

Lighthouse Bible Studies

Topic 1: Jesus' Final Day
Session 3: The Resurrection



Matthew 28:1-7

- So the two Marys go, on the Sunday morning to see to the full and proper burial of Jesus
- Even though the guards would've been battle hardened soldiers, they were terrified to see the Angel and fell to the ground
- Then the Angels tell the women that Jesus was risen and instruct them to return to tell the disciples what was going on
- What's interesting about this is that all four Gospels make note that the first witnesses of the resurrection are women
 - That's significant because in the first century, particularly in the Jewish culture, the eyewitness account of a woman was practically worthless
 - In a court of Law, if an entire group of women gave testimonies saying one thing and a single man said something that contradicted their testimony, the man would be believed
 - So in choosing women to be the first witnesses of the resurrection and then entrusting those women to bring testimony to the men, Jesus is making a huge statement regarding equality between genders
 - But this is something that Jesus does often
 - He was the only known Jewish Rabbi at his time to have had female disciples
 - His teaching on divorce gave women much more protection and legal support than they would've had previously
 - For his time, Jesus was all about equality between men and women
 - I don't want to go to much deeper into that subject, it's a big topic for another day, but it's important to note that in this account, Jesus is giving credibility to women and enabling them to not only teach but to give testimony to men..

Now John's account is a little more spread out than Matthew's In John, Mary goes to the tomb, sees that the stone has been rolled away and goes to tell the disciples before she sees the Angel

John 20:2-10

- The two disciples want to see for themselves what's going on, so they run to the tomb.
- The description of the face cloth being folded up implies that Jesus took it off himself upon awakening from death
- The belief that is spoken of here in the passage isn't the belief that Jesus had risen, that comes later, but rather that they believed the words of the women only upon seeing it for themselves

So that's what we read about the initial resurrection of Jesus. Jesus then begins gradually appearing to his disciples to show them that he is indeed alive

Jesus first appearance is to Mary Magdalene in John 20

In John's account, it is Jesus himself who tells Mary of His resurrection, unlike in Matthew, where the women are told by the Angel.

John 20:13-16

- In this account, Mary assumes that Jesus body has been taken by someone. She even at first mistakes Jesus for the gardener, but upon hearing Jesus say her name - she instantly knows who it is
- Jesus taught before his death that ***His sheep follow him because they know His voice.***
- In Matthew's version of Jesus' appearance to Mary, she holds his feet and worships Him
 - This shows, firstly that Jesus has indeed been physically resurrected, since it would be impossible to hold a vision or a ghost and secondly, as is one of the central themes in John, that Jesus knows he is divine - because he allows Mary to worship Him

John 20:17-18

- Here, we get a wonder glimpse into the family of faith
- Our faith in Jesus makes God our Father, just as He is Jesus' father
- When Jesus refers to the disciples as His brothers, we see again the family type connection that exists within the Christian faith

After Jesus appears to Mary, His next appearance is to the two disciples who are traveling on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24

Luke 24:13-24

- Some people have speculated that the disciples who were traveling along the road could have been husband and wife since only Cleopas is named and they were both traveling to the same small village at the same time
- There's no way to be certain of this though, all we know is that these two disciples were walking along discussing what had happened regarding Jesus crucifixion
- We can tell that the discussion that these people were having was quite a sad and negative one from the way that they spoke to Jesus about their hopes and how the religious leaders had dashed them
- I don't know if you've ever found that when you are feeling negative or sad about something, the thing that we instantly want to do is to find other people to complain with
 - We like to find other people who are as disgruntled or angry as we are and feed off each others negativity
 - But while that's often what we want to do, it certainly isn't healthy for us
- It's much more healthy to be the person like Jesus, who (as we shall see in the next passage) when he finds himself in a negative conversation looks for hope to speak into it

Luke 24:25-29

- So Jesus teaches from the Jewish scriptures why the Messiah had to die
- And at the end of their journey, they invite Jesus in to spend the night
- The ancient near east was a dangerous place to travel at night in the first century and so it was common for travelers to stay with one another during their longer journeys

Luke 24:30-35

- What's important to note here is that Jesus became known to the two disciples in the breaking of bread
- In other words, it wasn't through the intellectual teaching that they received on the road that they came to recognize Jesus, but through the time spent with him around the dinner table
- It was in the time of relationship that they recognized who Jesus really was
- The same can be true for us
 - Although the teaching of scriptures is vitally important for a Christian, I mean that's why we're here - If you don't know the bible you can't really be a disciple, but although that's all important, intellectual knowledge alone can't bring us into relationship with Jesus
- Towards the end of next month, there's something that is recognized in the methodist church as aldersgate day
- It commemorates the time that in a small bible study in Aldersgate, London the frustrated and doubtful Anglican Priest John Wesley heard a reading of a commentary on Romans and had the connection established between his heart and his head - the things that he believed on an intellectual level, he finally knew emotionally in his heart and he came to know Jesus personally
- Of course, Wesley would go on to found the Methodist church and make it possible for denominations other than Anglicanism and Catholicism to be practised in England
- But much like the disciples in this passage, in Wesley's journal that night who wrote these words
 - *I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.*
 - It's amazing how the terminology that Wesley uses to describe the feeling in the moment is so similar to the description given by the disciples in this account when they say **Did not our hearts burn within us**
- That is as good a description of the feeling of faith as I could give, the feeling that in spite of any intellectual arguments against the gospel something deep within your heart tells you that it's true.
- Wesley would later look back on this experience and coin a term for the state that he was in before this experience and the people who have yet to experience it... He called them 'almost Christians'
 - People who believe intellectually that the message of the bible is good and who try to live in the way taught by Jesus, but who don't have the personal level of relationship with Jesus or the knowledge that he died for them
- This passage teaches us that as good as intellectual knowledge is, it is only through relationship that we truly know who Christ is

After Jesus appears to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, he appears to a large group of disciples over in John 20

John 20:19-23

- We'll speak more about the giving of the Holy Spirit in our next series, but to summarize, following the Disciples' seeing and believing in the resurrected Jesus, they are filled with the Holy Spirit
- This experience is not the same as the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, and we shall examine the differences and look at the subsequent baptism in the Holy Spirit in our next series
- In his words about forgiveness at the end of the passage, Jesus tells the future leaders of His church to carry on the message of forgiveness that He himself carried

The final appearance of Jesus is to Thomas.

John 20:24-29

- I don't think we can give Thomas too hard a time for doubting as he does
 - If we were in his position I think we'd probably be skeptical as well
- But when Thomas finally does see Jesus, he makes possibly the strongest remark relating to the deity of Jesus in the NT
 - In saying 'my Lord and my God' Thomas is clearly saying that Jesus is part of the one true God
- Certain cults that don't believe in the deity of Christ have tried to refute this by saying that Thomas is just making an expression of disbelief and effectively taking the Lord's name in vain
 - This is a completely ridiculous idea, according to the Jewish law a person could be stoned for making such a statement taking the Lord's name in vain
- Thomas was definitely, 100% confessing the deity and lordship of the risen Christ
- Jesus' remarkable claim at the end of the passage, puts us and all the other readers of John's gospel in an equal position to the disciples who walked with Jesus

Jesus' appearance to Thomas is the last of his appearances and before He ascends to heaven for a final time, we see a few moments of teaching being given by Jesus

The first of these are Jesus' teaching to seven Disciples by the Sea of Tiberias

John 21:1-3

- Now Peter is still disgraced at this point, following his denial of Jesus during the trial
- I don't know if he's sitting there remembering his calling by Jesus and wanting to reminisce about that time, but he and some of the other disciples go fishing and catch nothing

John 21:4-8

- This account is very similar to the account of Peter's calling to be a Disciple. In both situations a disheartened Peter spends a fruitless night fishing, only for Jesus to provide him with a miraculous catch, leading to Peter having a revelation about Jesus' identity
- Upon realising that the man on the shore is Jesus, Peter jumps into the sea to swim back to shore and meet Jesus

John 21:9-14

- This passage is quite interesting in that it implies that Jesus glorified body, which He appeared in post-resurrection looked somewhat different from his carnal body
- With many of Jesus post-resurrection appearances He is unrecognized by His disciples
 - While in many cases it could be argued that the disciples recognize Him upon closer view, in this account even when the disciples are on the shore with Jesus, He still looks different. Although they know who He is by His words and the miraculous catch of fish

John 21:15-19

- Some people have made a big deal out of the fact that Jesus switches between two Greek words for love (agape and phileo). While it is possible that this carries significance, it is perhaps more likely that it doesn't. It is common to find John switching between different words in this manner throughout his Gospel and letters.
- The most significance should be attached to the fact that Jesus questions the love of Peter three times, mirroring the three denials made by Peter during Jesus' trial
- Jesus' question to Peter is presented in an ambiguous manner

- It is possible to interpret the words ‘these’ in Jesus’ question three ways
 - Referring to the fish (Peter’s job and material possessions)
 - More than he loves the Disciples (the approval of man)
 - More than the Disciples love Jesus (Having a greater love for Christ)
- While the third is the most likely possibility, all three are valid questions and are questions we should ask of ourselves in our journey in discipleship

John 21:20-25

- I don’t know about you, but it can be quite easy sometimes to be distracted by other people’s issues
 - Ewe tell ourselves when we think they need to hear a sermon, we pray that God would deal with them... perhaps we compare ourselves to them or condemn them for their actions
- This is what Peter is doing here - It’s a classic example of the ‘great sermon, if only so and so were here to hear it’
- Jesus reminds Peter that he only needs to concern himself with his own relationship with Christ and not inject himself into his friend’s
- I love how throughout the bible, Peter seems to always do something really good instantly followed by something really stupid
 - He walks on water, but loses faith and sinks
 - He is the first to declare that Jesus is the Messiah, but then instantly tries to stop Jesus from fulfilling His mission to die
- I sometimes find Peter very relatable
- Here, after Peter’s great restoration by Jesus, he makes another slip up.
 - But of course, Peter goes on to finish well and to lead the Apostles boldly into the first age of the Christian Church

So now we come to Jesus Ascension back to be with the Father

But before He leaves His disciples, He gives them one final instruction

This instruction sums up the mission of the global church and is as much a command to you and I as it is to those original 11 Disciples

Matthew 28:16-20

- So this account of what we call ‘The Great Commission’, like I say gives the people of God their mission
- I find it amazing that, some of those 11 Disciples, after all they had seen, heard and experienced still doubted Jesus
- I want to remind you at this point though that doubt isn’t a sin - no matter where you are on the Christian journey, we all at times suffer doubt
 - Doubt about if we are really saved
 - Doubt about if the bible really is true
 - Maybe even doubt about whether God even exists
- I heard a great quote this week from Steven Furtick, who says ‘Faith isn’t the absence of doubt, but the ability to overcome it.’
 - And I think that’s very true
- So Jesus’ command itself is to go out and make disciples of all nations, the definition of a disciple is given by Jesus in the passage as someone who ‘**Observes all that I have commanded you**’

- Our mission as Christians is to not only bring people to know Jesus. But also to teach them to live like Him, to value what He values and hate what He hates
- Then as those who we have trained repeat the process, eventually the message of Christ spreads throughout the entire world
- I don't know if you've ever noticed, but this verse is often misquoted and people often think it says 'all authority has been given to you' - we love sometimes to talk about taking authority over things, whether it's when we pray for healing, to resist temptation or any number of other examples
- But we need to remember that we, ourselves have no authority - It is Jesus who has the authority
- The reason we don't need to have authority ourselves is that we carry Jesus with us
- If a police officer asked you to go into the street and stop the traffic while he helps someone who's injured then you carry the authority of the policeman don't you
 - But if the Policeman comes out into the street with you then you don't need authority because the authority is right there besides you
- The same is true with us
 - We carry Jesus with us, through the Holy Spirit, wherever we go - so when we come up against temptations, sickness and fear we don't need to take authority ourselves, because when we call on the name of Jesus to help us, all authority is right there besides us

Mark 16:19-20

- So finally, having completed his mission on earth - being born of a virgin, living a sinless life and teaching about the Kingdom of God, teaching His disciples, being handed over by the Jewish leaders to be crucified by Rome, dying the death of crucifixion in the place of all mankind, rising for the dead after three days, appearing to His disciples and preparing them to carry the message of salvation to the whole world, Jesus ascends to heaven to sit on a throne alongside God, where he sat before the creation of the world, having completed the task of saving mankind from our sins
- The greatest and most significant life ever lived
- A life that shows plainly the love of God for all those who were far away from Him
- God himself, made man to suffer and die for us and to be resurrected so that we too can one day live with Him for all eternity
- In the book of Acts, Luke records the ascension of Jesus to the Father and the Angels say to the disciples that Jesus will one day return, in the same way that he ascended, on the clouds - to bring about the fully realized Kingdom of God among us