

# *God Is Faithful*



## ***People sometimes break promises; God never does.***

Ever been left with a broken promise?

- » "The repairman will be at your house by 8:00."
- » "The doctor will see you shortly."
- » "I'll always be there for you."

Some broken promises can't be avoided. After all, when we make promises we don't factor in traffic snarls or sudden illness. But whether the broken promise is a slight irritant like forgetting to call back a friend or a devastating blow like a shattered marriage vow, when we experience enough broken promises, we may begin to question anyone's ability to remain faithful to a promise. We can even lose hope.

Thankfully, God is not like us. God is always faithful no matter what.

The reality of Jesus' resurrection points to this great truth. By raising Jesus from the dead, God showed He makes the impossible possible. Nothing prevents Him from keeping His promise to us. God is faithful and will always do what He says. Jesus told us He would rise from the dead—and He did!

Let's look at the resurrection of Jesus, that first day when Jesus came out of the tomb, and discover how we can have hope because God is faithful.



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SPECIAL FOCUS

GOD IS FAITHFUL



*What surprise ending has left you wondering, "How did that happen?"*

**QUESTION 1**

*The empty tomb points to the faithfulness of God.*



## THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Skeptics often question the resurrection of Christ. But those who have objectively looked into it come away with a different conclusion.

- » “I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort, to the understanding of a fair inquirer, than the great sign which God hath given us that Christ died and rose again from the dead.” –Thomas Arnold, Oxford University.<sup>1</sup>
- » Harvard Law School professor, Dr. Simon Greenleaf, was a skeptic; He mocked Christians in his classroom until some challenged him to put the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus through the filter of the law. He took up the challenge and found the evidence so convincing he became a believer. He concluded the resurrection of Jesus is one of the most well-established facts of history.<sup>2</sup>

The evidence points to the resurrection of Jesus as a verifiable historical fact. This evidence also tells us something about God, the One who raised Jesus from the dead. Skeptics were present on that first morning of Jesus’ resurrection, but God’s faithfulness was also present.

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# WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

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## **Luke 24:1-3 (CSB)**

**<sup>1</sup> On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came to the tomb, bringing the spices they had prepared. <sup>2</sup> They found the stone rolled away from the tomb. <sup>3</sup> They went in but did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.**

At the beginning of Luke 24, resurrection was not on anyone's mind; they certainly weren't expecting it. Notice what the women were carrying as they came to the tomb: spices. These spices were not for cooking; they were to prepare their friend for His final burial.

The women were not expecting the stone to be rolled away from the tomb (Mark 16:3-4), nor were they expecting the tomb to be empty. They knew they were at the right place. They had seen Jesus' body placed there (15:47). But now, on the morning of the third day, they walked in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

No one just walks out of a tomb. It's impossible. But God makes the impossible possible.

I can promise my wife a year-long trip around the world with first-class transportation, five-star accommodations, and the best of everything. I can plan it. I can figure out the budget. I can promise it with the best intentions in the world. But there's a problem: I can't deliver. I don't have the ability, the finances, or the time off.

If God were just like me, His faithfulness would be limited by His ability. God could not be faithful to what He has said He will do if His ability, capacity, and power had limits or restrictions. But the empty tomb proves that God is not like me. Nothing restricts God in His ability and power to deliver, to do whatever He chooses to do. He makes the impossible possible.

***What do you remember about your earliest encounters with the resurrection story?***

**QUESTION 2**

**Luke 24:4-8 (CSB)**

**<sup>4</sup> While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men stood by them in dazzling clothes. <sup>5</sup> So the women were terrified and bowed down to the ground. "Why are you looking for the living among the dead?" asked the men. <sup>6</sup> "He is not here, but he has risen! Remember how he spoke to you when he was still in Galilee, <sup>7</sup> saying, 'It is necessary that the Son of Man be betrayed into the hands of sinful men, be crucified, and rise on the third day?'" <sup>8</sup> And they remembered his words.**

The women were not left in their perplexed state. Two men—angels (Matthew 28:5)—appeared and asked a single question: "Why are you looking for the living among the dead?" The question makes sense. After all, we go to places like Starbucks® or a favorite restaurant to meet the living; we don't go to the cemetery. The men gave only one option for Jesus' absence in the tomb. No one stole His body; He did not revive from unconsciousness in the cool of the tomb. "He is not here, but he has risen!" (Luke 24:6).

This shouldn't have been a surprise to the women. Jesus' resurrection should not have been unexpected. "Remember how he spoke to you when he was still in Galilee, saying, 'It is necessary that the Son of Man be betrayed into the hands of sinful men, be crucified, and rise on the third day?'" (v. 6b-7).

If the disciples had carried a clipboard and checklist, they could have checked off all the things Jesus said would happen during the previous week. He would be:

- » Handed over to the religious leaders
- » Rejected and condemned to death
- » Handed over to the Romans
- » Mocked and crucified
- » Raised to life

Each box could have been checked off methodically as the events unfolded—just as Jesus said. Perhaps the disciples were so accustomed to the permanence of death that the reality of Jesus' death made them

***Why do we sometimes doubt or forget what God has promised?***

**QUESTION 3**

***Why is Jesus' resurrection a crucial doctrine of the Christian faith?***

**QUESTION 4**

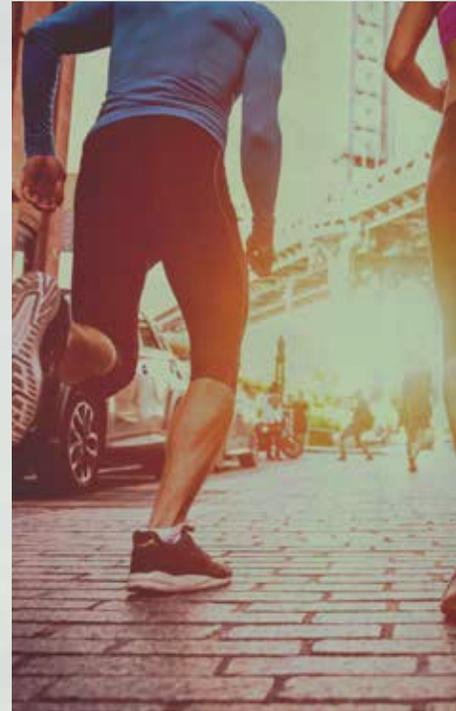
forget what He said about being raised to life. But, before the disciples could check off the last box, fear, faithlessness, and unbelief set in.

**Luke 24:9-12** (CSB)

**<sup>9</sup> Returning from the tomb, they reported all these things to the Eleven and to all the rest. <sup>10</sup> Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them were telling the apostles these things. <sup>11</sup> But these words seemed like nonsense to them, and they did not believe the women. <sup>12</sup> Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. When he stooped to look in, he saw only the linen cloths. So he went away, amazed at what had happened.**

Rushing back to the others, “they reported all these things” (v. 9) to Jesus’ other followers. Unfortunately, the women’s report—including what the angels said—did not have the same effect on the disciples or on the other people gathered with them. “These words seemed like nonsense to them” (v. 11). They wrote it off as ridiculous, ludicrous, and inconceivable.

Consequently, “they did not believe” (v. 11). “They” included the eleven remaining apostles, the ones who had walked closely with Jesus. These were Jesus’ closest friends, those who had spent the most time with Him. They heard *everything* He said, including the





***What are some possible responses to Jesus' resurrection?***

**QUESTION 5**

statements about His resurrection, yet in this moment, they were skeptics.

The empty tomb is proof positive. It offers solid evidence that God is not bound by our unbelief. God did what He did because He is ultimately faithful to Himself. He does not have earthly limits, neither is he necessarily limited by our lack of faith. Faith is important, to be sure, but God can and sometimes will accomplish His plans and His purposes in spite of our unbelief or lack of faith. Imagine the potential of great faith, when properly placed in His powerful promises. God is always faithful to Himself, His promises, and His purposes—and so you can believe He will always be faithful to you.

Peter was the apostle who was often saying or doing the wrong thing. He could be impetuous and impulsive, but in this moment his impulsive nature led him to check out the report. “Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. When he stooped to look in, he saw only the linen cloths. So he went away, amazed at what had happened” (v. 12).

Instead of staying in doubt and unbelief, Peter got up and went to check it out for himself. He investigated. Peter chose to exercise what little faith he had left, and he found God to be faithful. For Peter, the door of hope was cracked open. Just maybe, what the women said was true. Maybe what Jesus said had actually come to pass. Did God faithfully carry out exactly what He said He would do?

If the resurrection didn't happen—if Jesus didn't really rise from the dead—then nothing in the Christian life matters (1 Corinthians 15:13-14). But the resurrection did happen; the tomb was empty, and Jesus is alive. That changes everything.

We have a heavenly Father who makes the impossible possible. He does not make empty promises, nor is He bound by our unbelief. The empty tomb is evidence of God's ultimate faithfulness to who He is and what He will do in our lives.

"The empty tomb is proof positive. It offers solid evidence that God is not bound by our unbelief."

DAVID FLEMING

## LIFE IN CHRIST



***When you think about the following verse, what captures your attention? Describe, list, or sketch your response in the space below.***

"But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love that he had for us, made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace!" Ephesians 2:4-5

## LIVE IT OUT

How will you respond to the faithfulness of God this week?

- » **Believe.** Jesus is alive, and He invites you to follow Him. If you have never trusted in Christ, place your full faith in Him. Read the inside front cover of this book to learn how you can do this. Talk to someone in your group about your desire to believe and trust in Christ.
- » **Investigate.** If you still wonder if the resurrection of Jesus is something we can count on, look into it for yourself. Many books address the reality of the resurrection, such as *Buried Hope* or *Risen Savior: The Search for Jesus' Tomb* by Charles Quarles or *The Case for Christ* by Lee Strobel.
- » **Trust.** Make a list of what God has accomplished in Scripture and then a list of what He's accomplished in your own life. Keep it somewhere easily accessible and refer back to it every time you're tempted to distrust God.

Scripture records almost nine thousand promises from God. We can trust the One who extended these promises to us because the empty tomb means God's words and His promises are not empty. **He does what He says He will do.**



My thoughts