

## THE RESURRECTION APPEARANCES – Luke 24:13-52

Anglican Diocese of Bathurst – 26 March 2023

### 1. JESUS FOLLOWERS ARE AFRAID

There is a time immediately after Jesus' crucifixion when many of his friends and followers have entirely given up.

#### **Some are leaving.**

So in Luke 24:13, we read that – on the same day that Mary Magdalene and other women are discovering that Jesus' tomb is empty – two men who had followed Jesus are on the road to Emmaus, a town about 15km out of Jerusalem. They are on the way out. They're not waiting to see what happens next. They have given up.

#### **And some are in hiding.**

Later on in the same chapter we find the eleven remaining disciples huddled in a house in Jerusalem. This is hardly a group of courageous Christians counting down the seconds before they get to meet the risen Jesus in the flesh.

And, to be perfectly honest, I find this comforting.

To the men on the Emmaus Rd, Jesus says:

*26 Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?"*

And to the eleven disciples in Jerusalem, Jesus says,

***Luke 24:44** "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."*

That is, for three years, they had travelled, lived, eaten alongside Jesus, and he had taught them that this was how things would go, and showed them from the Scriptures what they should expect.

And still, when the time comes, they are ill-equipped. Jesus calls them 'foolish and slow to believe' and 'troubled, with doubts in their mind.' It is never a good thing to be rebuked by Jesus, but at least, we can take encouragement from the fact that we are in good company.

Many of these same fearful followers will go on to give their lives to spread the news that Jesus has risen from the dead. So perhaps there is hope for our courage and faithfulness, too.

What is it that they encounter in Jesus, which turns them around?

### 2. JESUS IS STILL THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Firstly, Jesus is still the good shepherd.

Do you notice that the very first thing Luke records the risen Jesus doing is chasing down a couple of his wandering sheep.

Jesus has been crucified, died, buried. Now he has conquered sin and death, risen from the dead. And what does he do, first? He runs after some stragglers from his flock.

Jesus will not lose a single one whom his Father has given him.

Then, when Jesus appears in the home in Jerusalem, he comforts his anxious sheep. 'Peace be with you,' are his very first words.

The risen Jesus is still the same Good Shepherd who loves and cares for his sheep.

### 3. JESUS HAS A NEW GLORY

But not everything about Jesus is the same. He has a new glory about him.

Let me explain.

Firstly, the risen Jesus doesn't always seem to be immediately recognisable. When Jesus walks alongside the men on the Emmaus road, we're told they 'they are kept from recognising him.' (v.16) It's not until their eyes are opened (v.31) that they realise who they are eating with.

Secondly, Jesus disappears and appears at will. Just as their eyes are open, he disappears. While the Eleven are listening to their story in Jerusalem, Jesus suddenly stands in their midst.

And the thing is, that this is very different from what we find earlier in Luke's gospel. Elsewhere, Jesus travels by foot and enters homes through the door like everyone else. In fact, the Jesus we find in the gospels actually wasn't supernatural enough for some early readers. In the fifth century, the fictional Arabic *Infancy Gospel of the Saviour*, which is quoted twice in the Quran, describes a young Jesus making live sparrows from birds he had made out of clay, and attributes healing powers to his nappy.

In contrast, most of the gospels describe Jesus as much more down to earth. And yet now, suddenly, Luke describes a Jesus who seems to follow different physical laws.

And the reason for these new and surprising things that we observe about Jesus is found in something Jesus has already said:

*26 Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?"*

Death and resurrection has been the gateway to a new kind of reality for Jesus. He hasn't just been brought to life; he has been transformed. Jesus has not just been resuscitated, he has been resurrected and will never die again.

So, Jesus is still good, but now he is truly great – what are to do with that?

### 4. THE MESSIAH

Well, perhaps because his disciples had done so very poorly so far, Jesus doesn't leave it up to us to join the dots. He tells us directly.

*Luke 24:46 He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*

Jesus says that at his resurrection, he went from being a teacher with local impact, to God's chosen King, his Messiah, whose crucifixion and resurrection was for the whole world.

To 'repent' means to stop going in one direction, to turn around, and to go in a completely new direction.

Many of you will know the story Jesus tells in Luke 15 of the prodigal son. It's a great example of repentance. He journeyed a long way from his father, but he had a change of heart. He turned round and headed home.

And in Jesus' teaching repentance is immediately connected to forgiveness of sins. Do you see how the two are not separate for him? There is no repentance without complete forgiveness. As the Father embraces his returned prodigal son, as Jesus tells them man beside him on the cross, today you will be with me in paradise. There is no more debt to work off.

Because the Messiah, Jesus, has done that work already. He suffered, before rising to glory.

And you know, I think that is what particularly strikes me about these encounters with Jesus. Jesus keeps teaching them: this is what I told you. This is what was written in the Scriptures.

Before he would rise to glory to bring forgiveness to all nations, the Messiah was going to suffer and die. That was always the plan.

If you look through the bible, you will find a hundred different ways in which the relationship between God and his people is described. God is the hen who shelters the chicks, the Shepherd who leads the sheep, the king who rules his people, the Rock on which our lives can be built.

But when God speaks of the kind of relationship that he plans for his people, the intimacy with him that he has in mind, God speaks of a husband and a wife, and of a wedding. He does not just want a 'king and his subjects' relationship with us. He wants a love relationship with us, as profound as a love relationship between a husband and a wife.

When I got married I promised:

*to have and to hold  
from this day forward,  
for better for worse,  
for richer for poorer,  
in sickness and in health,  
to love and to cherish,*

Didn't know what was coming.

But Jesus tells us God knows what is coming. He knows the whole story. He knows that the price of calling a people to enjoy him, to be a bride for his Son, is the death of that same Son. From the beginning of creation, God was willing to pay the highest price to bring you home.