

To Seek and to Save the Lost

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

Luke 24:36-49

Rev. Freddy Fritz

June 12, 2016

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

Scripture

Jesus was crucified on Friday, Nisan 14, 30 AD. He was buried in Joseph of Nicodemus' tomb before sundown on that same day. But, three days later, on the first day of the week, that is, on Sunday, at early dawn, several women went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared in order to anoint the body of Jesus. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus (Luke 24:1-3). Two angels told the perplexed women, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen" (Luke 24:5-6).

The first evidence that Luke provided for the resurrection of Jesus was the empty tomb (24:3). The second evidence was the angelic announcement (24:6). The third evidence was Jesus' appearance to two disciples on the road to Emmaus (24:13-35). And the fourth evidence was Jesus' appearance to his disciples in Jerusalem (24:36-49).

Let's read about Jesus' appearance to his disciples in Jerusalem in Luke 24:36-49:

³⁶ As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you!" ³⁷ But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. ³⁸ And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹ 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 see that I have." ⁴⁰ And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. ⁴¹ And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" ⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³ and he took it and ate before them.

⁴⁴ Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me

in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,⁴⁶ and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead,⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.⁴⁹ And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.” (Luke 24:36-49)

Introduction

My former senior pastor, Lee Eclov, said that someone dear to him once gave him a little cross adorned with roses. It bore the inscription, “Hope raises no dust.” He looked at that phrase and tried his best to penetrate its mystery. He didn’t want to look stupid, so he didn’t say anything. After pondering it for a little while, he just had to get to the bottom of what it meant. It had been written on a cross, so it had to mean something!

When he typed “Hope raises no dust” into the Google search engine, he found out that the phrase was originally uttered by Paul Éluard, a French poet associated with Dadaism. When he looked up Dadaism, he found this definition: “The Dada movement tried to express the negation of all current aesthetic and social values and frequently used deliberately incomprehensible artistic and literary methods.”

He then read some of Éluard’s other famous quotes – quotes like, “Elephants are contagious,” and, “Earth is blue like an orange.”

All of this brought him back to “Hope raises no dust.” Everyone believes hope is vital to people, but most folks’ hope is about as vague as the Éluard quote that is painted on that little cross.

But for Christians, hope is not vague. We have a hope that is historical and personal. We have a hope that stands in front of the empty grave of Jesus and declares, “You, too, can live as Jesus does!”¹

Jesus was crucified, died, and was buried on Friday. Just three

¹ See <http://www.preachingtoday.com/illustrations/2009/march/1031609.html>.

days later, on Sunday morning, he was raised back to life again. On that first day Jesus showed himself to be alive on at least five occasions. Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-18), to the other women (Matthew 28:8-10), to Peter (Luke 24:34), to two disciples on the road to Emmaus (24:13-35), and then to ten disciples in Jerusalem (Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-25), which is the subject of today's lesson. Luke records only two of Jesus' appearances, although he does also refer to Jesus' appearance to Peter (Luke 24:34).

Lesson

Jesus' appearance to his disciples in Jerusalem in Luke 24:36-49 shows us how they came to recognize that Jesus was indeed alive.

Let's use the following outline:

1. The Reappearance of Jesus (24:36)
2. The Reassurance by Jesus (24:37-43)
3. The Revelation by Jesus (24:44-49)

I. The Reappearance of Jesus (24:36)

First, let's notice the reappearance of Jesus (24:36).

In Luke 24:13-35, we learn that Jesus appeared to two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Once they recognized him, Jesus vanished from their sight. Then they immediately went to Jerusalem, a journey of about seven miles. When they arrived in Jerusalem, they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" (24:33b-34). I want you to notice that Luke said that the two Emmaus disciples "found the *eleven*." Presumably, Thomas did not believe the report of the two Emmaus disciples and left the group, because he only saw Jesus eight days later, as recorded in John 20:26-29. The two Emmaus disciples told the other disciples what had happened on the road, and how Jesus was known to them in the breaking of the bread (24:35).

The other disciples must have listened to the report of the two

Emmaus disciples with complete bewilderment. By now they knew that the tomb was empty, as Peter and John had seen for themselves. The women had reported the empty tomb, and also that they had seen Jesus alive. The disciples were not expecting Jesus to be resurrected back to life again, and were having a hard time understanding what was going on. And then, **as they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, “Peace to you!”** (24:36).

One can understand the shock of the disciples at seeing Jesus. As Darrell Bock notes, “They do not expect Jesus to be raised nor do they expect him to keep appearing. As with most people, they have to be persuaded. The disciples are as skeptical as the rest of humanity.”²

So, let’s notice the reassurance given by Jesus that he was alive.

II. The Reassurance by Jesus (24:37-43)

Second, look at the reassurance by Jesus.

A. *Their Panic (24:37)*

First, notice the panic of the disciples.

Luke said in verse 37, **“But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit.”** Unlike Jesus’ appearance to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, when he “drew near and went with them” (24:15), here Jesus suddenly appeared in the room in the midst of them all. One moment there was nothing, and the next moment Jesus was standing there! So, one can understand that **they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit.**

My mother had a twin sister, and they were identical twins. In fact, I could not tell them apart until I was about six years old. My Aunt Caroline had a slight beauty spot just above her left eyebrow, and if my Mom applied a bit of makeup to her eyebrow, I could not tell

² Darrell L. Bock, *Luke: 9:51–24:53*, vol. 2, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1996), 1932.

which one was my Aunt Caroline or my Mom, Emily.

When we were preschoolers and lived near my Aunt Caroline, my Mom would often take my brother and me to visit her. While walking through the town, we would sometimes meet people who thought that Mom was Aunt Caroline. They would engage Mom in conversation, and when they asked who the boys were, Mom would say, "Oh, these are Emily's boys." And then when she got to my Aunt's apartment the two of them would try to figure out who Mom had met on the streets.

Well, Mom died suddenly of a heart attack when she was only forty-six years old. My brother and I were university students at the time, and we drove through the night to our home. We slept when we got home. That evening many friends and family came to the house. While I was chatting with some people in the kitchen, I heard a number of people suddenly start screaming in the living room. Wondering what had happened, I went to the living room. My Aunt Caroline had walked into the room, and many people did not know that Mom had a twin sister. They were obviously shocked to see my Mom's identical twin walk into the room!

Jesus did not have an identical twin. Nevertheless, the disciples in Jerusalem **were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit**. But this was no spirit that they saw, because Jesus gave proof that he was no spirit.

B. His Proof (24:38-43)

And second, notice his proof.

Jesus gave the startled and frightened disciples two proofs that he was alive.

1. First Proof (24:38-40)

Notice the first proof.

Jesus' first proof was an invitation to see his wounds and to

touch him. **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 see that I have.” And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet (24:38-40).**

Interestingly, Darrell Bock notes, “Only this passage and John 20:25 suggest that Jesus was nailed to the cross.”³ Furthermore, “Luke 24:39 is the only text that describes the resurrected body as having flesh and bones.”⁴ What the disciples saw was no spirit. It was no phantom. It was no vision. They were seeing and touching the resurrected, glorified Lord Jesus Christ!

2. Second Proof (24:41-43)

And notice the second proof.

Jesus’ second proof that he really was risen from the dead was his eating a piece of broiled fish in their presence. **And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate before them (24:41-43).** Jesus really was alive! Luke demonstrated the reality of Jesus’ presence in the midst of his disciples by enjoying a meal in their presence.

Bock summarizes the reality of Jesus’ resurrection as follows, “The empirical evidence of Jesus’ resurrection is stated briefly: Jesus appears to them, speaks with them, and eats before them. Truly he is raised.”⁵

Eight days later Jesus appeared to the disciples again, and this time Thomas was with them. Thomas believed that Jesus was indeed raised from the dead and was alive when he said, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28).

After Jesus appeared to his disciples, they never again doubted

³ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke: 9:51–24:53*, vol. 2, 1933.

⁴ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke: 9:51–24:53*, vol. 2, 1933.

⁵ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke: 9:51–24:53*, vol. 2, 1935.

the reality of his resurrection. In fact, historians believe that ten of the remaining eleven apostles died a martyr's death because they were so convinced about the reality of Jesus' resurrection.

What about you? Do you believe that on the third day Jesus rose again from the dead? It is essential that you believe it because it is part and parcel of the good news. God the Father accepted Jesus' sacrifice for sin by raising him from the dead on the third day.

III. The Revelation by Jesus (24:44-49)

And finally, observe the revelation by Jesus.

A. *Jesus Reviews His Past Ministry (24:44-47)*

First, Jesus reviews his past ministry.

Jesus began to teach the disciples as follows, **“These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled”** (24:44). Jesus' expression, **“the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms,”** is the way Jews in Jesus' day referred to what we call the Old Testament. **The Law of Moses** was the first five books of Moses (what we call the Pentateuch); **the Prophets** included the Major Prophets, the Minor Prophets, and also the historical books, such as Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles; and **the Psalms** included not only the Psalms but also all the wisdom literature, such as Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes.

Kent Hughes makes an important observation, “We must understand that one of the reasons Jesus taught them from Scripture was that he did not want them to rest their belief in his resurrection on their personal experience alone. . . . Resting their faith on a miracle was not sufficient. He wanted them to ground their experience of his resurrection on the massive testimony and perspective of Scripture.”⁶

⁶ R. Kent Hughes, *Luke: That You May Know the Truth*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1998), 415.

Jesus' point was that all of the Old Testament is about him. Philip Ryken said, "Jesus Christ is the key to understanding the Old Testament. To know the Old Testament truly is to know Jesus, and to know Jesus, one has to know the Old Testament."⁷

Luke said that **then Jesus opened their minds to understand the Scriptures** (24:45). Earlier that day, Jesus had opened the eyes of the two Emmaus disciples, and they were able to recognize Jesus (24:31). Luke noted two previous occasions the difficulty Jesus' disciples were having in understanding spiritual truth. In Luke 9:45 we read, "But they did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying." And in Luke 18:34, "But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said." But now Jesus **opened their minds to understand the Scriptures** (24:45). What made the difference? Philip Ryken gives the answer when he says, "What these men needed – what everyone needs – is the mind-opening work of God. Christianity is rational, but understanding the gospel is not merely intellectual. It takes a work of God for anyone to know Jesus in a saving way."⁸

When I was being interviewed to serve as the pastor at my previous church, which is in a university town, I noted that the church was filled with educated people. In fact, the adult Sunday school class of twenty adults had twelve people with doctorates or who were doctoral candidates. I was asked how I would preach the gospel to intellectual academics. My response was that the ground at the foot of the cross is level. The gospel is so simple that even a child can understand and embrace it. Believing the gospel is not a matter of intellectual ability. Instead, it is a matter of spiritual illumination, which is given by God to anyone who is humble enough to ask for it.

So, never think that you need to have a certain intellectual ability to understand the gospel. Simply and humbly ask God to open your

⁷ Philip Graham Ryken, *Luke*, ed. Richard D. Phillips, Philip Graham Ryken, and Daniel M. Doriani, vol. 2, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2009), 680.

⁸ Philip Graham Ryken, *Luke*, 681.

mind so that you can understand the Scriptures.

Jesus continued **and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem”** (24:46-47). Darrell Bock says that “Luke introduces the basic content of the Scriptural teaching on God’s plan, summarized in three infinitives.”⁹ This contains Luke’s version of the Great Commission, which is found in each of the other Gospels (cf. Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:14-18; John 20:21) and also in Acts 1:8.

*First, God’s plan of redemption is that **the Christ should suffer.*** Jesus had frequently noted throughout his ministry that he had to suffer (cf. Luke 9:22; 17:25; 22:15; 24:26). Jesus now reiterated the importance of his suffering as part of God’s plan of redemption. He had to suffer and die in order to pay the penalty for our sin.

*Second, God’s plan of redemption is that **the Christ should. . . on the third day rise from the dead.*** Throughout his ministry Jesus had also indicated on a number of occasions that he would be raised from the dead on the third day (cf. Luke 9:22; 18:33). Jesus’ resurrection is an essential part of the good news of salvation. God had accepted his sacrifice to pay the penalty for our sin by raising him from the dead.

*And third, God’s plan of redemption is **that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.*** The good news of the gospel is that Jesus paid the penalty for sin. And now sinners who repent of their sin and turn to God in faith will receive forgiveness of their sins. This good news is not only for us who repent and believe, and receive forgiveness of our sins, but it is also good news that is to be proclaimed to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem.

So, if you have repented of your sins and received forgiveness of your sins, then you are commissioned by Jesus to tell others how they too can find forgiveness for their sins. Are you telling them about it?

⁹ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke: 9:51–24:53*, vol. 2, 1938.

B. Jesus Previews Their Future Ministry (24:48-49)

And second, Jesus previews their future ministry.

Jesus concluded his teaching with these words in verses 48-49, **“You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”** Jesus told his disciples that they had seen him alive, and so they were **witnesses of these things**. Furthermore, he was going to send the promise of his Father upon them, which was the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, they were to stay in Jerusalem until they were **clothed with power from on high**, which is another way of saying that they were to wait until the Holy Spirit empowered them, which happened fifty days later, on the Day of Pentecost.

The Holy Spirit has now come to all believers. We are baptized in the Holy Spirit, and we are all empowered by him to tell others the good news of the gospel.

So, we have a very good reason to tell others about Jesus: not only is Jesus alive, he has changed us, and we are now empowered by the Holy Spirit to live for him and tell others about him.

Conclusion

Therefore, having analyzed Jesus’ appearance to his disciples in Luke 24:36-49, we should believe that Jesus is indeed alive and tell others about him.

Believe that Jesus is alive! There are many convincing proofs that he is alive. Belief in his resurrection is an essential part of the gospel. And that truth is now found in the Word of God.

Jesus’ disciples were completely transformed once they knew Jesus was alive! They could not stop telling others that he was alive and able to transform lives. May God so empower you and me! Amen.

Mission Statement

The Mission Statement of the Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church is:

*To bring people to Jesus Christ
and membership in his church family,
develop them to Christlike maturity,
equip them for their ministry in the church
and life mission in the world,
in order to magnify God's name.*

Sermons by Rev. Freddy Fritz

This sermon, and other sermons, by the Rev. Freddy Fritz can be found at:

1. www.tampabaypresbyterian.org/sermons
2. www.sermoncentral.com/contributors/freddy-fritz-sermons-11181.asp
3. www.sermonaudio.com/source_detail.asp?sourceid=Fred-dyFritz

Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church (PCA)

Answers for Life!

Address: 19911 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., Tampa, FL 33647

Telephone: (813) 973-2484

Fax: (813) 973-4673

Email: Office@TampaBayPresbyterian.org

Web site: www.TampaBayPresbyterian.org

PRAYER:

Father, thank you for raising Jesus back to life again. Thank you for this marvelous narrative of Jesus' appearance to the disciples in Jerusalem. Jesus gave yet another evidence of his resurrection to them when they saw him, touched him, and watched him eat fish.

Jesus charged his disciples to believe the Word of God, that it is all about him. You have given us your Word to teach us about the person and work of your Son, Jesus Christ, whom you sent to seek and to save the lost.

And Jesus also charged his disciples to tell others about his person and work. O God, may we obey the Great Commission that Jesus gave to us in *The Gospel of Luke*. Empower us to tell others that the Christ had to suffer and die to pay the penalty for sins, that you raised him on the third day from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is found only in him.

And for this I pray in Jesus' name.

BENEDICTION:

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and always. Amen.

CHARGE:

Now, brothers and sisters, go and serve God wholeheartedly!