

Session 5

March 31, 2024

## THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

Luke 24:1-8; 38-43

Hebrews 11:1 teaches us that “faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen.” But that doesn’t mean that faith is some kind of blind leap in the dark! Rather, our faith is based on evidence. As a historian, Luke was mindful of recording the facts surrounding Jesus’ life and His death. And He was equally dedicated to recording the facts about the resurrection. In fact (no pun intended!), Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection are so central to the gospel of salvation (see 1 Cor. 15:3-4) that nothing short of certainty will do. In this week’s lesson, three evidences of the resurrection are mentioned, all of which point to the fact that Jesus rose again.

**The testimony of Jesus’ absence (vv. 1-6).** Luke’s account of Resurrection Morning focuses on the actions of the dedicated women who followed the Lord. First, they “came” and they “brought” (v. 1). The remaining details explain the context. It was the first day of the week (Sunday), and it was sufficiently early that it was still dark (John 20:1). After the burial tradition of the Jews, spices had been brought that were prepared prior to the sabbath (Luke 23:56). While a large quantity had been applied by Nicodemus at the garden tomb (see John 19:39), this did not preclude the ladies from following through with their own act of devotion. Next, they “found” and they “didn’t find” (vv. 2-3). What they found was the stone rolled away from the tomb. What they did not find was a body inside! Third, the women “bowed down;” not at the sight of the Lord, but at the sight and subsequent terror of seeing His messengers waiting in dazzling white (v. 5). Notice that all of the evidence presented by the ladies’ actions indicate that Christ really had died, that He really was buried, and that He really was no longer dead in the grave. Then, these facts were confirmed by the angels’ frank proclamation, “He is not here, but is risen!” For reflection: *Read 1 Cor. 15:3-4. We all know how important Christ’s death is in God’s redemptive plan. But why do you think His burial and resurrection are also essential elements of the gospel?*

**The testimony of Jesus’ promise (vv. 6-8).** There have always been those who believe that Jesus was somehow caught by surprise by all this and that His death was a tragic result, as if God’s plans had somehow been thwarted. Such thinking is not only erroneous, but it is offensive! It makes God the Father less than sovereign and makes Jesus the Son less than truthful. Over and over, the Lord Jesus warned His disciples of the events that would take place and stated the necessity of fulfilling them. For example, in Mark 8:31, He laid it all out: His suffering, death, and resurrection. He said the same thing again in Mark 9:31 and added even more details in Mark 10:33. As to His own willful intent, the Lord was clear: “No one takes my life from me, but I lay it down” (John 10:18). While the Bible makes it clear that the disciples didn’t fully understand all that would take place or even want to discuss it (e.g. Mark 9:32), this passage in Luke confirms the facts that Jesus had indeed made those predictions and that they indeed remembered them. For reflection: *Mark 9:32 says the disciples “did not understand this statement, and they were afraid to ask Him.” Why do you think they were afraid to ask Him? What applications might we make from their reaction?*

**The testimony of Jesus' presence (vv. 38-43).** While Jesus' absence from the tomb was one evidence of His resurrection, it was not enough to convince His disciples that He was alive. For this, He needed to appear in person. Notice that that while poor Thomas will always take the blame for it (John 20:24-25), all of the disciples were equally doubtful (see also Mark 16:11). Notice as well that Jesus, after questioning their faith (v. 38), was quick to give evidence to help them believe (v. 39). The wounds from the crucifixion proved that it was Jesus, and the eating of fish proved He was there in bodily form, and not some kind of spirit as they supposed in verse 37. For reflection: *Look up Matthew 28:16-17. How do you account for their continued doubts? What applications can we make from these two verses?*