

The Burial and Resurrection of Christ

Primary Text: Luke 23:50-56; Luke 24:1-12 (KJV)

Gospel Summary Text: 1 Corinthians 15:1-8 (KJV)

The gospel is rooted in real history. Paul summarizes it in four great facts: **Christ died for our sins, He was buried, He rose again the third day, and He was seen** according to the Scriptures and by many witnesses, 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 (KJV). Luke's account of the burial and resurrection of Christ brings us into the heart of that apostolic witness. These are not side details. They are essential to the gospel itself.

Christ's burial proves that He truly died. Christ's resurrection proves that His death was accepted by the Father and that death could not hold Him. The empty tomb, the angelic announcement, and the eyewitness testimony together declare that Jesus Christ is the risen Lord.

Main Truth

The burial and resurrection of Christ confirm the truth of the gospel, reveal the faithfulness of God to His Word, and call believers to courageous, open devotion to Christ.

Why the Burial Matters

Many believers rightly focus on the cross and the resurrection, but the burial is also part of the gospel. Paul includes it plainly in 1 Corinthians 15:4 (KJV): "And that he was buried." Burial is the public confirmation that Christ truly died. Men do not bury the living. The burial stands against every denial that would suggest Jesus merely appeared to die or somehow survived the cross.

Luke gives careful attention to this moment because the burial is part of God's witness to the world. Jesus was not left vaguely unaccounted for. His body was taken down, prepared, placed in a known tomb, and observed by witnesses. The same gospel that declares His death also declares His burial.

Joseph of Arimathea

Luke introduces Joseph of Arimathea with unusual care, Luke 23:50-51 (KJV). He was a counselor, a member of the Sanhedrin, yet he was also "a good man, and a just." He had not consented to the council's decision and deed against Jesus. He was one who "waited for the kingdom of God," Luke 23:51 (KJV). That language places him among the true remnant in Israel, a man of faith who trusted the promises of God.

Joseph appears at a critical moment. When the disciples are absent and the body of Jesus would otherwise be left to shame, Joseph comes forward. John 19:38 (KJV) reveals that he had been a disciple of Jesus secretly, for fear of the Jews. Now the moment of decision has

arrived. He can no longer remain hidden. He goes to Pilate, asks for the body of Jesus, and openly identifies himself with the crucified Christ.

What Joseph Teaches Us

Joseph's action is one of the most striking examples of courageous discipleship in the passion account. He shows that God often prepares a person quietly for one decisive act of faithfulness.

- God places His people in unexpected places.
- Secret discipleship cannot remain secret forever.
- Fear can give way to courage by the grace of God.
- Ordinary acts of obedience can become central to God's redemptive witness.

Joseph did not preach a sermon at Pentecost or plant churches across the Roman world. He buried the body of Jesus. Yet that act became part of the heart of the gospel proclamation to all nations. His example reminds the church that faithfulness in a God-appointed moment matters deeply.

This should encourage believers who feel overlooked or uncertain about their place in the kingdom. God prepares His people for the work He has ordained for them. When the decisive moment comes, the call is not to shrink back, but to obey.

The Burial of Christ

Joseph took the body down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulcher hewn in stone, "wherein never man before was laid," Luke 23:53 (KJV). The burial was done quickly because the Sabbath was drawing near, Luke 23:54 (KJV). The women who had followed Jesus from Galilee watched carefully. They saw the tomb and how His body was laid, Luke 23:55 (KJV). Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments, resting on the Sabbath according to the commandment, Luke 23:56 (KJV).

This careful record matters. The location of the tomb was known. The placement of the body was known. The women knew exactly where to return. The burial of Christ was not vague, hidden, or uncertain. It was witnessed.

There is also rich symbolism here. Christ rests in the grave on the Sabbath. His saving work has been completed. The old order is about to give way to the dawning of the new creation.

The Resurrection of Christ

Luke 24 opens on "the first day of the week," Luke 24:1 (KJV). The women come early to the tomb bringing the spices they had prepared, but they find the stone rolled away and the

body of the Lord Jesus gone, Luke 24:2-3 (KJV). Their first response is perplexity. Then two men in shining garments stand by them and interpret the event.

The angels do not merely announce an empty tomb. They explain its meaning: “Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen,” Luke 24:5-6 (KJV). The resurrection must be understood through the Word of Christ. The angels tell the women to remember what Jesus had already said in Galilee, that the Son of man must be delivered, crucified, and rise again the third day, Luke 24:6-7 (KJV).

How Faith Is Strengthened

The women do not come to faith in the resurrection by the empty tomb alone. The empty tomb is interpreted by the Word of God. Luke says, “And they remembered his words,” Luke 24:8 (KJV).

This is an important lesson for the church. Events do not interpret themselves. God’s Word interprets events. Faith is strengthened when what God has said is remembered, believed, and applied. The resurrection was not an unexpected correction to a failed mission. It was the fulfillment of Christ’s own words and of the Scriptures.

- The empty tomb is a fact.
- The angelic message gives divine interpretation.
- Christ’s prior words anchor the event in Scripture.
- Faith grows where God’s Word is remembered.

The women then become the first witnesses to the resurrection message, Luke 24:9-10 (KJV). Their testimony is initially dismissed by the apostles as idle tales, Luke 24:11 (KJV). Yet the truth remains true even when first received with hesitation.

Peter and the Grave Clothes

Peter runs to the tomb, stoops down, and sees the linen clothes laid by themselves, Luke 24:12 (KJV). This detail is significant. The grave clothes are not scattered as though a grave robbery had taken place. They remain there in a way that points to something miraculous. John adds that the napkin that had been about His head was not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself, John 20:6-8 (KJV).

The point is not merely that the tomb is empty. The scene bears witness to a resurrection unlike any ordinary event. Jesus did not revive and struggle out of the tomb. He rose in power. Peter leaves amazed at what has come to pass, Luke 24:12 (KJV).

The resurrection of Christ is bodily. The body that was crucified is the body that was raised. Christianity does not proclaim a vague spiritual survival, but the bodily triumph of Jesus Christ over death.

What the Resurrection Declares

The resurrection is God's public vindication of His Son. Romans 1:3-4 (KJV) teaches that Christ was "declared to be the Son of God with power... by the resurrection from the dead." Romans 4:25 (KJV) says He "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

The resurrection means that Christ's death was accepted. The atoning work is complete. Death had no rightful claim over Him once that work was accomplished. He rose because the payment had been made and justification had been secured for His people.

Acts 13:29-39 (KJV) shows how the apostles preached this message. Christ was taken down from the tree and laid in a sepulcher, "But God raised him from the dead," Acts 13:30 (KJV). Through this risen Christ, forgiveness of sins is preached, and by Him all that believe are justified, Acts 13:38-39 (KJV).

Application for the Congregation

These truths are not meant to remain historical facts only. They press upon the conscience and comfort the believer.

For believers

The resurrection gives real hope in the face of death. Christ has conquered the grave, and all who belong to Him will share in that victory. The believer may grieve, and the believer may suffer, but the believer does not face death without hope.

Joseph of Arimathea also calls us to open, courageous loyalty to Christ. There are moments when a hidden faith must become public obedience. The Lord prepares His people for those moments, and His grace is sufficient when they come.

For those not yet trusting Christ

The gospel is not advice. It is news. Christ died for sins. Christ was buried. Christ rose again. Christ was seen. The proper response is repentance and faith. The risen Christ is the only Savior for sinners.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

Reflection Questions

Use these to prepare your heart before the Sunday service.

- Why is Christ's burial an essential part of the gospel message?
- What stands out most about Joseph of Arimathea's courage and obedience?
- What does the empty tomb mean when interpreted through the words of Christ?
- Why is the bodily resurrection of Jesus so important to the Christian faith?
- How does the resurrection strengthen your hope in the face of death?
- In what area of life might the Lord be calling you from fearful silence to open obedience?

These questions are meant to move beyond information into worship, assurance, and practical faithfulness.

Prayer Focus

Thank the Lord Jesus for dying for sinners, for entering the grave, and for rising again in victory. Ask God to strengthen your faith in the resurrection, deepen your hope of eternal life, and make you a bold disciple who does not shrink back when obedience becomes costly