

The Living Among the Dead

[Luke 24:1-12, 1 Corinthians 15:19-26](#)

It was a sad day in America and all over the world when the news finally spread. The rumors were true. There was no denying it – Elvis, the King of Rock and Roll, was dead. Yet it is interesting how many people claimed to have witnessed seeing the king alive, even when the reports were confirmed of his death. No matter how great someone is, at some point we will all face death.

There has only been one who was able to conquer death. Jesus of Nazareth, God on earth, defied all odds and broke through the bonds of death, hell and the grave to once again walk on earth – alive and well. The documented evidence was irrefutable – Jesus who was crucified was now alive. Jesus, who was cruelly beaten and battered, nailed to a cross and pierced for good measure. Jesus who was taken down from the torture

device of the Romans and laid in a borrowed tomb, signed, sealed and delivered would not be restrained by the grave. Jesus was among the living, later to appear to numerous witnesses who attested to the account that in fact Jesus the Christ did return from the dead. Folks, this is a day to celebrate! This is a day to rejoice! We remember this day as if it has just happened – the power of Jesus Christ lives and reigns again. Hallelujah!

This is another of those sermons I should preach with a disclaimer – this is exciting stuff! The light of the world has come to redeem the lost – we no longer have to remain prisoners to our sin. God sacrificed himself to ensure that we could have life, and have it more abundantly. Instead of a funeral, we are in the presence of a renewal – Jesus Christ is alive!

So why on earth are we looking for him among the dead? Luke 24:5-8 says, “Why do you look for the living among the

dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’ Then they remembered his words.”

This must have be the AHAH moment of the century! Jesus wasn’t kidding! He wasn’t speaking in parables or circles – Jesus meant what he said – he was going to die and after three days he would rise again. They do say hind sight vision is 20/20! Suddenly all of Jesus’ teachings were starting to make sense.

Resurrection is an interesting thing. From a medical perspective, people are resurrected/resuscitated every day. We hear the accounts of those whose hearts have stopped beating and are zapped back to life. But there is only so much medical science can do. When someone is dead more than a certain

number of minutes – not days – there is no hope. They cannot be resuscitated. They simply pass from this life to the next. But Jesus was not the result of a brilliant breakthrough in medical science. Jesus, the son of God, would not be contained by death. Jesus, the Messiah, would not be constrained by grave clothes. Jesus, our Redeemer, would not be held back by a tombstone. Jesus was alive – not as a corpse or a resuscitated ghost but once again as both fully human and fully divine.

Yet the disciples were still stunned by devastation. The women who followed Jesus still visited the tomb to complete the burial process. The Romans still thought they had taken care of another nuisance. Everyone was looking for Jesus among the dead. How about us? Are we still trying to bring Jesus in the midst of the dead? I certainly hope not! This is exciting stuff folks! Christ is risen – he is risen indeed!

Are we willing to capture that enthusiasm and share the gospel with our neighbors? Are we expecting life here at Mount Tabor? I do. God is in our midst today. Christ is risen and the grave is missing one more inhabitant. We remember these events as the pinnacle of our Christian year. Christ is here with us, and Christ does not dwell among the dead. Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father, yet is still in our midst lighting a spark of excitement and hope and courage, amen? Christ is a very real presence in the hearts of all believers. We are among the living, amen? Has Christ breathed new life into you so that all the cares and mistakes of the past have faded away in the awesome presence of Almighty God? We are Easter people – we live in the promise and hope of a kingdom of God here on earth and in heaven.

So where do we go from here? We know the story and we acknowledge the presence and life of Jesus Christ, the son of God. Does the story end here or is it just the beginning?

Perhaps we are at a crossroads – what path is God asking us to follow? This is where we can seek God and find direction for our faith community. This is where we will find the answers for the cares and concerns of our lives – at the foot of an empty cross.

Communion with God and all the saints is something we celebrate today as well. The arms of hospitality are extended to everyone – this is our model to follow. Can we welcome all who wish to worship here? Can we extend a hand of hospitality that includes God's grace, offered without price? Can we take this Easter excitement and extend fellowship to one another as we share God's love with our neighbors?

This is where we can come and commune with God. This is where we can lay our burdens down and receive peace and assurance. This is where we can marvel at the image of an empty tomb and leave rejoicing at the mighty work of God. This is where we can be the real presence of God in our community. This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Let us not look for Jesus among the dead but among the living. We are alive and well at Mount Tabor and Christ is in our midst. Let us take the light of Christ with us and share it with all who desire a relationship with God. The tomb is empty! Christ is risen – He is risen indeed! Amen.