

**Luke 24:1-6a (NIV)**

<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!”

42-24-04-Easter Morning Discoveries

Easter, resurrection, fear, worry, human effort, divine victory

Luke 24:1-6a

Hope beckons to a dying race from the door of Christ’s empty tomb.

**INTRODUCTION: (Text as the Scripture Reading)**

–**Read text: Luke 24:1-6a** (NIV) <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!”*

–Easter symbolically brings us to our final earthly destination. Lent’s 40-days always ends at the tomb which held Christ’s body and which stands for *our own tomb*. It didn’t belong to Jesus but to Joseph of Arimathea, someone *like us*—trying to be a disciple. In fact, in a way he represents us. His *empty tomb*, from which Christ arose, symbolizes ours! And it has a message of good news for us: **HOM.idea**.

–So, at the close of our Lenten journey, we come again to the garden tomb. We accompany the women who came on that first day, and with them, we make some *Easter morning discoveries*. First, we see...

**I. He Is Gone!** — (He was there (*they had seen Him buried*), but they didn’t find the body they were expecting....

- A. They were entirely sure about His death [They saw the spear go in! There was no room in their minds for *modern theories* of Jesus *faking death*.]
- B. The mystery of our hope is that our God became a human being; the history of our hope is that He died as a human, in our place!
- C. But nothing short of Christ’s resurrection could have changed His *confused, discouraged, and despairing disciples* into *fearlessly bold evangelists!* (Christ’s resurrection utterly transformed them!)

**TRANS:** We call the day of Christ’s death “*Good Friday*,” because we know about Easter. To the women at the tomb, the resurrection was a surprise. It had been *bad Friday* for them, watching their hopes die on a cross. Because these women didn’t anticipate it, His resurrection was *ecstasy for them!* We, who grow up knowing about it, can *never* know the thrill they experienced, but *we can learn from their discoveries*....

## II. He Is Gone, but He Left Some Things Behind

### A. He left behind **75 lbs of spices** *He didn't need.*

1. Nicodemus gave these spices as a way to dispell the odor of His decaying body, and the women were *bringing even more!*
2. But Jesus left behind a fragrance that sweetens our path to the grave [**anonymous**: “Why should we tremble to convey / These bodies to the tomb? / There the dear flesh of Jesus lay, / And **left a long perfume.**”].

### B. He left behind **His grave clothes**, *reminding us of 3 things...*

1. He had fully identified with *our human condition* of wearing clothes to protect the body and keep it warm in cold weather.
2. He had fully identified with *our human death* by being wrapped up in a shroud to hide the loathsome process of decaying flesh.
3. By abandoning these grave wrappings, Jesus showed that where He went, and where we'll someday go, the *bodily coverings* in this life will be traded for eternal robes of righteousness.

### C. He left behind **angels**

1. They were at the tomb **not** to serve the needs of the risen Savior, but to serve as *messengers* to the women and to us.
2. They rolled back the stone not to release Jesus from the confines of tomb, but to show us that He was alive, that He had risen.
3. They came there not to awaken Christ from death, but to assure us that *our death too will receive similar angelic watch-care.*

### D. He left behind **an open passage from the tomb**

1. Death appears so final, until we visit *the empty tomb* and see that Jesus knocked down the doors of the death-house.
2. Mortal humanity's hope of immortality has been won by our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ, who said in **Rev 1:17b-18**, “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.”
3. His glory in the *open doorway* of the *empty tomb* now penetrates the obscurity of the grave (No longer is death *dark, shadowy and fearsome*—Jesus bathed the pathway to the afterlife with light!)

**TRANS:** We have the leisure to reflect on *what Jesus left behind*, but for these women, there was a more obvious, practical discovery...

## III. He Is Gone, and So Are Our Plans...

### A. They came searching in vain [It's **simple logic**: “No one's ever to be

*found where they are not!”]*— but some still look *in vain* for Jesus...

1. He's **not** in the *philosophical tomb* created for Him by modern religious skeptics [**In Search of the Historical Jesus** was a vain, distrust in the God-inspired Scriptures, from which Christ still speaks today!]
  2. He's **not** in the *grave error* of New Age teaching that calls Him just “one among many spiritual gurus”—No! He identified Himself uniquely and exclusively by saying in **John 14:6**, “I am the way the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”
  3. We look in vain for Him in *biographical high points* [**anonymous quote**: “Admiration for past holy lives and recollections of our own past spiritual victories are of little value unless they challenge us to faithful living today.”] (**Jesus was Lord then, but He is especially Lord now!**)
- B. These women came to render services that were unnecessary—
1. Their good intent wasted *time and money* [as **some college kids** find by incurring *heavy debts* with *years of study* for *degrees never used in the real jobs they finally get.*] (Jesus had *another job for these women!*)
  2. Efforts can be wasted by trying to honor Christ through our own understanding. (We must find out where He is and what He's doing, so we can **join Him**. [**A woman dreamed** Jesus would visit her, so *she got so busy straightening her house and preparing an extravagant meal that she missed Him by ignoring the needs of a beggar who came that day.*])
- C. The purpose of these women was to *continue to express grief...*
1. Their *emotional plans* were **totally destroyed!** They came with heavy mournful hearts and left bubbling over with joy!
  2. The angels asked: “*Why do you look for the living among the dead?*” (Can we let *their question penetrate and transform our emotions, at the death of a loved one?* Christ's empty tomb encourage that!)

### **CONCLUSION:**

—The inevitability of death and the grave are somber realities on this planet. But *Easter morning* makes these enemies no longer the fearful prospects they once were. “*Christ is risen!... He is risen indeed!*” **And Hope beckons to a dying human race from the door of Christ's empty tomb.**