

He Is Risen!  
Luke 24:1-12  
Archibald Wallace

As a trial lawyer I always hoped there would be one or two witnesses in the case to what had happened and at least one who would be convincing. Often there were no witnesses to what had gone wrong, only experts who tried to reconstruct what had happened and why. In today's text there were witnesses, but not to the act we celebrate; their witness was to what they found and who they ultimately met. Before a few days had passed more than 550 people had witnessed what happened that first Easter morning, Jesus was no longer in the tomb; he had risen from the grave, and was alive.

As I reflected on the events of that first Easter morning, I was reminded of a young man standing next to his mother in a grassy area overlooking a mighty river. The grass was dotted with stones, some marble, some granite, each one bearing a name, each one listing a birth date and a death date. For 200 years from the late 1700's, families had come to this spot to say good=bye to loved ones, The quiet was deafening, as they stood by graves of family members from way back in their past. As they thought of what lay around them, the mother prayed in a quiet voice, and among her words were these: "Why look for the living among the dead?" The young man heard, but the words didn't make sense. On the ride home he asked the mother, what did those words mean? Why did you pray them. Her answer: Go and study Luke 24:1-12; then you will see.

So let us turn to that passage and hear what God has spoken to us.

Luke 24:1-12

- 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 when he was still with you in Galilee:
- 7 **"The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men; 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 (The Apostles) 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.

## The Word Of The Lord!

As an aside, the Gospel of John treats the scene a little differently. In John, both Peter and John ran to the tomb, both go inside the tomb, and John says of himself, that when he went into the empty tomb, he believed —believed that Jesus had been raised.

But, let's go back to the words Luke gives us from the angels, "why do you look for the living among the dead." These were spoken to the women who had come to the tomb. They were actually a rebuke, chiding them for not remembering what Jesus had told them in Matthew 16:21-23

### Matthew 16:21-23

21 From that time on, Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed, and on the third day be raised to life.

22 Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him, (saying) "Never Lord. This shall never happen to you!"

23 Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me Satan. You are a stumbling block to me. You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men."

### The Word Of The Lord!

Jesus had told his disciples clearly that he would be put to death, but be raised from the dead on the third day. The words of the angels to the women were to chide them for forgetting, and to make them realize they had not believed what Jesus had told them. The angels were asking, , why are you doing a useless act, trying to preserve a body, when he told you he would not be there, that he would be risen? The women had come to the tomb on Easter morning for the wrong reason; they came to prepare a dead body for posterity; instead, Jesus was alive/ is alive and awaited them. The words of rebuke asked, do you know what really happened last night, this first Easter? Do you really know what God did?

It was the prayer of the mother standing by the graves of her ancestors that I opened with —do I really know what happened in this person's life or that one's or that one's?

You and I come to the tomb each Easter, and we look in, and we expect to see something, but that something is far less than what really happened that first Easter morning. So, I submit to you, if we are ever going to get Easter right and fully realize what God did that day, we must take a deeper look at what we believe about Easter--- Not what we say we believe, but what we live that we believe.

Some come to Easter and scoff—no one ever came back to life from the dead and lived. That's so unscientific. Obviously, they don't know God; consider this: if God could create life and existence from nothing, could not that same God restore life, and raise the dead to life? Scoff away!

Then, there are those who say it was just a myth, this Easter story. But answer this —if it's a myth, what should we tell the 550 plus eyewitnesses who reported they had seen the risen Christ. The women, the disciples at the tomb, the disciples in the upper room, the men on the road to Emmaus, the 500 to whom he appeared, the fishermen in Galilee, even Saul, who became Paul because of it. And still you scoff?



Oh you doubters--- suppose a person came here today, into this room, and said I just drove in on I-95 and I saw a wreck, a terrible wreck, and they describe it, would you believe? What if two came and told the same story? What if 50? What if 550? So, doubt and scoff and keep on seeking the dead, not the living. What is wrong with us when we are so eager to lap up the story when ten tell us of a wreck, yet we doubt when God is the actor, the cause, the deliverer?

And then there are others who come to Easter and say, he, this Jesus was a great man, a teacher, an ethicist, a theologian, but they cannot take the final step and give him the title he deserves—Christ, Lord, Savior, Emmanuel—God with us, the Prince of Peace, the King of Kings. Could it be they can't because it would mean someone was greater than they think they are?

The words of the mother at the graveside in Kentucky echo with their scoffing, for they too are looking for the living among the dead. The why of Easter is important. The events of Easter underscore exactly what God was doing, what God did, and what God has intended for us ever since.

Easter is about life and the erasure of sin. Without Easter we were doomed. We could never live up to the standards God charted for us at Mt. Sinai. We could never avoid failing away or turning our backs on God. It's our nature because we are so self oriented; with us, it's all about self. With God, it's possible to turn from self, to love others and to love God. Because we are such a mess, God intervened and came to us, that our relationship might be restored. God's plan was for his son to serve as the one last sacrifice for us, that if we accepted the son as savior, our sins would be erased from the Book of Life, not there on judgment day, so that we could be a part of god's kingdom forever.

So I ask, how can you ignore the eye-witnesses to the resurrection? How can you ignore the truth when it stands before you? How can you say to God, I have heard the story, but it's just that, a story; it doesn't mean anything? How can we say new clothes for the day so I can shine is what it's all about; or, I like candy and hunts better; or like to be entertained with pageants and watches, they excite me? How can we say this is what Easter is all about? And sadly, how can we say we like the box we have put Jesus in better than the box-empty tomb God gave me? We say we can put the box we put Jesus in until the season comes back next year, but if it's an empty tomb, then Jesus is loose, and alive, and around, and it means I'll have to deal with him all the time, and I'm just too busy. Ouch!

Friends, the truth is this. The tomb is empty. Christ has risen and is alive in resurrection power. Our sins have been forgiven through the blood of the perfect sacrifice—God's son, Jesus. If your beliefs about this day, and the empty tomb, and the witnesses remembrances, and the words from Christ himself after the fact, don't lead you to fall on your knees and thank God, then you have missed the meaning of Easter, and you are right to look in the empty tomb for him and wonder why he isn't there; it's where he should be. You see, in putting Christ back into the tomb, we declare we cannot accept the truth of Easter that God loved us so much that God made this happen for each one of us.

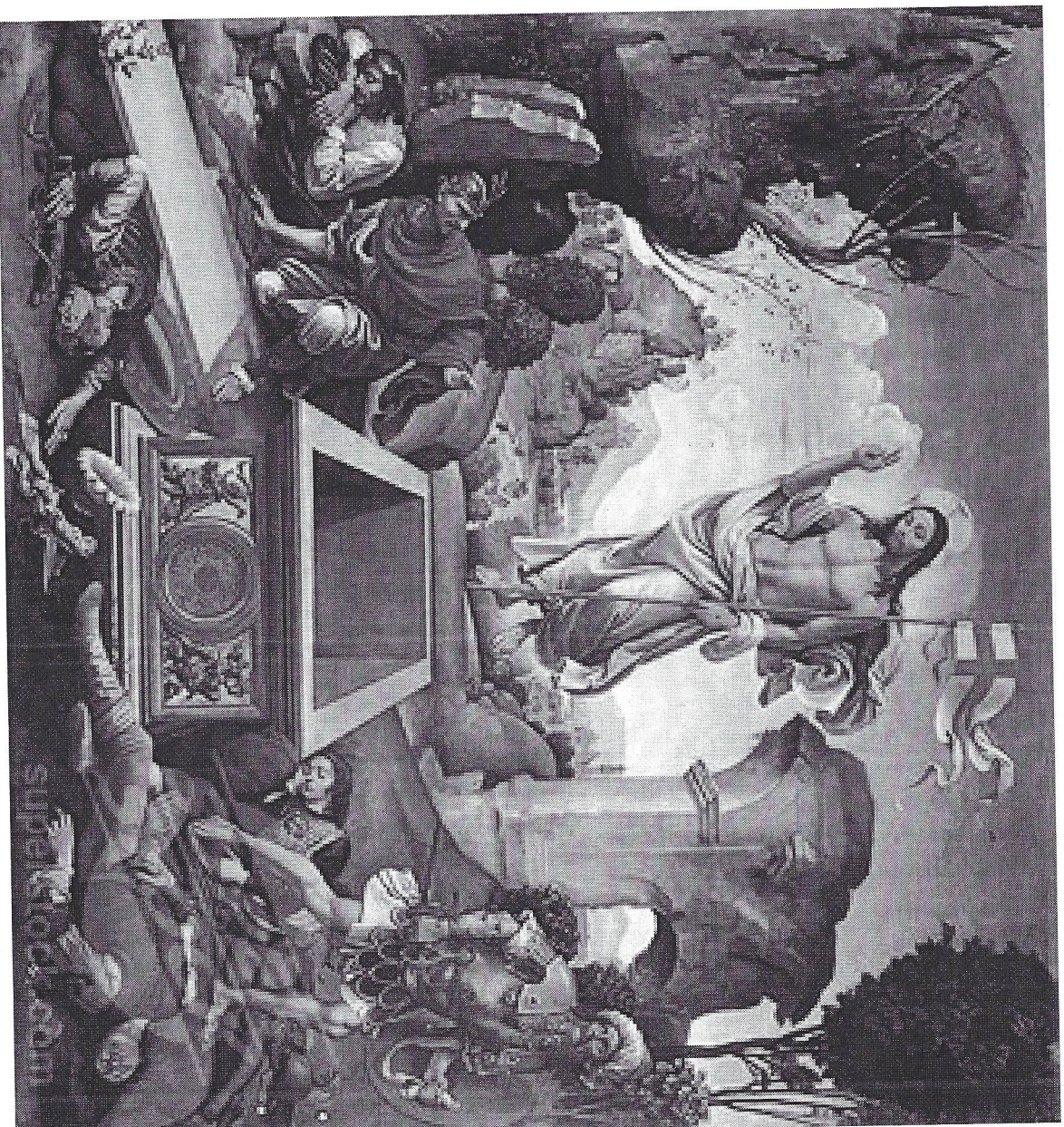
So today, if we look and see an empty tomb and nothing more; if we do not get what happened that first Easter, then we have missed Easter, and if you have missed Easter, you have missed the most important event in the Bible. We're good at celebrating Jjesus' birth, and it is important, because it marked the moment God came to us, to live with us and to show us the way to go home. We're good at studying what Christ said and did and interpreting what that might mean for today. But if we look at Easter nad hear the angels say to us, "Why do you look for the living among the dead?" then we don't get it that Christ has risen and lives and rules in resurrection power. Don't put Christ back in the tomb—let him out in your life and let him rule in your life...you can't imagine the difference that will make, as

you too will burst into every facet of your life and shout out, did you hear what I heard? Have you seen what I saw? Let me tell you about my friend Jesus, and what really happened Easter morning.

He IS RISEN indeed.



# RESURRECTION



Raffaellino  
del Garbo



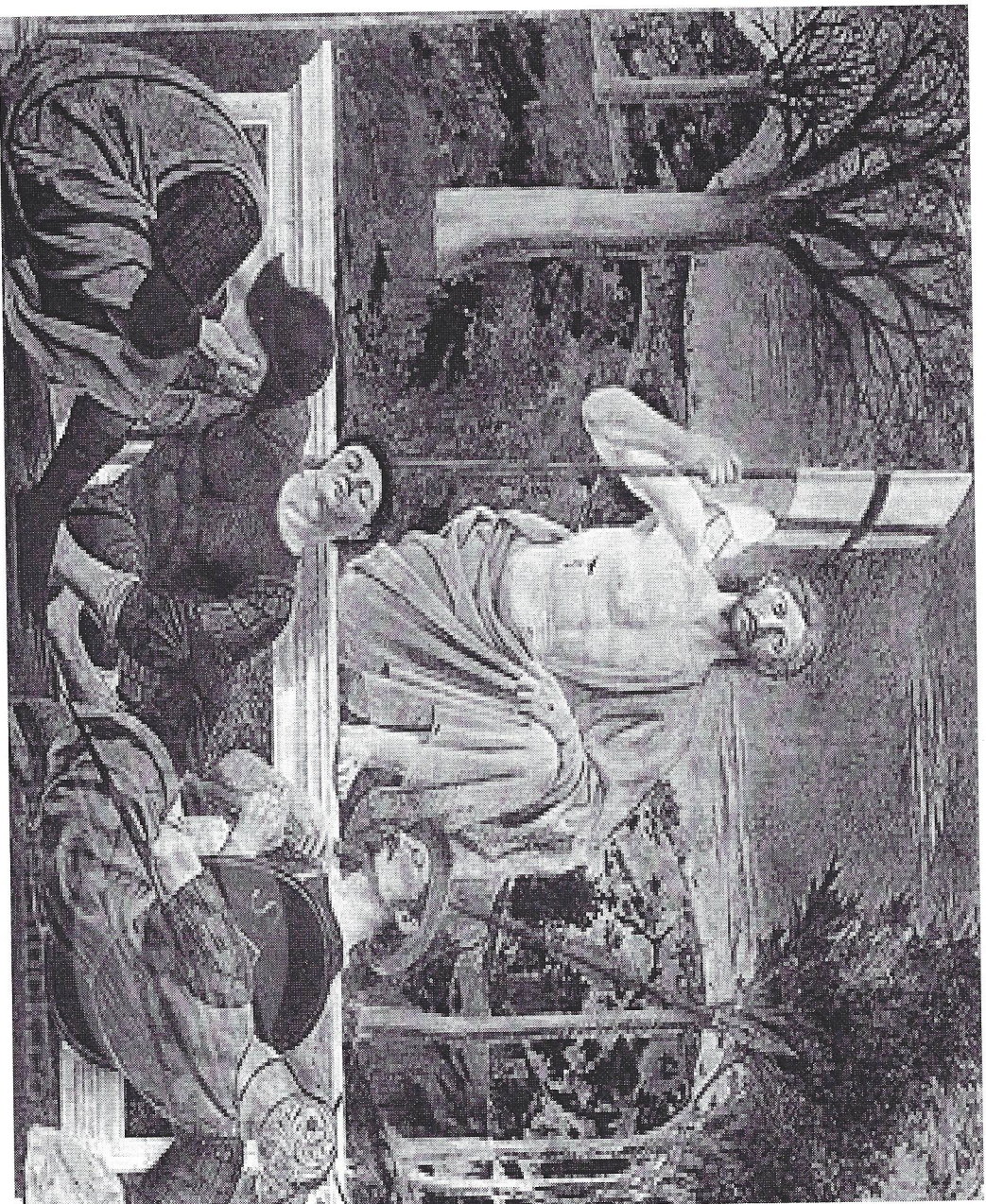
# THE RESURRECTION



Vladimir  
Mazuranic



# THE RESURRECTION



Piero della  
Francesca