angels to the women at the tomb (24:1–12); the appearance of Jesus to the disciples on the road to Emmaus (24:13–35); and the appearance of Jesus to His disciples (24:36–53).

If you read these events as a sequence, how do you see a greater and greater revelation of Jesus in the movement from morning to evening on the first Easter day?

2. As Luke offers us a fuller and fuller revelation of Jesus, Luke also offers a fuller and fuller remembering of God's Word. As you read these three events as a sequence and focus on the sections of dialogue, how do you see a fuller and richer revelation of God's Word?

3. In Luke's Gospel, when the words of Jesus and the words of Scripture are remembered, one has the fullest revelation of the resurrected Jesus who rules over all, and one sees how God's people become witnesses of God's work in the world.

What happens in the ending of each of these events, and how does that ending encourage us in God's work among us today?

CONCLUSION

The apostle Paul often speaks of the Gospel as the mystery of salvation (e.g., Romans 16:25 and Ephesians 3:9).

On that first Easter morning, Luke reveals how that which was hidden for ages was made manifest to the world. Christ not only opened the grave, but He also opened the Scriptures, opened His teachings, and opened the mouths of His disciples that they might bear witness to the clarity of salvation from sin by the death and resurrection of Jesus, the Christ.

Today, as we remember Easter, we also remember the words of Jesus, the words of the Scriptures, and the words of all who have borne witness to this work of God for us. By remembering God's words, we, too, become witnesses of God's saving work in the world.

CLOSING PRAYER

Almighty God, when the women came to the tomb that first Easter morning, You sent angels to teach them Your Word, and You changed their lives forever.

Be with us now as we celebrate Easter. Open our minds to understand the Scriptures, open our hearts to trust in Jesus Christ, our risen Savior; and open our lives to be witnesses of Your work in this world until Your Son returns and brings His glorious kingdom that never ends.

Through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and ever. Amen.