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The Main Thing Devotional

Chaplain's Office

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10-1-2020

**Surprise!**

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## **The Main Thing: Surprise!**

*And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. - Luke 24:4*

**God's surprises might be perplexing, but they are always life-changing.** Do you like surprises, or would you prefer the predictability that certainty can bring? A couple of years ago, I read a fascinating book by Tania Luna and LeeAnn Renninger, entitled, "Surprise." The book highlighted that hotel guests who had experienced a "delightful surprise" were 58 percent more likely to return there or recommend it to someone else. It seems like pleasant surprises can be good for business, but can it also be good for our faith?

As you read through the Bible, it doesn't take long to discover that God is a god of surprises. In Luke's account of the resurrection, the element of surprise pervades that glorious Sunday morning experience in Palestine. While Jesus' followers were perplexed about the empty tomb, behold, two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling clothing and said, "Why do you seek the living One among the dead? He is not here, but He has risen..." Surprise! God's not dead; He's alive! The resurrection of Jesus is the greatest surprise in earth's history. How unpredictable. How life-changing!

As we prepare for Vespers, we will get to experience God's presence through worship, community, and inspiring messages. But as we worship together, let's not allow the familiarity of the service to make us lose sight of the glorious surprise that God has waiting for each one of us. If we do, we may be seeking the living among the dead in our own lives. We could be seeking forgiveness in dead formalism, love in toxic relationships, success in worthless materialism, and healing in empty methods. Each day of our lives, God seeks to surprise us just as He surprised those faithful women two thousand years ago.

Let's celebrate each day with expectation by looking for the surprises God has awaiting us. You may just find them in the most unexpected places, even an empty tomb.

### **Reflection**

When was the last time you were surprised by others or by God? How can our need for predictability cause us to miss the miraculous surprises God seeks to show us? Why not pray about who can you surprise this week in your dormitory, classroom or office - it may just change their life!

### **Prayer**

*God, thank you for the life-changing surprise of the resurrection. You seek me to have faith even when I am caught by surprise and have little understanding of the circumstances surrounding me. Through it all, You are my true source of stability and protection, for you promise to never keep anything that is for my good away from me!*

### **NEWS AND RESOURCES**

- **Grab Your Vespers Tickets in Advance:** At [southern.edu/united](https://southern.edu/united), students can now book their tickets weeks in advance instead of having to wait each week for the unique link. Feel free to

contact [Michael Baranda](#) if you have any questions or need to cancel your ticket for any reason.

- Share your prayer requests or praises with us via text message using your mobile phone. **Text-to-Pray: 423-281-8996.**
- **Need to talk to someone?** We encourage you to make an appointment with Chaplains [Anna Bennett](#) or [Joseph Khabbaz](#) if you need someone to talk to for support, prayer or have a desire to grow spiritually.