

HE IS NOT HERE

(15-20 minutes, easy set-up)

Use this outline and any of the corresponding activities to share the Biblical Truth with students.

Introduction: Imagine that you have been a follower of Jesus for a while. You followed Him to Jerusalem, you were there when He was found guilty, and you watched Him carrying the bar for the cross through the city and to the place where He was crucified. After Jesus died, you would have experienced sadness, anger, frustration, humiliation, hopelessness. Those who had loved Jesus had watched Him face an excruciatingly painful and humiliating death. His followers watched and cried, but could do nothing. The women who had been with Jesus in Galilee even followed along as His body was carried to a burial chamber and placed inside. And, because of the lateness of the hour and the approaching Sabbath, they again could do nothing. At sunrise, when the Sabbath had ended, the women rushed to the tomb to do the one thing they knew how to do for Him . . . to prepare His body in death.

1. Because Jesus was alive, His tomb was empty (Luke 24:1-12).

Biblical Background: The women came to the tomb with burial spices, but found the entrance open and Jesus' body missing, and two angels who asked why they were looking for Jesus' dead body (vv. 1-5). Instead, they were greeted by two angels who proclaimed that Jesus had been risen from the dead, just as He had promised them. The angels' words supported the fact that **Jesus Is God and Savior** (vv. 6-8). The women left the tomb and went back into Jerusalem to find the disciples. When the disciples heard what the women had found, they did not believe them, so Peter ran to the tomb to make sure and then left the empty tomb marveling about what had happened (vv. 11-12).

Illustration: Daniel Bennett wrote, "The women who loved Jesus were eager to express that love through caring for His body. But they found that their eagerness was outmatched by that of their Lord; arriving at the tomb 'at early dawn' was simply too late" (available online). Jesus had already left the tomb . . . alive!

Application: Although the women had been heartbroken by what they had witnessed at Jesus' crucifixion, they returned to complete the burial rituals for one reason . . . because they loved Him. Can you imagine what it felt like for them to realize that Jesus was no longer dead, but had risen from the tomb? We all have the opportunity to accept and celebrate that death could not hold Jesus!

2. Because Jesus was not in the tomb, He appeared before His disciples (Luke 24:36-43).

Biblical Background: Even though they had heard the news that Jesus was alive, His appearance still surprised and even frightened them (vv. 36-37). When Jesus encouraged them to touch His physical body, proving that their doubts were unnecessary, the disciples responded with joy and wonder (vv. 38-41a). Jesus further demonstrated He was physically alive by asking for food and eating (vv. 41b-43).

Illustration: Jesus had told the disciples what would happen to Him. And, even after they heard the news of Jesus' resurrection, they were still surprised when they met Him face-to-face. And, they even doubted what they saw.

Application: Larson and Ogilvie wrote, “We are not asked to believe the doctrine of the Resurrection. We are asked to meet this person raised from the dead” (p. 349). Have you met the risen Lord?

3. Because Jesus was about to ascend into heaven, He explained what was to come (Luke 24:44-49).

Biblical Background: Jesus reminded His disciples that everything He had taught before His crucifixion fulfilled the Law and the Prophets (vv. 44-45). Jesus explained that His death and resurrection had brought the forgiveness of sins in His name (vv. 45-46). Jesus proclaimed that the disciples were witnesses of all this and would receive power from God to be able to share what they had witnessed (vv. 48-49).

Illustration: Last words are important. Sometimes they're words shared in a Last Will and Testament, or the commencement speech given at graduation. These words are well-thought out and are meant to convey care, to take care of details, and to inspire hearers to go forth and succeed.

Application: Jesus used this time with His disciples for last words . . . to remind them of what He had done for them and to inspire them to go forth and share all they had witnessed.

Conclusion: In his sermon *The Foundation of Faith*, Steven Cole asked, “If Jesus Christ is not risen from the dead, then He Himself was a liar, since He predicted His own death and resurrection on numerous occasions. Why believe in and follow a liar? If Christ is not risen from the dead, then His death on the cross did not secure the forgiveness of our sins. Jesus’ resurrection was God’s seal of approval on the sacrifice that Christ offered for all people so that Paul could rightly say, ‘If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless, you are still in your sins’ (1 Cor. 15:17). Celebrate today the risen Lord!