

EASTER MORNING

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Lesson: Luke 24:1-12

I think we can imagine how Mary Magdalene, the other Mary, and the other women felt when they came to the sepulcher that first Easter morning. They were coming to find the body of the Lord, and their hearts were probably heavy. They were probably sad because they had forgotten, just for the moment, what the Lord had promised, that He would rise from the grave. Their hearts were probably pleased for the moment to see that the huge stone had been moved away from the sepulcher for they had no way of moving it themselves. But when they entered they did not find the body of the Lord and for a moment this probably saddened them. And their sadness then turned to fear for there was an angel of the Lord and the angel of the Lord made them fearful, and they bowed down to the earth. And then the angel of the Lord told Mary and the other Mary the very remarkable thing, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here."

Mary and the other Mary came looking for the Lord and they could not find Him. Now let me ask, have you ever asked this same question? Have you ever asked, "Where is the Lord? Where is His body? I have never seen it. Perhaps I'm looking in the wrong place to find the Lord? Am I making the same mistake as Mary? Perhaps I'm looking for the Lord among the dead instead of among the living. Where is the Lord?"

The Word is made of paper and has a cover. Is this Book living? No, the paper isn't living, the cover isn't living, and the print on the paper is not alive. Is a church building living? It's made of stones and glass, but can it feel and think and love like you? No, a church is not alive. When we say recitations from the Word are they alive? We seem to be getting closer. The words of the recitation are in our memory, and our memory is in our mind, and certainly our mind is alive.

Now let me ask, is a flower alive? A flower is certainly alive, we say. But let me ask you again, is a flower alive or is there life within it that makes it seem alive? Certainly there is life within it just as there is life within you and me. And where does that life come from? That life comes from the Lord! And so we can say that the life that is within a flower, just as the life that is within our body, is really the Lord that is with us, for He alone is alive. And so we can see that we seek the Lord among the living, for the Lord alone lives and gives life to us all.

Now let us go back. If the Word is not alive, is the truth within the Word alive? Yes, we say. For the Lord is within His Word. The Lord is within His Word, and where the Lord is, there is life. So there is life within the Word. When we worship in a temple, we are told that the Lord is in His holy temple, and wherever two or three are gathered together we are told, there is the Lord in the midst of them, and so a temple becomes alive because the Lord is there, and the Lord is in His holy temple when we are worshiping Him there.

Recitations also can come alive. If we leave them and forget them in our memory though and allow them to become meaningless and useless, then they become lifeless. But if we remember them, if they become a part of our life, even any small part of a recitation, then they can become alive in us.

If we only remember the phrase “Why do you seek the living among the dead?” And that phrase helps us find the Lord, to discover that the Lord is among the living, that He is in the living flower, and His is the life within us; that the Lord is alive in the Word because He is truth there. If the Lord can be found in His temple when we worship Him there and the Lord can be found wherever we see good in the neighbor, then we are seeing the Lord. If we learn that lesson, then we understand the message of Easter just as the Marys did on that first Easter morning. Understanding the message of Easter, we will as Mary, go home and tell others, we will want to tell the whole world that the Lord has risen and that He can be found among the living, and our hearts will be full of joy and praise just as they are this Easter morning. And it will make us want to sing to the Lord, to sing praises to the Lord, Hosanna, and we will want to say Alleluia, Alleluia, that the Lord God has risen. *Amen.*