

## HE HAS RISEN!

Luke 24:1-35 (Key Verse 6)

“He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee....”

On a daily bases we appear at school on campus, we come to classes, come exam time we prepare and come to write that exam or test. Sometimes we panic and get worried because we feel unprepared. We also appear at our work places, we rise early in the morning, take our baths, eat and get ready for work. We do all these things because we have some hope in our hearts. As a student we hope to finish our studies and make lots of money, we hope to improve the quality of our lives and those of our families. Most especially when we have black tax, we get tired of suffering and Wits or studies becomes our hope to a better life. Once we graduate, we apply for jobs some try to start their own companies all in hopes for a better life and future. There is a quote I read somewhere, that says, “Take away a man’s hope and you take away his will to live.” I believe that is the reason we have so much will power to study, work hard because we have hope, we are hoping for something. However, what is the bases or what is the foundation of our hopes? Where does our hope come from? We have our elections coming up soon in South Africa, and each political party Is making promises so we can place our hopes in them. From our past experiences we too have seen people who graduate from University and high institutions of learning improve the quality of life through obtaining descent jobs. So seems these institutions and work places are promising things and so we also place our hopes in them. The question of course is, are those promises full proof trust worthy? Is it a guarantee that promises of this world will grant us a better life?

In this book Luke goes into great details to reveal the account of Jesus resurrection from eye witnesses. It was to write down an orderly account to reveal the living hope presented and proclaimed in the life and message of Jesus Christ. May this hope and certainty make us faithful and fruitful servants of the word. Amen!

Look at verse 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.” Jesus had died on Friday having prayed, “Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” as learned from b. Tsibela’s message. Now it was on Sunday the third day and the women very early in the morning took spices to the tomb. Spices were traditionally used to reduce a dead body from rotting. So they were going to see and spice up a dead Jesus. Though they were coming to see Jesus they were coming with sadness and hopelessness f hearts. However when they arrived they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. In those days burial was in caves that would be closed up by a large stone. Worse part when they entered they could not find the body of Jesus.

While they were wondering what was going on, two men in some special clothes appeared before the women [4]. These men asked the women a profound question, “**Why do you look for the living among the dead?**” Though the women had come to Jesus, though the women were looking for Jesus. They were after all looking for a dead Jesus, a powerless Jesus, a Jesus who needs their spices in order not to decompose quickly. Why do you look for the living among the dead, also suggests that we should expect the living among the dead. This is a recipe to live a hopeless life. Such people may still carry their bible talk about Jesus and come to church however, they are looking for Jesus among the dead. Jesus is dead in their lives. They mix Jesus with ancestral worship, they say God helps those who help themselves. They consult with sangomas same time claiming to believe in Jesus. Have we not noticed a number of these sangomas use dead bones and call upon the dead to receive answers for the living. Also many times the way we practice our Christian faith is as though Jesus I dead. We are in despair and shot of hope. In such a way that if there is any form of hope it is actually a dead hope. Though we come to Jesus in prayer, It is as though he is dead. That is why though we pray, though we may come

to church you would still find yourself ever so often feeling hopeless and in despair. If we need success, we need human recognition, more than 50% mark on our courses or material things to feel a sense of hope then by definition our Jesus is a dead Jesus. It is so sad and actually pitiful that so many people even worse, Christians would depend on gossiping about others or seeing the defeat of others to be happy.

We are looking for the living among the dead. We usually receive much hope when we can gain that success, or that good bank balance in our bank accounts, that certificate that we are now graduates ready for job market, however how long will that hope last? Is it a guaranteed hope to carry us through life and even beyond death. Last time I checked when we die our certificates and bank balance become useless. Some families even bury their loved ones with their certificates and accolades. We truly need to introspect our lives, what is the bases of my hope? In other words what is driving me to desire to succeed in life? What is the source of my hope? So that source that bases of my hope, Is it full proof? can it withstand the test of time? Can I depend on it with my life? Are we looking for a good thing "HOPE" among the dead? This is not a rhetorical question, you go stand before God and answer, you go stand before the mirror and honestly respond.

These men did not wait for the women to respond, they gave them the answer. Let us all read verse 6-7, "He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" He is not here, he has risen. What does this mean? Firstly, It means Jesus is not among the dead, he is living. It means that Jesus is alive. He was delivered over to the hands of sinners, was crucified and on the third day he rose from the dead. This is what Jesus had told them before what should happen. However, because of hopelessness and despair over the death of Jesus they had forgotten the words of Jesus and his teachings. Jesus is alive! He is not among the dead he has risen! Secondly it means that, Jesus has overcome death. Death has no power over him. We are so accustomed to death, we would hear of people who died to an illness, just this coming Easter Weekend we would hear of death rates on the roads due to busyness of the roads. My point is that, all these have made us forget that actually death reigned on earth because of Sin. Death not simply a natural thing, it points to the rebellion of mankind towards God. That is why the theme of our conference, we heard yesterday's message, "Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing." We are born sinners and continued to be ruled by the power of sin and death. Jesus on the cross prayed, "Father forgive them" and so Jesus died because of sin. All our sin was imputed on Jesus as though he was the one who committed them. There was an exchange at the cross, Jesus became our sin while He gave us his purity and holiness. He died in our place. However, the wonderful news is that, Jesus rose from the dead after three days just as he had taught his disciples. This means that our sin had been washed away, because death came through sin, and now Jesus had risen from the dead, sin no longer has power that leads to death. Because though Jesus died due to sin, he rose from death. Jesus is alive. This means that though we may die because of the body of sin we live in, those in Jesus will rise again to eternal life. That is why Jesus said in John 11:25, "...I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die." What hope in this world can compare to this. We can live for material things, success, human recognition and marks, however can all these things save us from death? You know there is one thing guaranteed in our lives is that one day we are going die. That is why I actually value funerals, they remind me of this truth. Because the world we live in many times gives an illusion that there is no death. Hence when someone close to us dies comes as a big shock. We are shocked because we did not expect it, even though it's guaranteed for all of us, Just a question of when. It does not matter whether I like it or not. And no matter how hard we work, play and so on nothing in this world can save us from the inevitable. And so I believe we end up placing our hopes in dead things in fake promises, e.g. if I have more money I will be happy, human recognition or greatness will give me joy and life, marriage and family that is void of God and so on. Ultimately it

all becomes meaningless because, as Maximus said in the Movie Gladiator (featured in the year 2000), “death smiles at us all.”

However, the risen Jesus changes everything, Peter says it well in 1 Peter 1:3, “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” The resurrection of Jesus from the dead gives us a living hope. This is all because of the mercy of God, what Jesus did for us on the cross, “Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” Our hope is living because, firstly, we have been given a new birth, incorruptible birth, making the power of sin and death powerless because of God’s mercy. Secondly, it is a living hope because, it is set upon an inheritance incorruptible that can never fade away because it is reserved in heaven. This is a significant difference to any inheritance or promises of this world. Thirdly, because of the risen Jesus our hope is living. You will never find Jesus tombstone or burial site. The two men said to the women, ““He is not here; he has risen.” Amen! It is my prayer that we may have living hope through the resurrection of Jesus and share in Peter’s joy. A joy that nothing in this world can take away from us, if we can but believe in what Jesus has done for us on the cross. Amen!

I thank God to have prepared this message, I still remember how some men came to our house to preach the gospel of Jesus and invite us to their church. When they left they left their bible and for many years I actually thought they were careless to forget their bible. However, out of a family of 6 children I miraculously became attracted towards studying and reading that bible. I received a clear word in my heart through Romans 10:9, “If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” Through this word I could repent of my sin and accept Jesus as my lord and saviour. It was later on that I realized that, those men had not forgotten their bible but because of the living Jesus, they left it for me. I could experience the living Jesus through his word. However over time, I am realizing that though I believe in Jesus and even stand in the pulpit to talk about Him. Still in my life I place my hope in dead things or things and end up living with dead hope. Which tends to make me proudful. Because I have so many things to do, deadlines at work, family and ministry. I find myself managing and placing my hopes in human recognition and success. Instead of making time to write testimony, I would justify myself by saying I am too busy. Whereas it actually means I would be placing my hopes in achieving things in this world. Whereas actually only Jesus is my living hope. How come I can easily invest so much time in things I could not take with in the resurrection to eternal life. The risen Jesus gives me better perspective of life and the world. The risen Jesus reminds me that he called me to be a campus shepherd. I can only live up to this calling through living by Hope in the risen Jesus. I pray that I may not be distracted by dead hopes of this world, but continue to follow Jesus who has called me to be a fisher of men, a husband, a father and a campus shepherd. This is God’s great mercy over me and my family and this is the living hope I pray and hope to instil on others and my children. Because Jesus is alive! May his calling over me and family be alive till Jesus comes or till I depart from this life, I pray. Amen!

**In conclusion**, weekly we commit time to something usually things we have hope in. We also commit time to study the word of God and reflect on Sunday message in a form of a testimony writing, all these things take our precious time. However, it is worth it to invest our time in God’s word in knowing Jesus, building up our spiritual man, because Jesus has risen, Jesus is alive. Praise God that because of what Jesus did for us on the cross, “father forgive them” we have a living hope sealed and guaranteed through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. To the world we may look like we are wasting time, some will tell us to use that time to make more money than spend it in testimony writing or in bible study or going to church. However, we have living hope because of the risen Jesus. All worldly hopes are dying hopes. There is no real, lasting, eternal hope in this world, because everything eventually perishes, spoils or fades away some day. I pray that we may live with resurrection faith in our hearts,

may we place our faith in the risen Jesus. Through Jesus we have living hope, to live victorious and purposeful lives in this world. Amen!