

April 1
Lesson 5 (NIV)

HE HAS RISEN

DEVOTIONAL READING: Luke 24:36-49

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Luke 24:1-35

LUKE 24:1-12, 30-35

¹ 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. ² They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. ⁵ 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? ⁶ He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ⁷ ‘The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’” ⁸ Then they remembered his words.

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

³⁰ When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. ³² They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”

³³ They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together ³⁴ and saying, “It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.” ³⁵ Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.



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KEY VERSE

“It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.”—Luke 24:34

LESSON AIMS

After participating in this lesson, each learner will be able to:

1. Restate the mystery of Jesus’ missing body and the resolution of that mystery.
2. Explain why the women’s preparation was unnecessary.
3. Offer a prayer of thanksgiving that God keeps his promises.

LESSON OUTLINE

Introduction

- A. An Enduring Proverb
- B. Lesson Background

I. Witness of the Women (LUKE 24:1-12)

- A. Prepared with Spices (v. 1)
- B. Unprepared for the Scene (vv. 2, 3)
- C. Angelic Explanation (vv. 4-8)
Because I Promised
- D. Apostolic Disbelief (vv. 9-12)

II. Epiphany at Emmaus (LUKE 24:30-35)

- A. Instant Awareness (vv. 30-32)
- B. Return to Jerusalem (v. 33)
- C. Resurrection Confirmed (vv. 34, 35)
Disappearance

Conclusion

- A. Remembering the Risen Lord
- B. Prayer
- C. Thought to Remember

Introduction

A. An Enduring Proverb

How do we find the strength to go on during the most difficult of times? We might wish we were the victim of a mere April Fool's Day joke, only to realize our problems are quite real!

Many find encouragement from a proverb of English theologian and historian Thomas Fuller (1608-1661). In his *A Pisgah-Sight of Palestine and the Confines Thereof*, Fuller wrote, "It is always darkest just before the Day dawneth." Two centuries later, Irish songwriter Samuel Lover remarked that this saying had become proverbial "amongst the Irish peasantry to inspire hope under adverse circumstances." Today the same words are used by therapists, self-help gurus, and motivational speakers. "Don't give up," is their message. "Better times are ahead!"

We all have experienced dark times that we thought would never end—yet they did end! The crucifixion of Jesus was such a dark time, but it was dispelled by the brightness of the resurrection.

B. Lesson Background

Luke 23:54 is clear that Jesus was crucified and buried on Preparation Day, the day before the Sabbath (see also Matthew 27:62; Mark 15:42; John 19:14, 31, 42). Luke 23:56 further indicates that the women prepared "spices and perfumes" on Preparation Day so as not to violate the Sabbath. Mark 16:1 states the spices were for anointing Jesus' body, and John 19:39, 40 demonstrates the Jews' burial custom of wrapping a body in strips of linen and spices. This was not an easy task, at least in the case of Jesus, as John 19:39 reveals the use of about 75 pounds of myrrh and aloes.

I. Witness of the Women

(LUKE 24:1-12)

The focus in Luke 24 on the witness of certain women has Luke 23:50-56 as its point of departure. What follows presupposes that the women knew the location of the tomb; indeed they did, because they had watched Joseph of Arimathea place Jesus' body there (compare Matthew 27:61). The same is not said of any of the remaining eleven apostles, although at least two of them seem to know exactly where the tomb is (John 20:3, 4).

A. Prepared with Spices (v. 1)

¹ 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.

The first day of the week is Sunday; the Preparation Day (Friday) and the Sabbath (Saturday) are past. *The women* refers to those mentioned in Luke 23:55, 56. Combining the observation that it is now *very early in the morning* with a sunset-to-sunset understanding of transition from one day to the next (Luke 23:54) leaves no doubt that this is the third day (compare Matthew 16:21; 17:22, 23; 20:17-19). Regarding *the spices they had prepared*, see the Lesson Background.

B. Unprepared for the Scene (vv. 2, 3)

² They found the stone rolled away from the tomb,

Archaeologists have uncovered hundreds of tombs within three miles of Jerusalem. Many have stones that can be *rolled away* like the one mentioned here. Mark 16:4 records that the stone over Jesus' tomb was "very large." And since limestone weighs about 170 pounds per cubic foot, even a stone of moderate size means substantial weight. If the stone is three feet in diameter and one foot thick, then the resulting volume of seven cubic feet computes to a weight of about 1,200 pounds. A stone four feet across would weigh over a ton.

³ but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

Jesus' missing body is the central, dramatic element of Luke 24. Luke stresses this as he builds to the climax of his Gospel in order to establish that Jesus' body

is missing for a reason.

C. Angelic Explanation (vv. 4-8)

4. 5. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. 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?”

The women’s confusion about the missing body doesn’t last long as it gives way to fear. The *two men* who elicit the fear are expressly identified as angels in [Luke 24:23](#) (see also [John 20:12](#)). [Matthew 28:2](#) and [Mark 16:5](#) mention just one angel, likely because the focus is on the speaker only.

Fear at the appearance of an angel is apparent in the writings of Luke ([Luke 1:11, 12, 29; 2:9; Acts 10:3, 4](#)). In other appearances, angels tell people not to fear. But here there is no such admonition. The women’s response of bowing appears to be instinctual. Abraham reacted the same way to the three men in [Genesis 18:2](#), as did Lot regarding the two angels in [Genesis 19:1](#). Bowing also seems to be a common act of respect for authority in the ancient Near East, as seen in [Genesis 33:3; 42:6](#); and [Ruth 2:10](#).

The angels’ concluding question is valid but incomprehensible to the women. The women have not yet seen Jesus alive, and they do not expect to. Even so, a hint to the mystery of the missing body is embedded in the angels’ question.

What Do You Think?

How can we ensure we relate to Jesus as living Lord and not as a long-dead historical figure?

Talking Points for Your Discussion

In the form and content of our prayers

In how we talk about him

Considering the degree to which we keep his commandments ([John 14:15, 21](#))

Other

6. “He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee:

The angels state the most important fact in all of history when they declare the reason for the absence of Jesus’ body—that *he has risen*. Then the angels give the women a command: to *remember* the words of Jesus while he was still with them *in Galilee*. These verses form the beginning of a poetic sandwich using the word *remember*.

We can note in passing the curious fact that Jesus’ enemies remember his prediction of rising from the dead ([Matthew 27:62, 63](#)) but his followers do not!

BECAUSE I PROMISED

A friend and his wife celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary not long ago. The husband admitted in a touching tribute that their years together had not been without struggle. “Marriage has been hard sometimes—much harder than we expected,” he said.

Despite the difficulties they experienced, they stayed together. “After one extended difficult patch, I asked my wife why she stayed. I didn’t like her answer: ‘Because I promised.’ I thought she’d say something about my charm or my being a good guy under it all. But it was nothing about me—it was about the promise. On our wedding day she said she would.”

Reading this, I thought about the times in my own marriage when things have been less than what I thought they’d be. During those times, I often remembered the day I stood before all my family and friends, before God, and before my husband and promised to love him even when it was hard. That promise we made holds us together. It trickles down to our children, who live under the umbrella of that bond. As my friend so aptly put it, “Keeping a promise requires more of us—it makes us better. And receiving a promise is a gift. It brings a priceless sense of security.”

God promised that a Savior would come, and God kept that promise. Then Jesus promised that he would rise again, and he did. Is it not glorious to serve a promise-keeping God?

—L. M. W.

HOW TO SAY IT

Arimathea *Air-uh-muh-thee-uh* (*th* as in *thin*).

Emmaus *Em-may-us*.

Galilee *Gal-uh-lee*.

Jerusalem *Juh-roo-suh-lem*.

Joanna *Joe-an-uh*.

Magdalene *Mag-duh-leen* or *Mag-duh-lee-nec*.

7. “The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.”

This verse is the center of the verbal sandwich begun in [verse 6](#). The angels remind the women of the words of Jesus that they should not have forgotten in the first place. These, the most critical of Jesus’ words, have been lost to conscious thought—possibly because Jesus’ followers did not wish to believe them (compare [Matthew 16:21, 22](#)).

8. Then they remembered his words.

This is the conclusion of the verbal sandwich begun in [verse 6](#). The sequence says something. The first encounter on this the third day is not between the risen Jesus and the women. Rather, the first encounter is with angels who bear an imperative to remember *his words*. We do well to apply this imperative to our lives daily!

What Do You Think?

How do lives focused on the resurrection differ from those that are not?

Talking Points for Your Discussion

Regarding outlook on sin

Regarding outlook on suffering

Regarding outlook on salvation

Other

D. Apostolic Disbelief (vv. 9-12)**9. When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others.**

The return of the women to Jerusalem echoes their previous return in [Luke 23:56](#), but this time the reason is quite the opposite! Instead of preparing spices to anoint the dead body of Jesus, they return with the message of the live body of Jesus. Mention of *the Eleven* highlights the fact that these are “the Twelve” of [Luke 22:47](#) minus Judas the betrayer.

10, 11. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.

Luke indicates there are at least five women involved, with three being named. *Mary Magdalene* is recorded by the Gospels as being present at the crucifixion of Jesus, at his burial, and at the empty tomb early Sunday morning. She was delivered from demon possession by Jesus, which helps us understand her devotion to him ([Luke 8:2](#)). *Joanna* is the wife of an official in the household of Herod, the king of Galilee ([8:3](#)).

Mary the mother of James is further defined as being “the mother of James and Joseph” in [Matthew 27:56](#). This may be Matthew’s way of referring to Mary, the mother of Jesus, for she had sons named James and Joseph ([Mark 6:3](#)). It would be odd, however, that Jesus’ mother would not be identified as such at this point rather than by the names of two of Jesus’ half-brothers (compare [Acts 1:14](#)). So it is more likely that the Mary in view here is a different woman from Galilee.

In any case, these women are followers of Jesus. But that is not enough to make their account of the empty tomb credible to the rest. Instead, those gathered (including *the apostles*) dismiss their story as *nonsense* (compare [Acts 12:14, 15](#)). We can imagine the disappointment and hurt these faithful women must feel at not being believed.

What Do You Think?

How can we prepare to respond to those who struggle to believe in the resurrection?

Talking Points for Your Discussion

Regarding awareness of presuppositions ([Acts 17:31, 32](#); [23:6-8](#); [26:8](#); etc.)

Regarding context of the interaction ([Acts 2:22-36](#); [10:34-43](#); [13:14-41](#); etc.)

Regarding our demeanor when challenged

Other

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.

This section of the account began with the women returning to the Eleven, but it ends with a focus on only one of them: *Peter*. The biblical record is clear that he is a key figure among the apostles, and especially in the resurrection accounts. In [Mark 16:7](#) the angel specifically instructs the women to tell Peter that Jesus is going to Galilee and the apostles will see him there. The fact that he is *wondering to himself what had happened* indicates that he needs a reminder of Jesus’ words just as much as the women did.

II. Epiphany at Emmaus

([LUKE 24:30-35](#))

[Luke 24:13-29](#) sets the stage for the next segment. Jesus has appeared unrecognized to two disciples on the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus. The nature of the conversation and the fading of daylight impels the two to invite the incognito Jesus to remain with them. But before everyone turns in for the night, a meal is shared.

A. Instant Awareness (vv. 30-32)**30. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them.**

Contexts of meals, eating, and drinking are important vehicles for portraying kingdom truths in Luke’s Gospel (examples: [Luke 5:27-39](#); [7:36-50](#)). Mealtimes in this Gospel are dramatic and suspenseful. Concerning the case at hand, the drama has been building since [24:13](#), with the climax now unfolding.

The similarity between Jesus’ actions in this verse and his earlier actions in [Luke 22:19](#) are intriguing. There Jesus “took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them” in instituting the Lord’s Supper. Does Jesus intend the current situation to be a reminder of the previous?

Three factors suggest the answer is no. First, Jesus has said that he “will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God” ([Luke 22:16](#)). Second, no cup is mentioned (compare [22:17, 20](#)). Third, the blessing and breaking of bread was not something unique to the last supper (see [Matthew 14:19](#)).

31. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight.

On the other hand, some students say that a certain link with the Lord’s Supper is suggested by the fact that Jesus’ dining companions are able to recognize him as soon as Jesus gives them bread, recalling that [Luke 22:19](#) has Jesus distributing bread as he says, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.” Up to this point in [Luke 24](#), Jesus’ body has been missing or otherwise kept from being recognized. This is the point in Luke’s resurrection account where that changes.

An interplay of physical and spiritual blindness may also be intended by Luke. Jesus’ two hosts for the meal are men who “were kept from recognizing

him” (Luke 24:16). Concurrently, they had received a tongue lashing from Jesus: “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken” (24:25). The suggested connection is that the lifting of their spiritual blindness (see 24:32, next) had to happen before they were able to recognize Jesus physically.

The gospel message includes Jesus’ proclaiming “recovery of sight for the blind” (Luke 4:18). This is not limited to those who are physically unable to see. It also (and more importantly) addresses the need of those who lack spiritual awareness.

32. They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”

The phrase *hearts burning within us* refers to a sense of longing or excitement that comes while learning truth. We should notice the sequence: (1) the correcting of deficient understanding of the Scripture while on the road to Emmaus was accompanied by burning hearts; (2) that correction in turn has led to the ability to recognize Jesus; and now (3) the two disciples comprehend the connection between (1) and (2).

What Do You Think?

How can we maintain hunger for God’s Word?

Talking Points for Your Discussion

Regarding positive thoughts and behaviors to reinforce

Regarding negative thoughts and behaviors to eliminate

B. Return to Jerusalem (v. 33)

33. They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together

The general designation “two of them” in Luke 24:13 leaves open the possibility that the one who is unnamed (see 24:18) is an apostle if 24:13 is read as a direct continuation of 24:9-12. That possibility is negated by the fact that these two men find *the Eleven . . . assembled together* in Jerusalem.

The action of and reporting by the two men bears similarities to those of the women in Luke 24:9. Although “the day is almost over” (24:29), they have the light of the nearly full moon by which to walk, since the Feast of Passover, recently completed, occurs during full moon. They cannot wait until morning to share their experience. So they scurry the seven miles (24:13) back to Jerusalem.

C. Resurrection Confirmed (vv. 34, 35)

34. and saying, “It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.”

The men return to Jerusalem only to hear from the Eleven and the others what they now already believe and have experienced, that *the Lord has risen*. This is the focus of all accounts in Luke 24 and the central idea of what is commonly called Easter today. Statement parallels in Luke 24 form a certain long-standing Easter tradition in churches. In 24:9, the women pass along the angelic claim that Jesus is risen; now some or all those in Jerusalem affirm *the Lord has risen*. In many services today, a worship leader will declare, “He is risen,” to which the congregation responds, “He is risen indeed!”

Those gathered also confirm that the Lord *has appeared to Simon*. This is Peter’s other name (see Luke 5:8; 6:14); he also is known as Cephas (John 1:42). But wait—why isn’t this described here? When Peter last appears in Luke 24:12, the Lord has not appeared to him. Now we read that he has. Is something missing?

The short answer is no. Like all careful historians, Luke chooses what to include and what not to (compare John 21:25). Each Gospel makes its unique contribution of detail.

What Do You Think?

How can we encourage each other in our faith in the risen Lord?

Talking Points for Your Discussion

When nonbelievers mock our faith

When the pressures of life seem heaviest

Other

DISAPPEARANCE

In the early days of the United States, rugged settlers braved the unknown to explore beyond the Appalachian Mountains. One such was James Harrod, who trapped and traded in what would later become Kentucky. Eventually, he helped found a settlement in 1774 that became known as Harrodsburg.

Over the years, Harrod married and had a family. He became involved in politics and farming and grew wealthy. He also used his skills to help the military periodically.

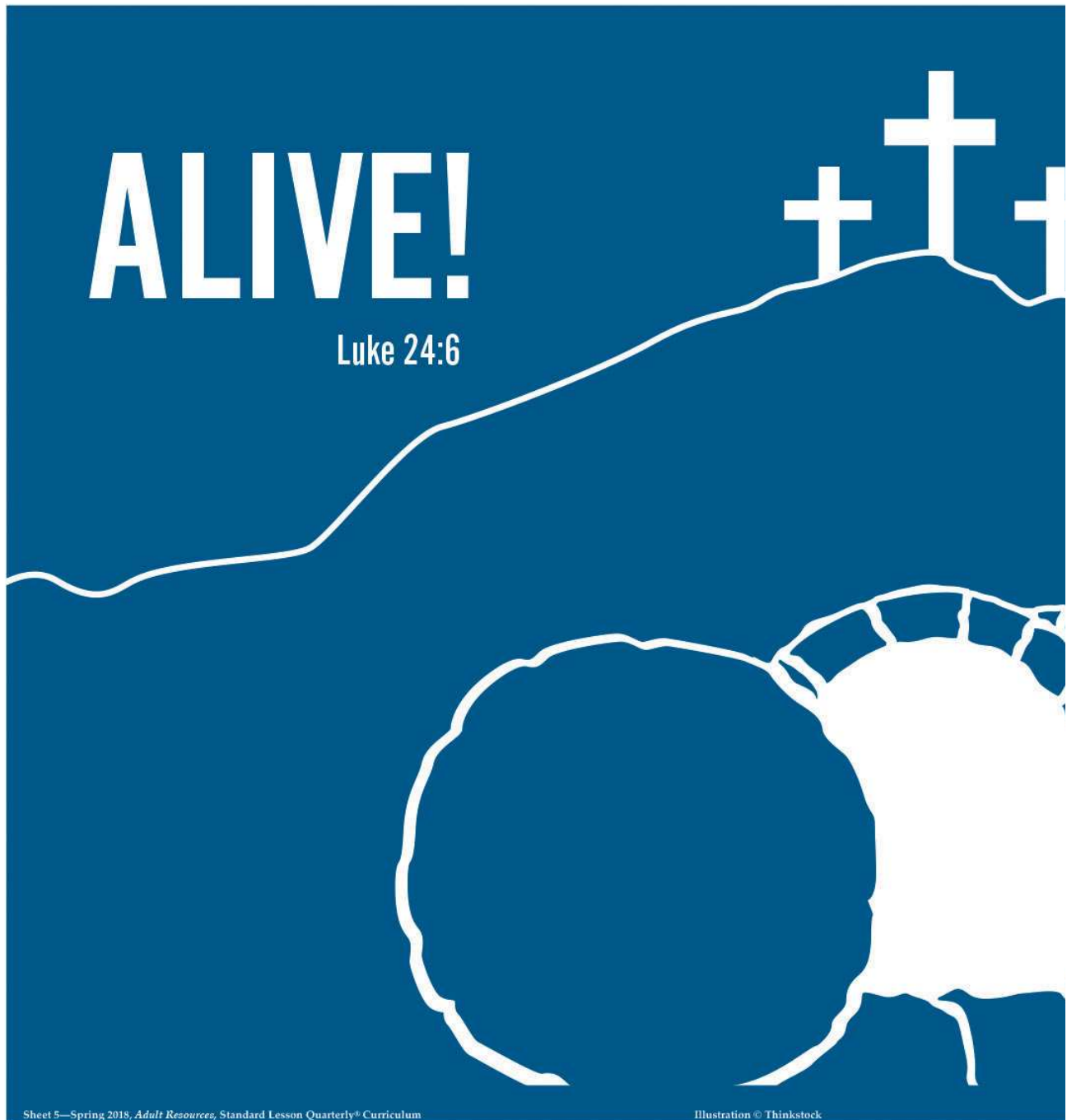
But Harrod became increasingly solitary, sometimes taking long trips into the wilderness alone. He disappeared on one such trip, leaving behind a wife, daughter, and stepson. His family searched for him, and many theories regarding his disappearance evolved.

Some people said they saw him alive and that he even told them he planned to return home eventually. Some said he went back to a secret wife and family in the wilderness. Others said he had been killed by Indians. His daughter claimed a fellow hunter had murdered him and hidden the body. But no body was ever discovered, and all trails eventually went cold.

James Harrod lived a life of distinction, but when he disappeared, he did not return. The life Jesus lived was more distinctive by far, he did return from the grave, and he promised to return again from Heaven. His resurrection proves him to be more than just a unique leader—far more.

—L. M. W.

35. Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.



Visual for Lesson 5. Start a discussion by pointing to this visual as you ask, “How does this fact affect the way you live daily? How should it?”

This verse serves as a transition to Jesus’ appearance in [verse 36](#). It also is a summary statement of all that has happened to the two men from [Luke 24:13](#) until now. Jesus’ body was missing from the tomb, but found when he *was recognized by them when he broke the bread*, with bread perhaps serving to represent Jesus’ body—the main focus of the drama of [Luke 24](#). He is risen!

Conclusion

A. Remembering the Risen Lord

Although many Christians say “He is risen” to one another only at Easter, there are some churches where Christians greet each other regularly with “He is risen!” This practice reminds them that the body of Jesus is missing from the tomb for a reason: because he is risen now and forever. This should be remembered daily, not just at Easter. The resurrection of Christ has daily implications, consisting of both blessings and responsibilities, for all believers.

B. Prayer

Father, thank you for keeping your promises by raising Jesus from the dead! Help us to trust you more because you are trustworthy. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

C. Thought to Remember

No darkness can overshadow the Son.

INVOLVEMENT LEARNING

Enhance your lesson with NIV® Bible Student (from your curriculum supplier) and the reproducible activity page (at www.standardlesson.com or in the back of the NIV® Standard Lesson Commentary Deluxe Edition).

Into the Lesson

Begin today's lesson by playing a version of the game Two Truths and a Lie. Give each person paper and a pen. Students are to write three bad things that happened in their lives. Two should be true; one should be made up. (For example: *I was fired from my job for sleeping; I recently had a root canal; My father died when I was young.* Two of these statements must be true; the other will be fictitious.) Have each person read his or her statements and let the class guess which one is the lie by a show of hands.

Alternative. Distribute pens and copies of the "Mystery Message" activity on the reproducible page, which you can download. Have students work individually to solve the puzzle.

After either activity say, "We have all experienced dark times that we thought would never end—yet they did end! The crucifixion of Jesus was such a dark time, but it was dispelled by the brightness of the resurrection."

Into the Word

Divide the class into three groups. Supply each group with pen and paper and one of the following assignments. They will read portions of today's text and write a newspaper headline and subhead for those texts. Two sample HEADLINES and *Subheads* for each group follow.

Group 1—Luke 24:1-8

UNBELIEVABLE!

Heavenly messengers say Jesus has risen

EMPTY TOMB MYSTERY

Witnesses perplexed about missing body

Group 2—Luke 24:9-12

DIVINE OR DELUDED?

Jesus' followers skeptical of resurrection report

GRAVE CLOTHES FOUND

But Jesus' body still missing

Group 3—Luke 24:30-35

DINNER GUEST DISAPPEARS!

Is this evidence that Jesus lives?

RESURRECTION EVIDENCE GROWS?

Some claim fulfillment of prophecy

Option. Research the events of Christ's resurrection as recorded here and elsewhere in Scripture. Compare and contrast the accounts to get a broader picture of what took place. You may want to point to these:

Appearance to 2 ([Luke 24:13-32](#))

Appearance to 10 ([John 20:19-24](#))

Appearance to 11 ([Matthew 28:16-20](#))

Appearance to 500 ([1 Corinthians 15:6](#))

Appearance to 1 woman ([John 20:11-18](#))

Appearance to 1 persecutor ([Acts 9:1-5](#))

Alternative. Distribute pens and copies of the "Scripture or Supposition?" activity. Have students work individually or in small groups to determine which statements are Scripture facts and which are things we infer from Scripture.

After either activity say, "People often question the promises of their leaders. Can they have assurance in the midst of doubt? In the breaking of bread and making himself known to his disciples, the risen Christ kept his promises—to his followers then and now."

Into Life

Give each person a plastic egg, several slips of paper, and a pen. Challenge students to complete the following statement in as many ways as they can, writing each response on a separate slip of paper and placing it inside the egg: "Because Jesus lives, I . . ."

Allow students to take the eggs home, and encourage them to share their responses with their families this week.
Option. Discuss the resurrection scene from *The Passion of the Christ* if students remember it.