

Seeking the Living Among the Dead

• Reading: Luke 24

- Early Sunday morning , the women went to the body of Jesus, feeling bad that they didn't have the opportunity to prepare his body before his burial
- Upon arrival at the Tomb, they find that he isn't there
- What they do find are Angels
- An Angel asks them a question in Verse 5, that I think still applies to us 2,000 years later...

• ***“Why do you seek the Living among the Dead?”***

- First of all, think about how strange a question that would have been
- You SAW Jesus on the Cross
- You KNOW he's Dead
- You HEARD about his Burial
- So, here you are, AT A CEMETERY, looking for a Dead Person
- Seems pretty reasonable to me!
- They weren't really expecting a living person, they were there, carrying a bunch of spices, ready to prepare a dead body
- They were, “Seeking the Dead among the Dead”
- THAT is the point of what the Angels say!
- Jesus spent three years telling them that he would die and rise again

- Every one of his Disciples should have Believed
- They should have had Faith
- They should have been Expecting him to rise again on the third day
- They should have been seeking a Living Person, not a Dead one
- They didn't believe enough to have it really change their way of thinking
- I'm sure that if they had been given some sort of "Examination" in order to join the Church of the Disciples, then one of the questions might have been, *"What's going to happen to Jesus after he dies?"*
- But, in reality, when people die they are buried and they stay in the grave
- That is just how it works
- They've seen it many times
- It's been proven to them without a doubt that this is how the world works
- People die. They get buried. End of story.
- Why would expect anything else?
- What about us?
- How do we picture Jesus?
- We know that he is risen from the dead, but do we really think of him as ALIVE and a part of our everyday life?
- Do we think of him as a living person who is intimately involved in our daily lives?
- Or is he just the main character in an important book that we read often?

- What about our outlook on life?
- Are we looking for the Risen Lord that is a “Life Giving Spirit”, or do we just expect like the women did that things will always be like they have always been?
- When we come to church every week, when we get up in the morning and go to the office, when we sit down to dinner with our families, what are we expecting to find?
- Do we really seek out new life in every one of these encounters?
- Or are we content with what we already know — with the dullness and slow death of routine, of subtle despair, of not seeing or being seen by those we claim to love?
- Usually, we are so afraid of change that we are more willing to hang on to things in our life that don’t really work, because that’s easier than risking the emptiness of the tomb
- In that sense we are looking for the Living among the Dead
- Lately, when I hear the Angels say, *“Why do you seek the Living among the Dead?”*, I hear something different...
- I hear, *“Why do you continue to do the same thing you’ve always done and expect different results?”*
- Why do we expect a New Life in Christ, if we insist on clinging to our old habits, our old thoughts, old prejudices, old hurts and old fears?
- If we really do seek a new life, then we can’t be looking among the tombs
- If we really do want to change who we are, if we really are looking for the Risen Lord, then we can’t be thinking the same way that we’ve always been thinking

- We can't be making the same old decisions
- Basing those decisions on the same old thoughts
- Basing those thoughts on the same old ideas
- Remember what Jesus said?

• Luke 5:36-28

36) He also told them a parable: "No one tears a piece from a new garment and puts it on an old garment. If he does, he will tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old.

37) And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed.

38) But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins.

- It doesn't make sense to put something NEW and POWERFUL into an OLD and WEAK container
- Why would we even attempt to fit this life-changing, life-giving, powerful message of grace and mercy and hope and salvation into our lives
- A message this wonderful deserves a new life, a new being
- To truly change, we have to change what is in our Minds
- We have to completely TRANSFORM our Minds so that we think like Jesus, and not the same we that we've always thought...
- Let's look at the verse about Transforming our Minds...

• Romans 12:1-2

1) I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

2) Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

- Transforming your mind means changing the way you think about things
- The renewal of your mind isn't something that you do
- It is something that is done to you
- We are talking about the transforming power of the Holy Spirit in our lives
- The amazing effects that the Word of God has upon us
- For it is living and active and sharper than a two-edged sword piecing to the division of soul and spirit
- And God also uses the experiences that He brings into our daily lives to shape us
- Consider this Passage from 2nd Corinthians

•2nd Corinthians 4:13-18

13) Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, "I believed, and so I spoke," we also believe, and so we also speak,

14) knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence.

15) For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

16) So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self his being renewed day by day.

17) For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison,

18) as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

- Transforming your mind means changing the way you think about things
- It means changing the way you think about your habits, your prejudices, your hurts and your fears
- The reason we act the way we do is because we have always acted that way
- We were scared by an experience when we were 8 years old, and it continues to shape the way we respond to similar experiences today
- We were impressed by someone who we thought was really cool at age 12, and it continues to shape how we act all these years later
- We've developed prejudices over the years and it continually influences our relationships and feelings today
- We've framed our expectations in life off from TV Characters and expect our lives to turn out like a fantasy
- Our OLD MAN is telling our NEW MAN how to think
- We have to TRANSFORM our mind so that the NEW MAN does the thinking
- We need to discern what is the will of God, through constant reading, prayer and meditation on His Word
- So, that we can test what is good and acceptable and perfect
- Base our thoughts on things that are Holy, not just on things that we've picked up over the years
- The things that we see are transient, the things that are unseen are eternal
- God has promised to make all things new

- Look what he told the people of Israel

• Ezekiel 36:24-27

24) I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land.

25) I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you.

26) And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

27) And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

- God will give us the same thing
- God knows that we need new life, new hope, new healing
- But it is hard for us to find the newness he is offering us if we are always looking back to the way things were, seeking the living among the dead
- And the same lesson applies to us here on Sunday Mornings
- When we go looking for Jesus, we shouldn't seek him among the tombs
- Jesus is alive and with God and we need to seek him there
- Quite literally, Jesus is here, in these Memorials this morning
- We won't find him out in the world among the dead, but we will find him here, in the Ecclesia, among the living