

The Living Christ Dispels All Doubt

Luke 24:33-43

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As we come to the end of our long study of the gospel of Luke, this wonderful adventure with the Lord Jesus Christ, we find ourselves in chapter 24 this morning. Chapter 24 of Luke, the last chapter and looking at a text that begins in verse 33 and runs through verse 43. It is on the surface a very simple narrative, easy to understand. On the other hand, it describes the most profound of all Christian truths that Jesus Christ is alive from the dead. In the wonderful, simple words of Scripture, so simple that no one could possibly mistake them, we have the record of this profound supernatural event.

Verse 33 begins with these words, “And they...that refers to the two disciples who had met Jesus on the road to Emmaus...and they arose that very hour and returned to Jerusalem and found gathered together the eleven and those who were with them saying, ‘The Lord has really risen and has appeared to Simon.’ And they began to relate their experiences on the road and how He was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread. And while they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst. But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit. And He said to them, ‘Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? See My hands and My feet that it is I Myself. Touch Me and see for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you that I have.’ And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. And while they still could not believe it for joy and were marveling He said to them, ‘Have you anything here to eat?’ And they gave Him a piece of broiled fish and He took it and ate it before them.”

Just before last Easter, some anti-Christian television journalists announced to the world, you will remember this, that they had discovered the family tomb of Jesus and the bones of Jesus were still in it. Their leader calls himself the Naked Archaeologist. I doubt that that’s a reference to the emperor with no clothes, but it seems to me to be a close connection. This leader suggested that the discovery should not be disturbing to Christians. To find Jesus’ bones was no problem because the Spirit of Jesus was still alive. Obviously a bad theologian, he was an equally bad archaeologist and an equally bad journalist, since it took only a few days after the first appearance of this highly promoted National Geographic television network special for them to pull it off the air because it was totally debunked as a fraud and all further reruns were canceled.

Denying the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ has always been a major pastime for Satan and his emissaries and agents because they understand that if He did not rise from the dead, then His Word cannot be believed because He said He would. Neither can the Bible be believed because it said He would. Neither can the Apostles who wrote the New Testament be believed because they said He did. And, in fact, the Old Testament can be rejected as well. If Jesus didn’t rise from the dead, then Christianity totally collapses. They understand that.

Non-believers, haters of Christ understand the importance, the centrality of the resurrection of Jesus

Christ. If it is true, then Christianity is true. Old Testament prophecies are true. New Testament testimony is true. The words of Jesus are true. The eyewitness testimonies are true. The gospel is true. Salvation is real. God is God and they're in trouble. That's why when it happened, the leaders of Israel who knew it happened and did not try to deny it, having been told by the Roman soldiers, told them, "Lie, don't tell the truth, don't tell anybody about an angel and a resurrection. Lie and say the disciples stole His body." Bribed, that's what they did, and that lie circulated.

Even unbelievers, Satan certainly, who manipulates unbelievers, understands that if the resurrection is true, Christianity is true. If the resurrection could be disproven, Christianity totally collapses. There have been, therefore, through the history of the church since the resurrection of Jesus Christ, countless, relentless, endless efforts to explain away the resurrection. No one, by the way, has ever succeeded. No one has ever broken the unbreakable chain of evidences that link the resurrection and make it clear that it is a fact of history. To bring down Christianity, all you have to do is bring down the resurrection. And then the Apostles become liars, the New Testament is a lie. Jesus is a liar. God is liar. The Bible disappears. The whole of the Christian gospel stands on the truth of the resurrection. If it is true, everything else is true.

That is why Paul writes in Romans 10:9 and 10 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. Salvation comes by believing in the resurrection which means you believe that God raised Jesus from the dead because He had offered a suitable fitting and perfect sacrifice for sin on the cross and God validated that in the resurrection. You believe that the Old Testament prophecies of His death and resurrection are true as they are, you believe that the New Testament testimonies to His death and resurrection are true, the Bible therefore is true, the gospel is true and that is the means of salvation.

The resurrection is so critical that each of the four gospel writers focus on the reality of the resurrection. And as I've been telling you, they focus on proofs. They all four look at the empty tomb as an evidence of the resurrection, a pretty good one. They all four look at the angelic testimony, the testimony of an unmistakable angel from heaven. They all look at the witness of the women who saw Jesus personally, Mary Magdalene and the other women. And they all include as an evidence of the reality of the resurrection the unbelief of the disciples and the apostles because one of the arguments is going to be, and always has been through history, the resurrection didn't happen but the followers of Jesus wanted it to happen so badly that they virtually actualized it in their own minds. They made it in to a reality because of such strong wish that it would come to pass. It was as if it happened because they wanted it so badly. All four gospel writers tell us there wasn't one person among the disciples or the apostles who even believed Jesus would rise from the dead. They not only didn't want it, they didn't expect it, they didn't even believe it.

Each of the gospel writers then looks at these evidences. Each of them from a little different angle, looking at different incidents of those things but all looking at these evidences. Each of them give eyewitness accounts where unbelief was turned to faith. Each of them tells us how people were transformed when they met the risen Christ, whether it was John telling us about Mary Magdalene, or Matthew telling us about the women on the road, or Luke telling us about His appearance to Simon, or Luke telling us here about His appearance, as does John, in the upper room to the gathered eleven and the others. They all show us what a massive transformation took place when the risen Christ appeared.

These appearances, these experiences sealed the faith of the apostles who then went out preaching the resurrection with proof. And they saw many believe and the church established on the Day of Pentecost with 3,000 and then 5,000 and tens of thousands more as the church began to move to what it is even this day, two thousand years later.

So Luke, consistent with the other writers, gives us eyewitness accounts of people who saw the risen Christ. His accounts begin in verse 13 of chapter 24 with two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Just a quick review. These are two followers of Jesus. One of them is named Cleopas, the other is unnamed. They have been with the rest of the disciples and the apostles in a location in Jerusalem. We don't know that location but they had gathered together there. Why had they gathered together? Fear. John tells us, "For fear of the Jews." If the Jews had killed Jesus, they felt that they would soon be after them because they were the followers of Jesus. You remember that before they ever came to Jerusalem for that final Passover, Jesus said, "I have to go to Jerusalem." And Thomas said, "Well we'll go and die with You there." Before it ever happened, they anticipated it and they anticipated that if it happened to Jesus, it was going to happen to them. They were going to get caught in the same net.

So now that Jesus is dead, they are huddled together somewhere in Jerusalem in a clandestine unknown place trying to sort all of this out. They have heard the testimony of the women that the tomb is empty, that the angel explained to them He is risen. They have heard the testimony of the women, Mary Magdalene and the other women, that they saw Jesus and He is alive. They do not believe it. They think it is nonsense. And that's important because they had no expectation of a resurrection whatsoever. They didn't even believe when they were told by separate people the same things. They didn't believe. They thought it was nonsense.

They were gathered there somewhere in Jerusalem, two of them decided to go home. Not all of them could go home, home might have been a long way off. Some of them might have been there for a period of time in which they were intending to stay through the next feast...days, weeks later. Some were pilgrims from other places. But at least two of them went home. They decided they would leave the hiding place, take their chances on the road in the afternoon of that first day and go back to their village called Emmaus, which is seven miles away.

So we meet them in verse 13, the two that very day going to Emmaus seven miles away. As they go along, they're talking about Jesus. They're talking about it because everybody's talking about Jesus, that's the topic of conversation for everybody in the city of Jerusalem since He arrived on Monday in the triumphal entry. And all of a sudden a stranger comes up alongside of them, it is, according to verse 15, Jesus Himself who approached and began traveling with them. Their eyes are prevented from recognizing Him. He is not startling. He is not blazing like the angel. He is human in His appearance and yet He is not the same so that they could recognize Him.

And as they walk along, talking about the things that have happened to Jesus, He engages them in the conversation. "What are you talking about?" verse 17. "They said, 'We can't believe. Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem who doesn't know about Jesus and all that has gone on this week?'" The things about Jesus they describe as He being a prophet, verse 19; mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people and the chief priests and the rulers delivered Him to the sentence of death and crucified Him, and we are so disappointed. We were hoping that He was going to be the Redeemer of Israel. And He did say something about rising on the third day but it's late in the third

day. The third day actually began last night after sundown at six o'clock and here we are in the late afternoon; nobody has seen Him. Oh yes, some women came and said that the tomb was empty and they said an angel told them He was alive. But...and they also said they met Him and saw Him personally, but we're not buying it...we're not buying it.

And then what He does is so wonderful. They can't put Jesus in the Messianic box because the Romans killed Him and the Jews...the leadership of the Jews rejected Him. That doesn't fit their Messianic theology. Triumph, glory, kingdom, power, overthrowing enemies, conquering the world, setting up His throne, that's their messianic theology, it's a limited theology, a partial theology. They had no place for suffering and death as a sacrifice for sin even though that dominates the Old Testament. They had conveniently ignored all of that because they wished for the triumph and the glory so that's what they focused on.

So Christ wants to straighten them out and so what He does is so wonderful. He says in verse 25, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken," all is the operative word, you don't have it all, you've got a partial look at Messiah, you've got to get it all. "Was it not necessary for the Christ, the Messiah, to suffer these things and enter into His glory?" What about all of the suffering portions of the Old Testament? "And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures." And that would be the things concerning His suffering and His death. And He probably ended up in Isaiah 53 talking about the suffering servant who dies as a substitute for sinners.

Oh they were so enraptured by His teaching, so riveted to His teaching, this would have been the greatest lesson ever taught. There would never be anything in their life that came even close to this. This is the whole significance of the Old Testament that finds its fulfillment in the coming of Christ, even in His suffering, before His Kingdom and His glory. And they're just blessed beyond words.

And so, as they arrive at their home, Jesus looks like He's going to go further. They plead with Him, urge Him, "Come in, please." Not because they want to be hospitable to Him, although they certainly would want to be, they want more of this teaching because verse 32 says, "Their hearts had been set on fire." There's nothing...there's nothing that produces the joy, the exhilaration, the thrill that the comprehension of Scripture brings to you, that comprehension which is connected to your eternal salvation.

And so He came in and they didn't even want to eat so that He had to break the bread and pass it out to them. They just wanted Him to talk. They didn't want Him to put anything in His mouth, I might say, which might inhibit the lesson. "And while He was breaking the bread," I love this, verse 30, "He took the bread and blessed it and breaking it began giving it to them and their eyes were opened and they recognized Him."

Was it the familiarity of having Him close they finally figured out who He was? Was it the way He broke the bread? They had seen Him break bread many times on many meals perhaps in the past. Was it the nail prints that they saw when He was breaking the bread? They would have been there as well. Was it a divine opening of their minds? Sure, probably all of that came together. Their eyes were opened, they recognized Him. And then this, "And He vanished from their sight." Whisst...gone.

Now we pick up the story. How did they respond to this? Well, as we look at verses 33 to 43, there's a little bit of a flow here. First I want to point out consistent profession....consistent profession in the first few verses. Luke makes sure we understand that everybody told the same story, and that's so very, very important. We understand that, don't we? When you're trying to verify something, if everybody tells the same story, you've got disconnected people having experiences in different places at different times and they all give exactly the same story. That's very weighty evidence. Consistent profession.

The second thing is confounding presence. In a moment of time as He had vanished from the table in Emmaus, He appeared in the middle of the room with all of these disciples and apostles gathered together. This is a confounding experience, and we'll look at that.

And the third element is convincing proofs. They think He's a ghost or a spirit and He offers convincing proofs that He in fact is physically, bodily risen from the dead. So these are the three facets of it.

The question to ask as we come into this passage is, "Was Jesus really raised physically from the grave?" It does matter. It isn't enough to say it doesn't matter if His bones are in a box somewhere as long as His Spirit is alive. That is not true...that is a fabrication and a lie. So we'll get to that. Look at the consistent profession, verses 33 to 35. The testimony is now mounting, the evidence is mounting that He is alive. It's selective as we'll see, but it's mounting.

There are independent people who have seen the evidence who are eyewitnesses. You even have the Roman soldiers and the evidence that they had no other explanation than that an angel came down and He left the tomb. You had the independent testimony of Mary Magdalene who saw Jesus as recorded by John. You have the independent testimony of the other women on the road who saw Jesus as recorded by Matthew. You have the independent testimony of two disciples on the road to Emmaus who met Jesus and sat and ate with Him at their house, recorded by Luke. Each an isolated experience, each with the same kind of testimony, He is alive and He is physical. This is not a hallucination, this is not some kind of an actualization of virtual presence, this is a real person.

So when He vanished from their sight at the end of verse 31, we pick up the story. What do they do? Verse 33, "They arose that very hour." They got up off the table, off their reclining seats, up immediately. Remember now, they had had bread, He broke bread. Bread is the first course, okay? Bread is the first course, it's pretty much that way even today, isn't it? You go out to a meal somewhere and usually they give you bread. Well in those days bread was the first course, you dipped it in a kind of a paste to get the meal going. The meal had just started. They hadn't gotten in to the meal, they had no appetite to eat the first course, they certainly weren't going to hang around for whatever else would follow. They arose immediately, no real interest in eating.

It is likely nine or ten o'clock at night by now. We can't be exactly certain but nine o'clock would be a very, very reasonable guess. And what do they do? They return to Jerusalem. They go right back to where they came from, right back to where they know the rest of their followers...friendly followers are hiding trying to sort out what's going on. They think that they now can go back and confirm the testimony of the women who were not being believed even though they had independent testimony that all said exactly the same thing. They now think they're going to be the answer to this horrible

problem that's going on, this dilemma, this sorrow, this sadness, despair, despondency that they have just left.

And so they turn, even though it's dark and the road might be dangerous and robbers might be lurking...that's irrelevant to them. They're headed for those people they know and they love to tell them that Jesus is alive and they know it and it's firsthand and if they wouldn't believe the women, maybe they'll believe us. I don't know how fast two disciples can go seven miles, but however fast they can, they did in the dark. Familiar road, the road home is always a familiar road. They got there as soon as they could get there.

And it says, "They found gathered together the Eleven." The Eleven becomes at this point in the gospel record a technical term for the Apostles who are different than the disciples. You understand that? Disciple is just a word that means learner, *mathetes*, all those who were followers of Jesus. The Apostles were the sent ones commissioned, set apart, originally Twelve, Judas is out, that left Eleven. So instead of being called the Twelve, later in the book of Acts they are referred to as the Twelve because that becomes their new name with the addition of Matthias in the first chapter of Acts. But for now, they're the Eleven, even though there aren't eleven of them there because Thomas on this occasion happens to be absent. We know that from John's gospel. So they're still the Eleven. It refers to the Apostles. They're...they're gathered and the others who were with them.

Just a couple of notes. Found gathered together...interestingly enough that's a perfect passive participle. When something is passive, it means that you don't gather yourself together, that could be active or reflexive, but you have been gathered together, somebody else is acting on you. Somebody else or something else is gathering you together. This is a verb. Very interesting verb used here, only here in the New Testament. They had been collected together by some force, the force of fear, the force of doubt, the force of confusion, all these things that they had experienced had acted like a force to gather them together. And, of course, behind it all is the divine force, as the Spirit of God gathers them together for an appearance of Jesus Christ to them.

Now the two from Emmaus think they have a scoop. Okay? They think they've got the news these people have really been waiting to hear and that they have more credibility than the women because in the culture women didn't give testimony in a court of law. So they're men. But they're surprised. It says they returned to Jerusalem, found gathered together the Eleven and those who were with them.

Now just to give you a little scene here, they go to wherever this is. The door is locked and bolted, John tells us in John 20, because they're afraid, they're hiding from the Jews, afraid they're going to get them. So they're banging on the door. It's Cleopas and whoever else, it's us, we're here, we have something to tell you, have something to tell you...let us in, let us in.

So they open the door and they let them in. And then notice this, the end of verse 33, "Those who were with them, the Eleven and those who were with them, saying..." very important, it's the Eleven and those who were with them who now speak. The use of the Greek verb form is accusative rather than nominative. If it was nominative it would mean the two were speaking. Because it's accusative it means the object is speaking. So it is them who are speaking, it's in the accusative case. So they go in ready to blurt out their incredible news and everybody on the inside says, "The Lord has really risen and appeared to Simon."

This is one up on them. They're just Cleopas and the no-name. I mean, the most convincing appearance would be to be to Simon, Simon Peter the leader. So before they can shout their joy, before they can dispense the thrill, tell their story, in their face comes this testimony, "The Lord has really arisen." Truly, indeed, it's an emphatic word. Been risen. Again it's a divine passive, been raised and appeared to Simon. This is the only time in the four gospels you hear about that appearance to Simon. The actual appearance isn't narrated.

You know, part of me feels bad about that. I would love to have heard what the Lord said to him because Peter had not done well that week. Right? He had done about as badly as anybody could possibly do...triple denier, scattered, doesn't even go to the cross, hiding. He's part of the reason that none of the others believed the testimony of the women because he didn't believe it. And leaders are leaders and followers are followers and he was the leader. And the Lord had said to him, "Satan desires to have you," in Luke 22, "to sift you like wheat and I've given him permission to do that."

This is confrontation, folks. And maybe it's not recorded because God is just being gracious to Peter. I don't know what the rebuke was but I'm sure it was pretty stern. Silence to me is gracious to the denying coward. And it also tells us that all of that is in the past and it's all forgiven. It really doesn't matter, that's over, that's gone. Peter was restored and he got it, boy, did he get it. His first letter, 1 Peter 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." He got it.

After hearing from Peter, everybody was becoming convinced. They had opened the door, apparently, a little earlier to let him in. Now I don't know what that was like either, but he must have come in and said, "Ladies, I apologize, you were right, He is alive and He appeared to me." The only other comment on that is in 1 Corinthians 15:5 where Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit says that He appeared to Peter, or Cephas, and then to the Twelve.

Well, that was a shock that they already knew and that there was an even stronger force of testimony coming from Peter then would come from them. "Then," it says in verse 35, "they began to relate their experiences on the road." You know, it's just a simple sentence in how He was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread. How long would that take? I mean, if you were telling that story, I know what it would be. "Like, you know, we left and...you want to build it up, right?...and we had walked about a mile and a half, about two miles and we're trying to...bang...what happened. Well how did you know He was there. Well where did He come from. How did He show up?" And this would not be just...you know, people didn't talk like the Bible narrative. They were real people having real conversations, you know, in a room full of people and this was the most important information they had ever had in their lives. So it must have been a wondrous thing for them to talk about all the experiences along the road and pointing to some of the Old Testament passages that He clarified in regard to the Messiah having to suffer and die and how they sat down at the table and He broke the bread and it was revealed who He was. And then He vanished out of their sight.

And what I want you to see in this opening section is everybody's got the same testimony. We saw Him...we saw Him...it was Him...it was Him...He's alive...He's alive...He's alive. Very consistent...consistent appearances and consistent professions of having seen Him.

That takes us to a second point, we'll call this confounding presence just for a little alliteration.

Somewhere in the telling, these two people have already been upstaged once by Simon, they're about to get upstaged again big time. "While," verse 36, "while they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst." And John says in his gospel that He said, "Peace be to you." Why did He say that? Well it was the common greeting, peace. Secondly, they were in a state of panic. Peace might be another way of saying, "Calm down." But I think it was probably more than that as well, I think it was peace in the ultimate sense. He came as the Prince of Peace. He came to bring peace to men of good will. And through the resurrection, He accomplished that peace. It's peace every way you could look at it.

So, while they're telling their story and dramatizing it, He Himself stood in their midst. He had vanished out of their presence in Emmaus and He just appeared in a split second from nowhere. Wow! Sudden supernatural appearance as startling as His vanishing.

Listen to the words of John...John chapter 20 verse 19 who is describing the same scene. "So when it was evening on the first day of the week, when the doors were shut, bolted, where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst." And by the way, He did the same thing a week later for Thomas' sake, according to John 20 and verse 26.

Now again, He didn't appear as a dazzling angel. He didn't appear as transfigured as He had on the Mount with Peter, James and John. He didn't appear covered with glory. He appeared in His resurrection form which was not shocking, not stunning because Mary just thought He was the gardener, right? And the women on the road just said, "We met Him and it was Him." And the disciples said He just walked up and we started talking together and there was nothing apparently, dramatically, shockingly supernatural about Him, His appearance. The resurrection glorified body of Christ was adaptable. It can be all glorious. In fact, in the New Jerusalem it can light all of the New Jerusalem so there doesn't need to be a light because He's the lamp of it, or it can be subdued.

You say, "So why does it say in verse 37 they were startled and frightened and thought they were seeing a spirit?" Because not because of what He looked like but because how did He get there? He just...whisst...is there in a locked room, that's the shock. It wasn't the thing that happened to the soldiers at the tomb who were knocked into a coma by a blazing angel. It was just that He was there and a second ago He wasn't there. And they were startled, *ptoeo* is the Greek verb, it means to be suddenly startled, and then *em phobos* from which we get phobias, fears, it means to be in a continued state of fear. They were stunned and startled and shocked into a condition of terror. That is a natural reaction. If you're sitting there and we're having this service and somebody instantly appeared there, you'd be startled, too...or here, or anywhere. It wouldn't really be a matter of what they look like, it would just be a matter of where did they come from that would generate the shock.

They thought they must be seeing a ghost. Now they had never seen a ghost, but maybe there was then like there is now this belief that ghosts exist or certainly spirits exist, demonic spirits exist, angelic spirits exist. It couldn't be a material being. It couldn't be a human being because where would He come from, humans can't do that. So it was a fairly reasonable conclusion to say that this must be a spirit, this must be some kind of a vision. You remember when Peter was in jail, and I'll

look at that in a minute in Acts 12, an angel came and he said, "I'm not sure what this is, is this a vision? This just doesn't happen."

So there is this confounding presence. They're just stunned and shocked and startled and frightened and terrified. And then comes the final point, convincing proofs...convincing proofs. "He said to them, 'Why are you troubled? Why do doubts arise in your hearts?'" You know, that's not...that's not a question that expects an explanation, that's a rhetorical question. It would be like us saying to somebody, "What are you so worried about? Why are you upset?" We don't expect him to give us a litany of reasons, we're really questioning the legitimacy of that kind of an attitude. Why are you acting that way?

Well, point one, I'm acting this way because of...and point two, I'm acting.... No, that's not the point. Look you know there was an empty tomb. You know there are grave clothes lying exactly where they were when they were on the body. You know there's an angelic testimony, you've heard it from multiple people. You know that Simon Peter saw the risen Lord and reported it to you. You know the two on the road to Emmaus saw the risen Christ. You know all of that. Why are you...why are you troubled and why do doubts arise in your hearts? As if to say this is not legitimate. This is not legitimate, there's no place for this. You have no reason to be troubled, no reason to be uncertain about the glorious reality. What He's doing is demanding that they look at the evidence, trustworthy people. Use your minds.

And then He says let's have you use your senses, verse 39. "Use your eyes...sight...See My hands." This is the convincing proofs. "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself." Well how would they know that from His hands and feet?

Well listen to what John writes in John 20:24. "Thomas, one of the Twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples, therefore, were saying to him, 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said, 'Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails and put my finger into the place of the nails and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.' And then after eight days again His disciples were inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut...again...and stood in the midst and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then He said to Thomas, 'Reach here your fingers, see My hands, reach here your hand, put it into My side, be not unbelieving but believing.' Thomas answered and said to Him, 'My Lord and my God.'" That is the only place in the four gospels where we have any indication they nailed Jesus to a cross. In no account of the crucifixion does it tell us they used nails. The only way we know they used nails is because the nail prints were there.

And He's saying...back to Luke 24...."See My hands, My feet." Nail prints. Who else could it be? I love this, "It is I Myself," *ego ami*, it is I am. And that's the phrase that John repeats and repeats and repeats in his gospel in declaring the deity of Christ. I am the resurrection and the life. I am the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for His sheep. I am the Door, I am the Way, I am the Truth, I am the Life, I am the Vine, etc., etc. And I AM is the name of God, *yahweh*, I am that I am.

So He says, "Touch Me, use your senses. Use your brain, look at the evidence testimony. Use your senses, see, look and then touch Me and see...verse 39. Use your eyes and use your touch. "For a spirit doesn't have flesh and bones as you see that I have." Wow! You mean the eternally glorified

risen Christ has flesh and bones? Wow!

The answer to that is, can have if He wants. Did you grab that one? The nature of the glorified body is that it can be whatever it wants to be, whatever it needs to be. They aren't bones like the bones before His death, they are the structure that keeps His actual corporeal form together. There's flesh but it's not like His former flesh. It's something different, it's eternal, it cannot die.

Well, He's asking them to look, to touch. "And when He had said this," verse 40, "He showed them His hands and His feet." And then in verse 41, it's so interesting. "And while they still could not believe it for joy..." What is that? What do you mean you can't believe it for joy? We have a phrase for that. Something is too good to be true. That was it. This is...you know, they have no expectation of this and now it's dawning on them that this is actually the risen Christ and it is true and it's too good to be true. It's like the old, "I'm pinching myself because this can't be happening to me." There's a conflicted mind here. This is not possible. This is not expected. But here it is.

This reminds me of Acts 12, Peter is in prison, put in prison by Herod for preaching the gospel. So he's in there and he's sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains and guards in front of the door watching over the prison and a big prison gate. "So an angel of the Lord," I love this, "suddenly appeared and a light showed in the cell." An angel from heaven comes in and lights up Peter's cell. And it says, "He struck Peter's side," whacked by an angel. "And he woke him up. Get up. And his chains fell off his hands and the angel said to him, 'Gird yourself and put on your sandals. Get your coat.' And he did so and he said to him, 'Wrap your cloak around you and follow me.'" And he went out and continued to follow, continued to know what was being done by the angel was real. He thought he was seeing a vision.

"And when they had passed the first and second guard, they came to the iron gate that leads into the city which opened for them by itself. And they went out and went along one street and immediately the angel departed." Gone. "Now when Peter came to himself, he said, 'Now I know for sure that the Lord has sent forth His angel, rescued me from the hand of Herod and all the Jewish people were expecting.'" Now he knew that the believers were meeting, they were meeting in the house of John Mark, his mother Mary. You know why they were meeting? They were having a prayer meeting for Peter. They're praying the Lord would let Peter out of prison. They're having a prayer meeting. They were gathered together. They were praying. He knocks at the door. A servant girl named Rhoda came to answer. When she recognized Peter's voice because of her joy, she didn't open the gate, she just ran back in. "Pe...Pe...Pe..." Peter is standing there at the front of the gate and Peter is.... "And they said to her, 'You're out of your mind,' and kept praying." Of course, this can't be happening, we're praying but oh no, this can't be happening. Not exactly an illustration of great faith.

The disciples are somewhere in the middle of reality and unreality, trying to figure this out. And so, "Okay," Jesus says, "You've looked, you've used sight, you've used touch, you've used your brain to process the testimony which is consistent. Let's try one other thing...how about...how about this..."

"He said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?'" Let's try the taste test. "And they gave Him a piece of broiled fish." Somebody ran and got a piece of broiled fish. "And He took it and ate it before them." Isn't it amazing how that ends? It just ends. "And He ate it." He ate a piece of fish. Can a glorified body eat a piece of fish? Well, God came down one time, took on a bodily form with a

couple of angels and had dinner with Abraham and Sarah, Genesis 18, Genesis 19. Or the critics say, "Well, this proves the inaccuracy of the Bible because fish were not available in Jerusalem." Well that is a stretch. But that actually...there are articles actually on how we know this is not true because there were no fish in Jerusalem. Despite the fact that one of the gates leading into the city is called "The Fish Gate," according to Nehemiah 3:3 AND Nehemiah 12:39 because that's where the fishermen from the sea brought the fish through to the city. And by the way, there were people of Tyre, according to Nehemiah, who lived in Jerusalem who were fish importers. Of course there were fish there and they had cooked it and they gave it to Him and He ate it.

Now how are we to understand this body? It can be seen. It can be heard 'cause it can speak. It can be touched. It can eat. It's a combination of what is natural and supernatural. Here's the way to understand it. His supernatural glorified body was able to conform to any realm and any reality. If it needed to be earthly, it could be earthly. If it needed to be heavenly, it could be heavenly. If it needed to be physical, it could be physical. If it needed to be spiritual, it could be spiritual. If it needed to be transcendent, it could be transcendent. If it needed to be earthy, it could be earthy. It could stand one moment on the Mount of Olives, have a conversation with the disciples, and in an instant, disappear into a cloud and go into the infinite heaven beyond the end of the infinite universe into the presence of God infinitely faster than the speed of light. It could do a quantum leap. You know, that's what put Einstein in his grave still scratching his brow because he couldn't figure out how something in an atom could go out of existence over here, come into existence over here and never traverse the space in between. That's quantum leap. Nothing can move that fast, it's impossible if it's here and it ends up here, it's got to go past the middle.

No, something can exist here, it exist there and never traverse the space in between. That's the power of God and that power is displayed in the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. He can be outside and be inside, He can be in Emmaus, He can be here. And yet He can eat a fish if He needs to. It's adaptability is what the mark of the glorified body is. And I'm telling you this because you need to know, you're going to get one. Philippians 3:20 and 21...are you ready for that? (Applause) Philippians 3:20 and 21 says that we're going to have a body like unto His body, the glory of our body will be like the glory of His body. And when we see Him, we'll be like Him for we'll see Him as He is. Our body will be able to conform to a millennial earth. When we come back with Christ, you know, when He brings us back to reign in the Kingdom, in the Millennial Kingdom, we'll have a glorified body and we'll be able to live adaptable to this earth. And when He wipes out this entire universe, creates a new heaven and a new earth, our adaptability will be set to adapt to that eternal state as well.

If you're wondering how this can happen, you need to just read 1 Corinthians 15, this is so interesting. Paul is answering questions. Somebody says to him, "Well wait a minute, you're talking about resurrection," 1 Corinthians 15:35, "just how are the dead raised?" Now this is a kind of a mocking question. "How are the dead raised and with what kind of body do they come?"

You know what his answer is? "You fool." That's a pretty harsh answer, really. It implies that the question isn't honest, it's skeptical, it's really wanting to argue against the resurrection. "You fool, don't you know that what you sow doesn't even come to life until it dies?" You put a seed into the ground, what happens to it? It dies before it brings forth life. +

And that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be but a bare grain. You sow a seed to

get a tree, you don't sow a tree to get a tree. You sow a seed to get a flower, you don't sow a flower to get a flower. You sow a flower to get a flower, you'll get nothing.

His analogy is simply this. God gives a body as He wished and to each of the seeds, a body of its own. And all flesh is not the same. There's a flesh of man and beast and birds and fish and there's heavenly bodies and earthly bodies and the glory of the heavenly is one and the glory of the earthly is another. There's one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, another glory of the stars. Stars different from stars. So in the resurrection it is sown an imperishable body, raised an imperishable. Sown in dishonor, raised in glory. Sown in weakness, raised in power. Sown natural, raised to spiritual. It's different...it's different. First man is from the earth, earthly, the second man is from heaven. As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy and is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly as we bear the image of the earthy we will bear the image of the heavenly. He had body like our earthly body, we'll have a body like His glorified body. It is a body that adapts. It is a body that doesn't have the kind of processes, bodily processes because of decay and because of the nature of the curse. It is a glorified body, it is an eternal body, it is a body that can adapt itself to anything without all the necessary human processes involved in that.

So the end is, you've heard the testimony of the eyewitnesses, multiple eyewitnesses. They have recorded the fact that I am alive, empty tomb, grave clothes where they were lying, angelic testimony, witnesses from all these different people including the head of all the Apostles, if you will, Peter. There's plenty of evidence to think about. You've seen, you've touched, you've seen me eat. Believe it, I'm alive.

Since that day, that Sunday in 30 A.D., the triumphant cry of the church has been the Lord Jesus is alive, He is risen from the dead. This...this is the invincibility of the church, as Erik Sower(??) put it. This is the invincibility of the church. And this is what the church has always preached. He rose from the dead. The Day of Pentecost, Acts 2, Peter stands up said, "You killed Him, God raised Him." Chapter 3, "You killed Him, God raised Him." Chapter 4, "You killed Him, God raised Him." Chapter 5, "You killed Him, God raised Him." Chapter 10, and I'll read this one, chapter 10 and verse 40, "God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He should become visible, not to all the people but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, that is to us who ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead and He ordered us to preach to the people and to solemnly testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead. Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins."

They went on preaching the resurrection as eyewitnesses of the resurrection. To be an Apostle you had to be an eyewitness of the resurrection. It's the gospel of the resurrection. Romans 1, "He was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead," Romans 1:4.

Now look, our Lord could have gone to heaven without a body. He had been in heaven for all eternity without one, right? He could have gone back without one. Still been all glorious, still been who He was, the resurrection is not about His continued existence. That was never in question. He's eternal. That is not the question. Why then a bodily resurrection? I'm just going to give you...you can think about them, we don't have time to open them up. Number one, a bodily resurrection was necessary to demonstrate His complete victory over sin. Sin kills. Sin brought spiritual death and it brought physical death. If He only conquered the spiritual side, then He did not conquer sin completely. The wages of sin is both physical and spiritual death. He needed to conquer both...He needed to conquer

both. If Christ had only conquered spiritual death, it would have been less than a complete victory. If he had not risen bodily, we who are His would not rise either. There would never be a restoration of this earth, there would be no millennial glory, that is all gone. That can't happen. Bodily resurrection is necessary to make the triumph over sin's effect total.

Secondly, resurrection is necessary to demonstrate the purpose of God in the humanity, that we were created as men and women to give glory to God through that creation. And that creation would be recovered in glory so that as we men and women in physical form throughout eternity, we will give glory to God as we were originally intended to, not as a half-way being which was partially conquered by sin and partially rescued.

And maybe most importantly, the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ is visible proof that God was satisfied with His sacrifice. It does matter that His body does come out of that grave because how else do we know that God was satisfied with His offering? Because we couldn't see His Spirit. Faith comes, saving faith comes when you acknowledge Jesus as Lord because you know God raised Him from the dead which puts the divine stamp of approval on His work on the cross.

Look, His followers followed Him to the cross and then He lost them all, right? Lost them all. Between Friday and Sunday, they are all gone. He had lost them all. If all you do is follow Jesus to the cross, you're going to have your hopes shattered. They needed to know not only did He die but He's alive and the only way they would know that is to see Him in the physical, visible, tangible, touchable form. If they had never seen Jesus alive from the dead, if his body was in a box somewhere, they would never have carried the message any further. They would have gone to Emmaus and every other village dispersed all the way back to where they came from and they would have said, "There's no reason to go a step further." They would never have attempted to make converts and establish a religion based on a dead, disappointing teacher even though they loved Him. What changed them was they saw Him alive. No one would have believed the Lord Jesus was Redeemer, Savior, Son of God and Lord if He hadn't visibly risen from the dead and that too is the testimony of the Apostle Paul in these powerful words, 1 Corinthians 15:13, "If there's no resurrection of the dead, Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your preaching is vain, your faith is vain and we are found to be false witnesses of God because we witnessed against God that He raised Christ whom He didn't raise if in fact the dead are not raised. If the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless."

He had to show Himself alive so we would know that His sacrifice had been accepted by the Father. Beloved, the philosophers were wrong. Plato was wrong, Aristotle was wrong, and all who followed them were wrong. The body is not the prison of the spirit, the body is essential to what it means to be a human. And in our glorified form, we will be both body and spirit in heaven exalting Christ forever. And the good part, we will be like Him.

Father, we thank You for the time You give us and it seems limited always and we seem pressured and sometimes aren't sure exactly why all things have to be conformed to time but we understand that. We just thank You for what You do give us, what our minds can absorb. We thank You for this truth that comes and we feel like those on the road to Emmaus, our hearts burn within us over these things and we rejoice in understanding the truth. We thank You for the clarity with which the Old Testament prophesied the coming of Christ in His death and resurrection, the clarity with which the New Testament describes its reality and gives us eyewitness accounts. Thank You for the ministry of

the Apostles in testifying to Christ and writing down both in the gospels and in the epistles the truth of the gospel of resurrection. Because He lives, we will live as well. We look forward to that glorious day and that glorious hope when we are like Him because we see Him as He is. And we give Him all the glory. Amen.

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