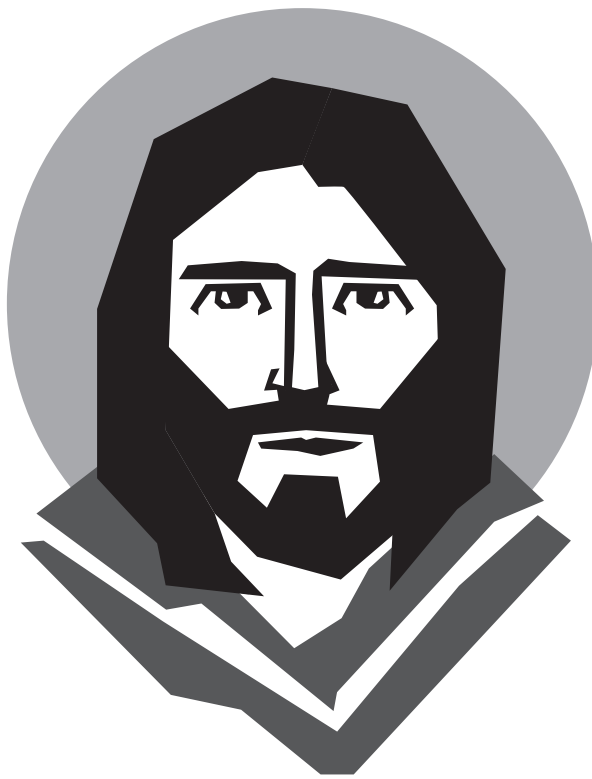


THE REAL JESUS



A study through the Gospel of Luke

BOOK 5: HIS RESURRECTION

THE REAL JESUS: HIS RESURRECTION

Week Three | October 14, 2018 | A Shocking Revelation

PREPARATION

GETTING READY

Before your group meets next time, spend some time alone in God's Word reading through this week's text, Luke 22:36-49. Pray that God, through His Spirit, would bring to life the truth of this text and how it applies to your life.

THIS WEEK

KEY BIBLICAL TRUTH

The Real Jesus was bodily resurrected from the dead.

THEOLOGY APPLIED

Jesus' resurrection allows us to see God's glorious redemptive plan and invites us to be part of His mission.

MEDITATE

"Jesus Himself stood among them, and said to them, 'Peace to you!'" (Luke 24:36b).

GETTING STARTED

+ Use this section to prepare your heart and mind for the truths of this week. This section will help to introduce the focus of this week's lesson.

How do you know He lives?

If the resurrection happened, Jesus is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. If it didn't happen, He is not. If the resurrection happened, then sin and death have been defeated. If it didn't happen, sin still has complete power over us.

So, how do you know He lives?

An old hymn called “He Lives” gives an answer to this question:

*I serve a risen Savior
He's in the world today.
I know that He is living,
Whatever men may say.
I see His hand of mercy;
I hear His voice of cheer;
And just the time I need Him
He's always near.
He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way.
He lives, He lives, salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart.
(CCLI# 800247)*

There are many comforting and glorious truths expressed in this hymn. It is true that we can have a personal relationship with our living Savior. We can sense His presence alongside us each day. We know His Spirit dwells within us. We see evidence of His mercy every day of our lives and are comforted by His Word. However, Jesus doesn't just live in our hearts. He actually lives! He's not like the memory of a deceased loved one that we carry with us. He is fully alive. As William Lane Craig says, “The resurrection is only real for our lives today if it is a real event in history.” We don't have to choose between objective facts and personal experience when it comes to the truth of the resurrection. The facts and our experience go hand-in-hand. Together, they allow us to encounter The Real Jesus.

❓: *What truths are expressed in the lyrics of “He Lives” and which ones would you say are missing?*

❓: *Why is what you base your belief on so important? How do you think it impacts your life?*

❏ UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

Today we will study the account of Jesus' bodily appearance to His disciples after the resurrection. We will see that He not only reassures them with physical evidence of His resurrection, but biblical evidence as well. Then, He tells them what to do with this good news!

1. PHYSICAL EVIDENCE
2. BIBLICAL EVIDENCE
3. WHAT TO DO WITH GOOD NEWS

GOING DEEPER

+ This next section will help show what God's Word says about this week's particular focus. Read through the Scripture passages and connect the text to this week's biblical truth.

PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

❏ LUKE 24:36-43

Q: *What is the first thing Jesus said to His disciples when He appeared before them? Why do you think it is significant?*

Q: *What did Jesus do to reassure them?*

Last week we talked about the difference between being slow to believe and humble belief. Those who are slow to believe have a posture of skepticism and cynicism that is generally rooted in pride and fear. They are afraid to be wrong or to be hurt. For some, skepticism is rooted in a lordship issue. The idea of bowing the knee to someone other than one's self is distasteful.

There is much tangible evidence that Jesus rose from the dead. But, as we saw last week, looking through a lens

of doubt doesn't help you see the facts more clearly. It actually twists them. We always see what we want to see. This is also true when it comes to seeing the facts of the resurrection. If you have a problem with Jesus being King of Kings and Lord of Lords, you will refuse to allow the evidence to show that Jesus did rise from the dead. You will come up with counter-theories or use the evidence to come to alternative conclusions. Many people have done just this. Here are some of the more popular ways people have tried to explain the evidence away.

1. The Swoon Theory: Jesus didn't really die. He just "swooned." But, thanks to the cold, damp air of the tomb, He came to. He managed to get Himself up, roll back the stone, get past the guards, and return to His disciples. However, this theory denies the evidence of His death. Living through the crucifixion and managing to conduct such an escape would have been impossible. Even if He did manage such a feat, Jesus was proclaimed dead by the Roman government and the Jewish leaders. This theory also doesn't explain how the linen wrappings were found in the tomb undisturbed. Jesus would have had to wiggle out of all the strips of linen wound tightly around His body and more than a hundred pounds of spices on top of that without moving them. When Lazarus was raised from the dead, the text says someone had to help unwrap him (John 11).

2. The Impersonation Theory: The person who appeared wasn't Jesus at all, but an imposter. Those who support this theory cite the evidence that His disciples—those who knew Him well—did not recognize Him when He first appeared. However, it would have been nearly impossible to copy Christ's exact wounds. For Thomas, seeing the wounds was proof that the man in front of Him was the same man he saw die on the cross. The text is also clear that they were in a locked chamber that was intended to keep intruders out. Jesus suddenly appeared in a glorified body. This miracle could not have been performed by an imposter.

3. The Hallucination Theory: All of Christ's post-death appearances were really just hallucinations. All five hundred of them. This theory is not reasonable according to everything we know about hallucinations from psychiatrists. First, only certain kinds of people with certain psychological dispositions have hallucinations. They are typically high-strung and highly imaginative, and most are considered paranoid or even schizophrenic. Jesus appeared to a mass of people who could not have all had the same mental condition. Hallucinations also occur when there is anticipation or expectation. No one anticipated, or even hoped, Jesus would rise from the dead. The historical records show them moving on with life. When they did hear of the resurrection, their first response was disbelief.

4. The Spiritual Resurrection Theory: Jesus' resurrection was not a physical resurrection, but a spiritual one. His body stayed in the grave, but His spirit rose again. The problem with this theory is that there is historical evidence that Jesus' physical body disappeared from the tomb. This would

not have happened had it been just a spiritual resurrection. The gospel writers do not speak of the resurrection as though it was simply a spiritual experience. They are careful to present it as an historical reality. We also know Jesus ate food with His disciples and encouraged Thomas to touch His wounds. Neither of these things could have happened if Jesus were a ghost.

Either these theories say Jesus didn't really die, or we have to say that Jesus didn't really rise. Because if Jesus really rose, He would be Lord. Each of these theories seems far-fetched. But, let's be honest, they are more likely than a man rising from the dead! The resurrection isn't probable; it is a miracle. The question is this—did it happen or not?

Jesus gives His disciples evidence of a literal, bodily resurrection. This passage directly contests the Imposter Theory, the Hallucination Theory, and the Spiritual Resurrection Theory. It's like Jesus knew the ways fallen, finite humans would justify their refusal to believe and pulls the rug from under their theories from the very beginning!

In verse 36, we read that Jesus appeared before the disciples. In fact, the text says that “Jesus himself” appeared. This is another way Luke emphasizes that it really was Jesus in the flesh. Now, it wasn't secular scholars who came up with the Hallucination Theory. It was the disciples! Their first thought was that they had gone crazy and were seeing things or were being haunted by a ghost. After all, that was the most probable explanation! But Jesus gave them proof it was really Him by showing them His body—His hands and feet, His flesh and bones (verse 39). To further prove He is a real being, He asks them for something to eat. Ghosts don't experience hunger and they can't eat real food. He eats right in front of them. He doesn't pull a fast one on them. He invites them to verify He is Jesus in the flesh.

Q: *Do you tend to think of Jesus as someone you carry in your heart like a deceased loved one's memory or like a literally risen Savior?*

Q: *Why do you think Jesus gives so much proof of His bodily resurrection to His disciples? How important is it for our faith?*

Q: *In what ways has Jesus graciously given you assurance of who He really is when you were struggling with doubt?*

BIBLICAL EVIDENCE

LUKE 24:44-46

Q: *Beyond physical evidence, what does Jesus point the disciples to for assurance of who He is?*

Q: *What do you think it means that He opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures?*

Have you ever seen a movie that had a dramatic ending? And have you ever gone back and watched the movie again and picked up on all the clues you missed entirely the first time? That is the same kind of experience the disciples had when, after seeing the physical evidence that Jesus had risen from the dead, He showed them biblical evidence for His resurrection. Though the disciples were very familiar with the words of Scripture, Jesus took them back through the familiar text and it began to make sense to them in a way that it never had before! As they went through God's Word having now seen the resurrected Christ, verses they thought were insignificant stood out to them. Things they never could figure out started making sense. There was a depth of beauty they had never tasted. Paul says Jesus is the "mystery" that has finally been revealed (Romans 16:25; Ephesians 1:9; Colossians 1:27). In other words, Jesus is like the secret code that unlocks the true meaning of the Bible! Tony Merida puts it this way: "The Scriptures are like a treasure map that leads to Jesus, the promised Messiah. This is why we have a thick Bible, not just a pocket New Testament!"

Q: *Think about some of the great heroes you admire in the Bible. How do they actually point to Jesus as the greater hero?*

Q: *This was not the first time Jesus had taught His disciples from the Scriptures. It was not the first time He explained why His death was necessary. What made the disciples really "get it" this time?*

WHAT TO DO WITH GOOD NEWS

LUKE 24:47-49

Q: *After revealing the good news of His resurrection to His disciples with both physical and biblical evidence, what did He call them to do?*

Q: *What command does He give them?*

Theologian Christopher Wright says, “The proper way for disciples of the crucified and risen Jesus to read their Scripture is messianically and missionally.” We just learned that reading the Bible messianically means to read it from a Christ-centered perspective, to view every single passage in light of God’s big plan of redemption, which is centered on Christ. Now, Luke 24:47–49 shows us that Christ-centered Bible reading will lead to a mission-driven life.

Did you notice that verses 45, 46, and 47 are parts of the same sentence? Reading the Scripture, seeing Christ’s work of redemption as the central focus, and proclaiming this good news to the nations are all part of the same breath! Christ’s work on the cross makes it possible for God to bring salvation to the nations. Now that Christ’s work is done, He commissions His disciples to take part in this mission to spread this good news of redemption to every place on the globe. Those who live Christ-centered lives will live mission-centered lives as well.

What does Jesus call them to proclaim? In verse 47, He says they are to tell everyone that, because of the cross and the resurrection, we can repent of our sin and receive God’s forgiveness! Before Christ, that was not a possibility (Romans 3:21–23). We could confess our sin all day long, but we still didn’t have a way of paying the price for that sin. None of our good works could cut it, and a holy and just God cannot just sweep sin under the rug (Romans 8:3–4). He must deal with it. And deal with it He did—on the cross (Romans 5:8). Now, the only thing we must do to be made right with God is to repent of sin and trust in Christ’s perfect sacrifice on our behalf! Because of the finished work of Christ, salvation is a free gift (Ephesians 2:8–9).

After Jesus commissions them to be participants in God’s big plan of redemption, He tells them they cannot do it on their own strength. They lack the necessary power. They are underqualified for the job. But, God will supply what they lack. He tells them to wait until they receive this power, the Holy Spirit. They are not to make a move without the Spirit. Think how glorious it is to be invited into God’s mission! And yet, how humbling is

it to know we cannot do it on our own. We need God's power in order to be part of His mission.

- ❖ *How does not reading the Bible messianically lead to a lack of zeal for mission? Or, how can it cause us to proclaim the wrong message?*
- ❖ *Jesus reminds His disciples in verse 48 that as they proclaim the gospel they should remember they themselves are witnesses of the truth of the gospel. In what way are you a witness of the truth of the gospel? How does that impact the way you proclaim it?*
- ❖ *How dependent on the Spirit are you? In what ways do you tend to rely on your own power and strength?*

NEXT STEPS

+ *Connect the truths from God's Word to your daily life. Process how what you've learned this week will impact the way you live beyond today and into the future.*

- ❖ *What is the basis for your belief that The Real Jesus really did rise from the dead? Is it both physical evidence and biblical evidence? Why are the two together so important?*
- ❖ *Discuss the idea that we commend what we cherish. What other kinds of good news have you shared today? (It may be as simple as "there's more coffee in the lobby!") How can you cherish Christ more?*
- ❖ *Are you experiencing a lack of zeal for mission? Are you outsourcing mission to other people? Can you identify what might be the root cause in your heart?*

PRAY

+ *Use this prayer point to connect your time in prayer to this week's focus.*

- Jesus, thank You that You don't ask us to believe with blind faith. You assure us in many different ways that You are who You say You are and You really did accomplish what was necessary for our salvation.

COMMENTARY

LUKE 24:30 There are other resurrection appearances in which Jesus proved His bodily resurrection by eating. See John 21:9–15, Acts 10:41. There is also a strong similarity between the meal He shares in these accounts, the Last Supper (Luke 22:19), and the feeding of the five thousand (Luke 9:16). For us today, taking the Lord's Supper is a unique way we can see and savor Christ by being tangibly reminded of who He really is.

**All exegetical content and commentary resourcing for this lesson was provided by the ESV Study Bible Commentary Notes, Christ Centered Exposition (Luke), and Preaching the Word (Luke).*

