

The gospel of Luke is written with a Gentile or Greek-speaking cultured people in mind. In writing the gospel account Luke focuses upon the role and importance of women and the poor, more than the other three gospels, and relates the most parable teachings of Jesus in his story of who Jesus is, how he was and is in the world, and how that changes even us.

The four gospels all tell the story of the resurrection of Jesus. Luke's is different in the insistence upon the fearlessness of the numerous woman who go to the tomb and then tell the male disciples of what they've found. They are active while the men are passive, they continue their relationship with Jesus while the men seem to think it's all over and have thrown in the towel.

the women: The story begins with the women as actors. These are the same women who in the preceding verses are described as "those who had come with Jesus from Galilee." They followed the removal of the body of Jesus to ascertain his gravesite, to which they now return, following the Sabbath rest commanded in the tradition, to anoint and further prepare the body for burial (what we might call the work of 'embalming.'). While the men seem to think everything is finished, they continue their service to the rabbi master, doing what is required of the Law tradition.

two men in dazzling clothes : the two men in dazzling apparel recall to mind the two (Moses and Elijah) who appeared suddenly in dazzling clothes with Jesus on the mountaintop during the Transfiguration (Luke 9:29-30). Here these two men tell the women to remember the words of Jesus, much as Moses and Elijah speak with Jesus "of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem" in Luke 9:31. The women bow down in a gesture of respect, worship and veneration of these two messengers (or angels – as it's the same word in Greek and Hebrew).

you look: the word translated as "look" is also commonly translated as "search" or "seek" as it is in Luke 9: 9-10, the teaching of Jesus which these words recall to our minds: "So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened."

Remember : this inviting imperative is repeated twice in the text: a sign that it's key. In the next two stories the risen Jesus explains, teaches and speaks to help the disciples remember what the tradition has long said about the Christ to come and what Jesus himself said. See Luke 24:27; 24:44-49.

the Son of Man.... rise again : The words of verse 7 recall to mind the other three announcements Jesus has made about his passion already in Luke's gospel, in Luke 9:21-22; 9:44; 17:25; 18:31-33.

THEY DID NOT BELIEVE : The testimony of the women would be naturally hard to believe, and also in that day the testimony of a woman was not considered legal, or sufficient enough to establish truth. The testimony of a woman was more like what we today call "alt truth" or "fake news." Their tale motivates Peter to check it out for himself, but he seems to go home in incredulity, he returns to his daily life (home) not to the indicated site of Jesus' past teaching in Galilee.

SCRIPTURES FOR EASTER SUNDAY

4.16.2017

Luke 23:56b-24:12

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

^{56b} On the Sabbath [**the women**] rested according to the commandment.

¹But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, **they** came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. ²They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³but when they went in, they did not find the body. ⁴While they were perplexed about this, suddenly **two men in dazzling clothes** stood beside them. ⁵The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do *you look* for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. ⁶**Remember** how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, ⁷that the *Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.*" ⁸Then they *remembered* his words, ⁹and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. ¹¹But these words seemed to [the apostles] an idle tale, and **THEY DID NOT BELIEVE** [the women]. ¹²But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.

Questions for the practice of Examen & Contemplation

***What strikes or shimmers for you in this passage ?**

***How does the promise and potential of resurrection interact with what you're living these days, or thinking about?**

***Is this story more about accepting a testimony of what happened or giving one? Is faith more about ascribing to a certainty or living out and into a promise? Is there a difference?**

***How is faith an invitation to remember something different than what we see or hear today? Do you see the past through the present? Or the present through the past?**