

Easter Sunday 3 (2024) Luke 24:36b-48; 1 John 3:1-7; Acts 3:12-19

In the beginning, let's look at the background of today's gospel:

In Luke 24, verses 1-2,

¹ on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they (**the women**) came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. ² They found the stone rolled away from the tomb...

Then, at verse 13,

¹³ Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem...

Verses 33-36,

³³ That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. ³⁴ They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!' ³⁵ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread. ³⁶ While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them...

Anyone who goes on a pilgrimage to Israel will definitely go to the Mount of Olives, which faces the Temple Mount and the Golden Dome of the Rock. There is a Church called **Dominus Flevit** on the Mount of Olives. Through the window on the altar, you can see the scene of the Temple Mount, which reminds people of the tears and mourning that Jesus Christ shed in the past because the Holy City was about to fall. Outside the **Dominus Flevit** is the Jewish cemetery. The direction of this cemetery is also facing the location of the Holy City and the former temple. The Jewish ancestors buried in this cemetery have their bodies or bones oriented with their heads towards the Holy City and the Temple, as if they are lying on the ground with the hope of seeing the revival of the Holy City and the Temple in the last days. This is Jewish hope and tradition. They firmly believe that God's promise through the prophet Ezekiel will surely come. Therefore, the cemetery and the direction of the coffin have such a special design and arrangement.

In the Old Testament, God took the prophet Ezekiel to see the bones of the Jews. Looking at the bones, God once promised, "**I will cause breath to enter you, and you**

shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD... And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live..." (you can read the whole story and conversation between God and Ezekiel in the book of Ezekiel, chapter 35:1-14) Of course, this message used visions and parables to respond to the needs and difficult situation of the Jews at that time. But God also spoke of the end of the future, saying that people will be resurrected under the power of God.

Recently, two of our brothers have rested in the Lord. As disciples of the Lord, we believe that they will receive the resurrection life from the Lord, because this is what the Lord has promised.

Both Jews and Christians are looking forward to the day of resurrection in the future. This faith is solidified by the fact of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we look at the Gospel of Luke, chapter 24, the resurrected Lord Jesus appeared on the road to Emmaus. After the two disciples, who met Him in Emmaus, returned to Jerusalem to report their experiences, the Lord suddenly appeared among the disciples. Resurrected Jesus Christ showed them his hands and feet, asked for a piece of broiled fish, and ate it in front of them. What do these actions of the Lord Jesus make you think of? The resurrection of Jesus led the disciples and even us to think about the passion of Christ and the mystery of the resurrection.

Because the resurrection of Jesus is not a ghost or a soul, but a real existence. When I read this passage, I will think of the last sentence of the "Apostles' Creed": **I believe the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.** And the last sentence of the "Nicene Creed": **We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.** We believe in the resurrection of the dead, and the resurrection of the body, as the forms of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. From Jewish tradition to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are told that the words God announced and promised through the prophet Ezekiel have not failed, and through Jesus Christ, God shows what the resurrection he promised will be like.

In the past, I often received questions from brothers and sisters. They asked, 'Do I need food after resurrection? Because the resurrected Jesus drank and ate.' They also asked, 'Since the resurrected Jesus still has nail marks on his hands and feet, will the mole and scars on my body still exist? I don't want to have them.' Another question that would be asked is, 'if the disciples recognized Jesus Christ, would the resurrected body be eternal? But I don't want to be like this forever.' Someone else asked, 'Will cremation affect the resurrection? Since they have all been cremated, how can there be bones to resurrect?' Maybe we have a lot of curiosity and doubts about life after the resurrection, not just the issues they mentioned. However, we know very little, because the resurrection itself is the manifestation of God's power and the mystery of life. Apart from what the Bible records about what the Lord Jesus did after his resurrection, we have no way of knowing anything else. Therefore, I cannot answer the brothers and sisters' questions. However, I know that we must trust God with faith, and He will give the best and most appropriate resurrection life to those who belong to Him. The resurrected Jesus has proven everything for us; we just need to rely on him by faith.

We also see that after the disciples saw the resurrected Lord, their lives were no longer the same. They experienced life transformation and bravely preached the word of God. Luke 24:52-53 stated that after the resurrected Lord ascended to heaven, the disciples "worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and they were continually in the temple blessing God." It told us about the courage of the disciples. They were originally afraid and cowed, but then the resurrected Lord made them brave and confident enough to preach the gospel openly in the temple. This is their transformation. Today we need to think about what kind of changes the resurrected Lord has brought to you. Will you be brave enough to tell others about this transformation? Will you more actively pursue a deeper knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ? We already have the resurrected Lord, who is the power of our transformation, so what are we waiting for?