

March 31, 2024 (Lesson 5)

## EXPERIENCING THE RESURRECTION (Easter)

1. **Recognizing the Risen Christ** (John 20:1, 11-18)
2. **Relationship With the Risen Christ** (Luke 24:13-17, 26-35)
3. **Restored by the Risen Christ** (John 21:1-2, 15-19)

**Central Truth:** Because Christ is alive, we can experience a personal relationship with Him.

**Focus:** Examine the effects of Christ's resurrection on those who witnessed it and experience its impact.

**Evangelism Emphasis:** By living in relationship with Christ, believers are instruments of His saving power.

**Golden Text:** "That I may know him [Christ], and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death" (Philippians 3:10).

Our entire Christian faith hinges on the authenticity of the resurrection of Jesus. If the fact that Jesus arose from the dead were not incontrovertible, then our faith would be vain, our hopes empty, and our entire lives built on a fanciful dream. The New Testament itself states as much point-blank. In 1 Corinthians 15, the Apostle Paul stakes his entire faith, indeed his entire life, on this cornerstone. Our hope for life after death is rooted and grounded in the historicity of the Resurrection—in our certainty it is not an idle speculation, a wishful dream, or an attractive myth but, rather, an attested fact.

As we read the Gospels, we quickly become convinced the Resurrection story carries the ring of truth. The straightforward narrative detail, the sincere conveyance of remarkably concrete particulars, the unhesitating revelation of the fears and doubts, even the sense of hopelessness of Jesus' followers, and the matter-of-fact communication of supernatural intervention must incline any honest investigator toward acceptance of this story as fact.

With the Resurrection being one of the best-attested events of ancient history, we could make no more sensible response than to dedicate our life to this Christ of the Resurrection. This is our

clear hope for personal survival in a reeling world and our strong hope for eternal life, ending that misery produced by emptiness, loneliness, and purposelessness.

## **1. RECOGNIZING THE RISEN CHRIST**

### **A. The Empty Tomb (John 20:1, 11-13)**

**1 The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.**

**11 But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, 12 And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. 13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.**

Early on the first day of the week (Sunday) while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene and several other women made their way to Jesus' tomb (see Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:1; Luke 24:10 for the names of the other women). Their purpose apparently was to complete the burial process. Luke records they were bringing spices. These served the purpose of cutting the odor of a decaying body.

Upon arriving at the tomb, they saw the large stone used to cover the entrance had been rolled away (John 20:1). Where was Jesus' body? Mary Magdalene assumed the Lord's body had been transferred or stolen by His enemies (v. 2). The women didn't even think about a resurrection. Their grief, and the past days' events, blinded them from the truth Jesus had been teaching them.

After notifying the disciples of the absence of Christ's body, Mary Magdalene seemed to have stepped aside as the others entered the tomb. After the others left, she stayed outside the tomb weeping (v. 11). When she looked inside the tomb and saw the discarded grave clothes, she also saw

two angels. They were sitting at the head and foot of where Jesus' body had lain (v. 12). This further emphasized the fact He was not there.

The events demonstrated how much the heavenly Father cared for this woman who had experienced a miraculous deliverance from demon-possession and sin. Now at the point of her sorrow and confusion, divine messengers were there for her. They began a simple dialogue with a logical question, "Why weepest thou?" (v. 13). Addressing her as "Woman" may appear rather cold to us. However, in the Greek language, it was a term of respect or affection.

Mary Magdalene responded, "I know not where they have laid him." This indicates she was alone. Not only had Peter and John left, but apparently the other women who had come were now on their way home. Her response also indicated her grief when she discovered the Lord's body was gone.

### **Security Breach**

The tomb was empty—the greatest security breach of all time. Yet, that event gives lasting security to all God's people.—David Jeremiah

#### **B. The Revelation (John 20:14-18)**

**14 And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. 15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. 16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.**

Jesus opened the conversation with the same question the angels asked. But He followed it up with a second one: "Whom seekest thou?" Mary's response came from her mistaken identification.

She assumed the man speaking to her was the gardener. Who else but the person responsible for the property would be there at such an early hour?

Jesus then revealed Himself by speaking just one word—her name. Immediately she recognized His voice. And turning toward Him, she called out, “Rabboni,” which means “Master.” Apparently, Mary had turned back toward the tomb in the process of the conversation, thus necessitating her turning a second time toward the Lord.

More than likely, Mary fell at Jesus’ feet to worship Him. But Jesus said, “Do not hold onto me” (v. 17 NIV), for He would soon be ascending to His Father. Instead of indicating an ascension to *our* Father and *our* God, He separated Himself from His followers by using the possessives *My* and *yours*. This reminds us that, unlike us, Jesus is divine. He is *the* Son of God.

Jesus told Mary to go to His “brethren” (those who do His Father’s will, Matt. 12:48-50) to tell them He was alive and would be ascending to His Father (John 20:17), and she did not hesitate to obey (v. 18).

From the general description given, Mary shared two things: First, she had seen the Lord and He wasn’t still dead. His body had not been stolen and the grave clothes left behind. He had risen! Yet, from Mark 16:11, we know they did not believe her.

Second, she must have told them what Jesus said about His coming ascension. This should have brought assurance to the disciples. It was consistent with His teaching of several weeks before, after which they had questioned His teaching: “What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father?” (John 16:17).

§ *How does Jesus Christ reveal Himself today to His followers?*

## **2. RELATIONSHIP WITH THE RISEN CHRIST**

#### **A. The Emmaus Road (Luke 24:13-17)**

**15 And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. 16 But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.**

On a certain day (apparently Sunday after the crucifixion Friday) two men who had been through the terrible days of the trial and death of Christ walked toward Emmaus. It was the first day of a new week, and the two believers, having heard the report of the women concerning Jesus' empty tomb and the appearance of the angels, spoke about it (vv. 13-14).

As they walked, the two men questioned each other as to what the women's story might mean. As they talked, a Stranger drew near and began to walk with them, "but their eyes were kept from recognizing Him" (v. 16 NASB).

Jesus, inquiring into the subject of their earnest conversation, elicited from them a summary of the arrest and crucifixion of their Lord, and a confused account of the empty tomb and the vision of angels at the tomb. But they apparently attached no importance to these rumors, and were completely discouraged, all their messianic expectations having been destroyed. "We were hoping," they said despairingly, "that it was He who was going to redeem Israel" (v. 21 NKJV).

#### **The Message of Easter**

The message of Easter is that God's new world has been unveiled in Jesus Christ and you're now invited to belong to it.—A. W. Tozer

#### **B. The Revelation (Luke 24:26-35)**

**28 And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. 29 But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. 30 And it came to pass,**

**as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. 31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. 32 And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?**

Continuing their journey, conversation continued, during which Jesus allowed the disciples to express their deepest feelings in regard to Him. When they had spoken, He gently chided them for their failure to believe their Lord would come again as He had promised (v. 25). Their fault lay in their ignorance of prophetic sacred writings available to them, as well as to their interpretation of the writings (v. 26). The disciples listened intently to their Visitor as He revealed to them the profound depths of the ancient prophecies (v. 27).

As the two disciples and Jesus neared Emmaus, Jesus “made as though he would have gone further” (v. 28). It had been a walk of about two hours from Jerusalem to Emmaus, but the presence of Jesus must have made the journey seem less tiring. Jesus made no false pretense. He would have gone further had the disciples not implored Him to stay (v. 29).

Jesus sat down with the disciples for a while at a table to remind them of His promises and to reveal Himself. Once in the home, Jesus assumed the place of host. It was He who broke bread, blessed it, and gave it to the others.

Somehow, in the breaking of the bread, the eyes of the disciples were opened and they knew it was their Lord. The recognition of Jesus may have come because of particular words He used blessing the bread. Or it may have been a certain gesture He made, or the nail prints on His hands. At that moment, Jesus “vanished out of their sight” (v. 31).

The two disciples wasted no time in returning to Jerusalem. The seven-mile journey to Emmaus had been filled with questioning and sadness, but the return hike to Jerusalem was filled with

confidence and incredible joy. Upon their arrival, they told the eleven apostles about Jesus' journey with them (v. 35).

§ *How did Jesus' words affect the two companions (v. 32), and how should the Scriptures affect us?*

### **3. RESTORED BY THE RISEN CHRIST**

#### **A. Third Appearance (John 21:1-2)**

**1 After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself. 2 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.**

Following the two appearances of Jesus to His disciples in Jerusalem, the apostles went on to Galilee. Especially mentioned were Peter, Thomas, Nathanael (or Bartholomew), James, and John (v. 2). In Galilee, Peter announced to the disciples that he planned to resume fishing. He was a fisherman by trade, with a wife and a family, and by this time he was in need of income. So when Peter said, "I go a fishing" (v. 3), he did not mean for sport or recreation, but for a livelihood. Since his life had been so dramatically altered, he resorted to the only way he knew to support his family.

The disciples set sail with Peter and spent the night fishing on the Sea of Tiberias. As the morning came they were still without fish, having caught nothing through the night. In the early light of morning, Jesus stood on the seashore and watched His disciples in their fruitless labor (vv. 3-4).

When the disciples finally recognized Jesus, they hurried to shore and Jesus fed them the breakfast He had prepared (vv. 7-13). This was the "third time" the Risen Lord had appeared to some or all of His disciples as a group (v. 14).

**Because He Arose**

If He had not risen from the dead, then who Jesus was and what He did would not matter. However, because He arose, it is a divine attestation that Jesus is who He said He was, and did what He said He would do.—Jerry Madden

**B. Three Affirmations (John 21:15-19)**

**15 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. 16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. 17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.**

Following their meal, Jesus turned His attention to Simon Peter and to a reconciliation of Peter's denial of Him on the night He was arrested. This does not mean Peter was not forgiven until now, only that he is here given an opportunity to repair and leave behind his great spiritual failure. Because Peter had three times denied the Lord, he is here called on three times to affirm his loyalty to Christ. In each instance, he is also given instructions regarding his ministry for Christ.

Jesus asked if Peter loved Him more than the other disciples because, on the night of the Last Supper, Peter had declared that even if all others should fail Him, he would yet remain true. Already, Peter had demonstrated his love by the way he raced to the empty tomb, but the Lord here gave him a chance to make verbal affirmation of that great affection.

By His repetitive question, the Lord underscored that the three denials were now erased and set into the past. This opportunity for a threefold affirmation of his love would also do much to restore



Peter's self-respect and self-image. Note that in verse 15, Jesus said, "Feed my lambs," and then He said, "Feed my sheep" (v. 16). This shows progression and maturity as the church will grow.

The third time Jesus asked His question, Peter was grieved and felt the Lord might be holding something against him. When Peter made his presumptuous statement of self-confidence at the Last Supper, Jesus had revealed something Peter himself did not know (13:37-38). Peter feared here that Jesus might yet see something in his life he himself could not see. Jesus set that possibility aside and instructed Peter a third time to feed His sheep (21:17).

In verse 18, the Lord looked into the future regarding Peter and declared to him details about his old age and death. When Peter was a young man, he had been able to take care of himself, but when he was grown old another would take him where he would not wish to go. This means Peter would one day be apprehended and executed much as the Lord had been. The words "Follow Me" meant Peter would follow Jesus in death as he had followed Him in life (v. 19).

§ *What did Peter ask Jesus in John 21:21, and what does Jesus' response (v. 22) communicate in your walk with Christ?*

## **THE RESURRECTION'S IMPACT**

There is no question about the factuality of the Resurrection. It was prophesied in the Old Testament, predicted by Christ, mentioned more than one hundred times in the New Testament, and was the major theme of the apostles' preaching. The stone was rolled away, the tomb was empty, and Christ appeared to many. Jesus Christ conquered death; He is alive!

1. The Resurrection provides the value of faith in God. "God . . . raised him up from the dead . . . that your faith and hope might be in God" (1 Peter 1:21). The object of our faith is sure.

2. It gives absolute evidence for the deity of Christ. “[He was] declared to be the Son of God . . . by the resurrection from the dead” (Rom. 1:4).

3. It means salvation is available to all; and those who accept Christ have an ever-living mediator with God. “He is able also to save . . . [forever those who] come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25).

4. It is a guarantee of our resurrection. “The dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (1 Cor. 15:52).

#### **Daily Devotions**

- M. Samson’s Strength Restored (Judges 16:25-30)
- T. Naomi’s Hope Restored (Ruth 4:13-17)
- W. David’s Joy Restored (Psalm 51:1-13)
- T. Lazarus’ Life Restored (John 11:38-44)
- F. Thomas’ Faith Restored (John 20:24-29)
- S. Saul Encounters the Risen Christ (Acts 9:1-15)