

EASTER VIGIL

Why Do You Look for the Living Among the Dead?

Q: *“Why do you look for the living among the dead?”* ([Luke 24:5](#))

- ❖ That is the question the angels posed to the women who came to Jesus’ tomb that first Easter morning.

And that is the question I would like us to consider on this Easter night.

Luke tells us the women made their way to the tomb with their spices to to anoint his body in the grave. ***“They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find Jesus.”*** (Luke 24:2-3)

- ❖ They were looking for Jesus among the dead, and they could not find him.

Many people are still looking for Jesus among the dead.

- I think of **scholars** who study the words of Jesus and the gospel manuscripts but do not believe in Christ’s resurrection.
- I think of the **archaeologists** who two thousand years later are still trying to find Jesus’ body and bones in the tomb but keep coming up empty.
- I think of people **who finger the body of Christ** on their crucifixes but do not know the reality of the living Christ.

All these people all have one thing in common:

- ❖ They are all looking for Jesus among the dead.

And if you are looking for Jesus among the dead, you will not find him.

He is not there!

Some of you may know of Frank Morison was a journalist who lived early in this country in the twentieth century.

- He was not a Christian.

- Although he admired the figure of Jesus, Morison was a **skeptic** at heart who felt that the story about the resurrection of Jesus was nothing more than myth or legend.

So, Morison had a brilliant idea.

- Q: Why not prove that the resurrection never happened?
- Q: Why not use his research skills as a journalist to dig into history and prove that Jesus never rose from the dead?

He would do his research and then write a book presenting historical facts about Christ and the events surrounding his death.

And so Frank Morison went looking for Jesus among the dead.

Q: **Guess what?** He never found him.

What he did find is exactly what Luke said in verses 2-3: He found ***“the stone rolled away,”*** but he did not find the body of Jesus.

- ❖ Instead he found the risen Christ and **put his faith in him** as his Lord and savior.

Morison wrote up his research in a famous book called, ***“Who Moved the Stone?”***

- ❖ I love the title of the first chapter. He called it: ***“The Book that Refused to Be Written.”***

HOW WILL YOU RESPOND?(verses 9-12).

We see several responses highlighted in our passage tonight.

- First there was **the response of the women**. Look at verses 9-10: ***“When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles.”*** ([Luke 24:9-10](#))

Of course they came back from the tomb frightened, confused certainly did not understand but there was one thing they could do.

❖ The women believed, and they shared their faith with others. Such being the case we need to share our faith with others, just like the women did.

The good news is for sharing.

❖ Don't keep the good news of Easter all to yourself.

b) Secondly, there was **the response of the apostles**.

The Gospel says: ***"They did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense."*** ([Luke 24:11](#))

While the women believed the good news of Easter and shared their faith with others, the apostles did not believe, and so they did nothing.

- I am happy to report the apostles later changed their minds on this point, but their initial response mirrors the response of so many people today.

They don't believe in all this Jesus stuff.

It all seems like so much nonsense to them!

They dismiss the story of Jesus outright and continue to live their lives as though nothing happened that first Easter morning.

- **Q:** Is that your response today?

But there is a Third Option for you today. And this option is illustrated for us by **Peter's response**.

Verse 12: ***"Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened."*** ([Luke 24:12](#))

If you are not sure rather than simply rejecting it as nonsense. You can do what Peter did.

- You can check it out for yourself.
- Peter ran to the tomb.
- He examined the evidence.
- He saw the stone that was rolled away.

He entered the empty tomb and saw the strips of linen that once contained the body of Jesus, now lying there by themselves.

Or else just do what Frank Morison did.

He didn't believe, but at least **he checked out the facts for himself**.

- You could read Morison's book, *Who Moved the Stone?* or
- Josh McDowell's book, *More Than a Carpenter*, or
- Lee Strobel's book, *The Case for Christ*, or more recently,
- Timothy Keller's excellent book, *The Reason for God*.

There are many other good resources out there that will present to you inspiring material on the resurrection.

Or if you are not into reading, then come and talk to me or one of the many seasoned members of this community.

Let us all share the Good News that Jesus has indeed risen from the dead.