

## THE GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 24:1-11

<sup>1</sup> On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, **the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb.** <sup>2</sup> They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, <sup>3</sup> but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. <sup>4</sup> While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. <sup>5</sup> In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead?" <sup>6</sup> **He is not here; he has risen!** Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: <sup>7</sup> "The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again." <sup>8</sup> Then they remembered his words.

<sup>9</sup> When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. <sup>10</sup> It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who **told this to the apostles.** <sup>11</sup> **But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.** (NIV)

INTRO - About 6 or 7 years ago I got bad news at the end of an 11:00 worship service. Longtime valley resident and St. John member Val Holtom told me as she was leaving church and shaking my hand, 'Pastor, I went to the doctor and this lump on my neck is cancer. They don't think they can do anything for me.' Then she went on. Now, I think that I had been feeling pretty good because worship had gone well that day. But that news from Val was enough to make me feel down. That week I called Val so I could visit her and talk to her and pray with her. But, I wasn't looking forward to more details about her bad news.

I. The ladies in the lesson for today were living with bad news.

A. We are told, **the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb.**

1. They had seen Jesus tortured, and executed, and killed on the cross.
2. They were expecting Jesus' dead body to be in the tomb.
3. As they lived with the news of death, they grieved the loss of their friend, their teacher, the only way they knew how, they went to prepare his body properly, according to Jewish custom, with spices.
4. The news of Jesus' death caused pain and sorrow for his followers.

B. Don't just look at the women, the disciples were acting the same way.

1. The men were supposed to be strong, but more than the women the male disciples had deserted and denied and betrayed Jesus.
2. Now they were ashamed of their actions, and hurting because of the death of their friend.
3. The ladies even went to the tomb and came back with news of an amazing experience.
4. But, the reaction of the disciples was similar to that of the ladies, only more so.

Verses 10 and 11 tell us the women '**told this to the apostles. <sup>11</sup> But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.**'

4. The news of Jesus' death caused pain and sorrow for his followers.

C. That is how I acted when I heard of Val's illness.

1. I knew of God's love, his promise for eternal life, but all I could focus on was the medical diagnosis.
2. Many times God's people live in the bad news of this world.
3. There is plenty of bad news, because this is a world of sin, and people continue to rebel against God, to live for themselves rather than for God.
4. The bad news of sin and death causes pain and sorrow for Jesus' followers.

II. So let me tell you about my visit to Val's house. She lived at the end of Plumbley Road in a small house with horse barns and corrals outside. You entered Val's house into her living room and her kitchen was in the back looking out into the back yard. I sat in the living room, and when I had a chance to speak I asked about the doctor's report. I believe that lung cancer had moved to Val's neck and other places. The doctors could NOT do anything. I expressed my condolences, 'I'm sorry to hear that, Val.' Do you know what Val said? She responded, 'Sorry? Pastor, why should I be sorry or sad? I'm going to get to see my Lord? That makes me happy? Why should I be sorry?'

A. I had the wrong attitude, I was looking at the negative when the good news was really stronger.

1. Val knew about her sin, and that death would come some day.

2. Now she knew that it would come sooner rather than later.
  3. But, Val knew the stronger and more important news.
  4. She knew that Jesus had come to this earth to be her savior, that he had lived a perfect, sinless life for her and all people, that Jesus had suffered and died to pay for her sins, and that Jesus had risen again and that **‘whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.’**
- B. The women and the disciples had good news.
1. Jesus had told them earlier he would die, but then rise again. The angels reminded them.
  2. The tomb was empty. The angels told the ladies that Jesus was risen.
  3. But in a world where pain, and trouble, and sin, and evil are so much a part of life, no wonder we are told about the disciples’ reaction. **their words seemed to them like nonsense.**
  4. They had reason to rejoice, however.
- C. My Christian friends, let me tell you today what God has done for you.
1. Jesus is the Son of God who left heaven and came to this earth to be your savior.
  2. Jesus was the promised Savior, who lived a perfect, sinless life for you and all people.
  3. In spite of being perfect, Jesus suffered and died to pay for your sins. Yes, he did die on the cross, because of us!
  4. But, Jesus rose again and, **‘whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.’**
  5. He is risen (He is risen indeed!)
- III. Now, let me tell you what happened next. As Val and I were sitting in her living room around her coffee table she pointed 6 pictures she had there on that coffee table. She said, ‘These are my Compassion Children.’ Val was sponsoring 6 children overseas for Christian teaching and the necessities of life. Val said, ‘I wrote a letter and sent a check for the rest of the year and asked them to find other sponsors beginning next year because I will be dead.’
- A. You see, Val’s faith in the resurrection affected the way she lived.
1. Even after her diagnosis she lived with faith, and love, and even joy, because Jesus had risen and was taking her to heaven.
  2. More than once I heard Val tell others that her coming death was not bad news, but good news.
  3. In the midst of a world of sin, and pain, and death, the resurrection of Jesus and Val’s faith in that resurrection changed her life, and the lives of those around her, for good.
- B. What is pulling you down today?
1. Does news of illness cause you sadness? Has the death of a loved one hurt you?
  2. Are you stuck in a pattern of sin, where you don’t think you can overcome your temptations?
  3. Does life seem like a little bad news in the midst of misery and sorrow?
- C. **He is not dead (here); he has risen!**
1. Jesus died to pay for the sin that causes life’s pain and sorrow and death.

2. But Jesus rose from the dead, and His resurrection continues to bless us. Jesus is stronger than the pain and evil in the world around us.
3. Jesus is stronger than sin and death.
4. Jesus has eternal life waiting for all who believe He is their savior from sin, for you.
5. Because of your eternal victory, because Jesus who helps you has died, but **HAS RISEN**, you can face illness, death, temptation, trouble, all life has to bring, in a changed way, with faith, and love and victory.

CONCLUSION - A couple of weeks ago I told about 80 of you about a friend of my daughter's at college. This young girl was raised in an abusive home, had spent much time receiving help, but even at a Christian college continued to have troubles. Then, one night she was attacked, and raped. She did not want to live. But, the love and victory of Jesus which her friends knew helped her. She told them she would not be there if it weren't for them. And she asked them to help her be baptized. This morning, just after midnight, she was baptized, and joined, as the Bible says, to the death and resurrection of Jesus. Life will never be the same again for her. Yes, there is pain and struggle. But, you know what, sin and death are not stronger, Jesus's resurrection is. **He is not dead (here); he has risen!** (He is risen indeed.)

May God grant you to live in the resurrection victory of Jesus. Amen.