



Shelby Christian Church

BEFORE AND AFTER: EASTER SUNDAY - THE CROSS WASN'T THE END
MATTHEW 28:1-10, LUKE 24:5-7, 1 CORINTHIANS 15:3-8, 20 * 4/5/2026

MAIN POINT

Death was defeated, hope was restored, and everything changed.

INTRODUCTION

What is one defining moment that has shaped who you are today?

Have you ever paused to imagine how different your life might look if that moment had never taken place—what choices you might have made, what paths you might have missed?

Now shift that thought to the resurrection of Jesus. If you had to capture the significance of His resurrection in a single sentence, how would you express it?

And then consider this: how would history—and your own life—be altered if Jesus had not risen from the dead?

Every one of us can point to pivotal moments that redirect our lives. These turning points send us down roads we never would have chosen otherwise. But even the most defining personal event pales in comparison to the impact of Jesus' resurrection. Imagine the difference that one moment made in your life, then multiply it beyond measure. No event in human history has reshaped the world more profoundly. Because Christ is risen, we live with purpose, grace, and an unshakable hope that nothing can take away.

UNDERSTANDING

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 28:1-10

Who went to visit the tomb, and when did they go? Why is the empty tomb significant for the Christian faith?

What does the angel's message reveal about Jesus' power and identity?

Why do you think Jesus chose to appear first to these women? What did the angel say to the women? What emotions do you think the women experienced, and which do you relate to most?

What does Jesus' resurrection prove about His claims and promises? What does it mean to you that death did not have the final victory?

Why is it important that the women were told to share the news with others?

This passage records the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the central event of the Christian faith. It marks the victory of Jesus over sin and death and confirms that everything He taught and promised is true. Matthew highlights the faithfulness of the women, the power of God, and the joy and hope that flow from the empty tomb. It reminds believers that the resurrection changes everything. It assures us that sin has been defeated, death is not the end, and hope is secure in Christ. Like the women, we are called to respond with worship, obedience, and joyful proclamation. The risen Jesus meets His followers, calms their fears, and invites them to live in the confidence of His victory.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LUKE 24:5-7

What is the significance of the question, “Why do you seek the living among the dead?”

Why was it important that Jesus’ resurrection happened just as He predicted?

What does this passage reveal about God’s control over events?

Why do you think the angels reminded the women of Jesus’ own words?

How does this passage connect Jesus’ suffering, death, and resurrection as part of one plan?

Luke 24:5–7 records a pivotal moment immediately following the resurrection of Jesus Christ, when the women visit the empty tomb. These verses reveal both the awe-inspiring reality of the resurrection and the connection between Jesus’ death, resurrection, and God’s plan for salvation. It encourages believers to trust God even in confusing or frightening circumstances. When we face trials or feel lost, we are called to seek Jesus—the living One—rather than clinging to dead solutions or false hopes. The resurrection gives us confidence that God’s plan is perfect and that His promises are trustworthy. It also reminds us to share this hope, just as the women would soon proclaim the news to the disciples. The passage challenges us to live in the reality of the risen Christ, trusting Him for guidance, hope, and eternal life.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 1 CORINTHIANS 15:3-8, 20

What part of Jesus’ death and resurrection do you find most personally meaningful?

Why is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus described as “of first importance”?

What does it mean that Jesus was “seen by Cephas, then by the twelve, then by more than five hundred”?

How does Paul’s personal encounter with Jesus strengthen the credibility of the resurrection?

Why is the resurrection of Jesus described as “the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep”?

How does the resurrection confirm Jesus’ victory over sin and death?

1 Corinthians 15:3–8, 20 is Paul’s foundational explanation of the gospel, emphasizing the death, burial, resurrection, and appearances of Jesus Christ. This passage highlights why the resurrection is

central to Christian faith and the hope it brings to believers. The resurrection assures believers that death is not the end and encourages endurance through trials. Paul's emphasis on witnesses reminds us of the responsibility to share the truth of Christ's resurrection. Jesus' resurrection confirms that God's Word is faithful and trustworthy. An encounter with the risen Christ brings forgiveness, renewal, and purpose.

APPLICATION

What feels dead in my life that God wants to resurrect?

How does the resurrection of Jesus give hope in the face of fear, suffering, or death?

What fears or doubts can the truth of the resurrection help overcome? How can reflecting on eyewitness testimony strengthen your faith? When have you experienced doubt, and how does the resurrection bring reassurance?

How can believers today share the good news of Jesus' resurrection?

What does it mean to truly believe that Jesus is alive?

How does the resurrection change how we live our daily lives? What is one way you can live in the hope and joy of the resurrection this week?

PRAYER

COMMENTARY

Matthew 28:1-10

The Women Come to the Tomb (v. 1) - Early on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary go to look at the tomb. Their presence shows their devotion and love for Jesus. They expected to find His body, not a resurrection. Their actions reflect faithfulness even in grief and uncertainty. This moment also shows that the resurrection was discovered by ordinary followers, not powerful leaders. God often reveals His greatest truths to those who humbly seek Him.

The Earthquake and the Angel (vv. 2-4) - Suddenly, a violent earthquake occurs, and an angel of the Lord descends from heaven and rolls back the stone. The angel's appearance is described as bright and powerful, reflecting divine authority. The stone was not rolled away to let Jesus out, but to let others see that the tomb was empty. The guards, representing human authority, are overwhelmed with fear and become like dead men. This contrast highlights the powerlessness of human efforts to prevent God's plan.

The Angel's Message: "He Is Not Here" (vv. 5-7) - The angel tells the women not to be afraid and announces the most important truth in history: "He is not here; for He has risen, just as He said." This confirms that Jesus' resurrection was not accidental but the fulfillment of His own prophecy. The angel invites them to see the empty tomb and then sends them to tell the disciples. This shows that the resurrection is not only good news to be believed but also a message to be shared.

Fear and Great Joy (v. 8) - The women leave the tomb with a mixture of fear and great joy. Their fear reflects awe and reverence in the presence of God's power, while their joy comes from the realization

that Jesus is alive. This combination of emotions is common when people encounter God's truth. Their immediate obedience demonstrates true faith. They do not hesitate but go quickly to share the good news.

Jesus Appears to the Women (vv. 9–10) - As they go, Jesus Himself meets them. His greeting reassures them and confirms the reality of His resurrection. They respond by worshiping Him, recognizing His divine authority. Their worship shows that Jesus is not merely alive but worthy of honor and devotion. Jesus tells them not to be afraid and instructs them to tell His disciples to go to Galilee, where they will see Him. Even after His resurrection, Jesus continues to guide and care for His followers.

The resurrection proves Jesus' victory over death. Death could not hold Him. His resurrection confirms His power and identity. God keeps His promises. Jesus rose "just as He said," demonstrating His complete trustworthiness. The resurrection brings both awe and joy. It transforms sorrow into hope and fear into faith. The resurrection message is meant to be shared.

The women were sent to tell the disciples, showing that believers are called to share this good news.

Luke 24:5-7

The Angels' Question (v. 5) - The women are terrified when they see the angels, which is natural given the supernatural appearance and the startling news. The angels ask, "Why do you seek the living among the dead?" This question redirects the women's perspective. Jesus is not in the tomb because He is alive. The angels' question emphasizes that looking for Christ in the wrong place—where He has been defeated or where we expect only death—is futile.

The Resurrection Fulfilled (v. 6) - The angels declare that Jesus has risen, affirming the core truth of the gospel: death could not hold Him. The resurrection demonstrates God's power over sin and death and confirms Jesus' identity as the Messiah. By stating the resurrection as a completed event, the angels assure the women that God's plan is unfolding precisely as intended.

The Reminder of Jesus' Predictions (v. 7) - The angels remind the women that Jesus Himself had foretold His suffering, death, and resurrection. This emphasizes that these events were not accidental or tragic failures, but part of God's intentional plan for redemption. It also highlights the importance of remembering Jesus' words and trusting His promises, even when events appear confusing or frightening.

The central message of these verses is that Christ has risen—death is defeated, and He is the living Savior. God's plan is sovereign and purposeful. The resurrection fulfills prophecy and Jesus' own predictions, demonstrating divine control over history.. Faith requires perspective. The question, "Why do you seek the living among the dead?" reminds believers to look for life and hope in Christ, not in the things of the world. Trust and remembrance are essential. The women are encouraged to recall Jesus' words, showing that spiritual understanding often grows by remembering and reflecting on God's promises.

1 Corinthians 15:3-8

The Core Gospel (vv. 3–4) - Paul reminds the Corinthians that he delivered what he received: Christ died for our sins, was buried, and was raised on the third day in accordance with Scripture. Death for sins: Jesus' death is substitutionary; He took upon Himself the penalty for human sin. Burial:

Confirms that Jesus truly died, fulfilling prophecy and proving He was not resuscitated as someone might rise from fainting, but truly conquered death. Resurrection on the third day: This validates God's plan and affirms Jesus' victory over sin and death. It also shows that God's promises are trustworthy.

Eyewitness Appearances (vv. 5–8) - Paul lists witnesses who saw the risen Christ: Cephas (Peter), the twelve apostles, over 500 brethren, James, all the apostles, and finally Paul himself. Eyewitness credibility: These appearances provide historical verification of the resurrection. Order of appearances: Paul emphasizes that the resurrection was witnessed by many, including himself, strengthening the gospel's reliability. Paul's encounter: Even though Paul was initially a persecutor of the church, his encounter demonstrates the transformative power of the risen Christ.

Christ, the Firstfruits (v. 20) - Paul calls Jesus "the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep," a term drawn from agricultural imagery. Firstfruits: Just as the firstfruits guarantee the coming harvest, Jesus' resurrection guarantees that all who belong to Him will be raised. Victory over death: Christ's resurrection signals that death is not final for believers, providing hope and assurance of eternal life.

Resurrection is central to the gospel. Without it, the faith is futile, and forgiveness of sins loses its power (cf. 1 Cor 15:14). The gospel is historically grounded. Paul emphasizes eyewitness testimony to show that the resurrection is a real, verifiable event.. Resurrection provides hope and assurance. Christ as firstfruits guarantees that believers will share in His resurrection and eternal life.. Transformation comes through encounter with the risen Christ. Paul's personal experience illustrates how the risen Christ transforms lives and calls believers to faith.