Luke Lesson 89 (2021)

**THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST**

(Subtitle: He has Risen!)

Luke 24:1-32

Key Verse: 24:6-7

“He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ‘The Son of Man must be delivered over the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’”

 Death is the ultimate enemy that no human can overcome. Even great kings and rulers in history succumbed to the power of death. Great tombs and monuments are built for them, but they are gone. Christ Jesus also died. But he didn’t remain dead. He arose. The fact of Christ’s resurrection is not something we should be shocked about. Why not? It’s because it only proves who he is, God the Eternal. Apostle Paul states in Romans 1:3, “Concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” (ESV) Because of his resurrection from the dead, we believe that Jesus Christ is fully human and God. But if Christ Jesus didn’t rise from the dead, he is just a human. There is no resurrection or eternal life. He is not the Christ, and our faith in him is worthless (1 Cor. 15:12-19).

In today’s passage, Luke records the fact of the resurrection of Christ. However, according to Luke, Christ’s resurrection is not just a historical fact, but it’s also the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Scriptures. Each of the four gospel writers agrees upon the truthfulness of Christ’s resurrection, yet they share unique stories concerning the event of Christ’s resurrection. The story of Christ’s meeting with two men on the way to Emmanus is unique to Luke’s account. I know we have heard this story many times. But let’s study it as if for the first time. Let its truth touch our heart afresh.

 Look at verse 1. “On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb.” The first day of the week for Jews is the day after the Sabbath. It’s Sunday, which was the third day since Jesus’ death and burial. The women who went to the tomb were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, the mother of James, and some other women who loved Jesus (24:10). The execution of Jesus on the cross was a traumatic event. The death Jesus died was cruel and vicious. The Roman soldiers whipped him repeatedly, pierced his hands and feet with huge nails, and placed the crown of thorns on his head. These women witnessed the cruel death of Christ. Undoubtedly, when these women went to the tomb with the spices to embalm his body, they wanted to show their respect and love for him, and they mostly wanted to mourn for his death.

 What did they find when they arrived at the grave? Look at verses 2-3. “They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.” I am sure they were shocked when they discovered the stone rolled away from the entrance and the body of Jesus missing. The first thing that came into their mind was something terrible could have happened to the body of Christ; some people might have taken it. It seems that they didn’t consider the rolled-away stone and empty tomb as indications of Christ’s resurrection.

 Look at verses 4-8. While they were wondering about this, two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. I am sure they were angels. The appearance of these two angels made them even more terrified. So in their fright, they bowed down with their faces to the ground. The angels announced the good news of Christ’s resurrection, by saying “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!” (5-6a) The angels were saying, *“Ladies. The grave is the residence for the dead people, not for the living people. Christ Jesus, you are looking for, is not here because he has risen! He is alive!”* It’s too good to be true that Christ had risen. But the women were still overwhelmed.

Read verses 6b-8. “Remember what he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ‘The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’ Then they remembered his words.” Even though Jesus mentioned his suffering, death, and resurrection repeatedly during his ministry (9:22, 18:32-33), his disciples, including these women, didn’t take his words seriously. But now, they could remember them only as the angels reminded them.

Even though we may have a lot of pieces of information in our brain, we don’t necessarily remember everything. We are forgetful and have selective memory. The meaning of the word “remember” has to do with our conscious awareness. Even though we may hear Jesus’ words all the time, it's useless unless we remember by paying attention to them. That’s why the angels encouraged these women to remember Jesus’ words.

 Look at verses 9-12. When they returned from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and others. But they didn’t believe the women because their words seemed to them like nonsense. The disciples might have thought that these women saw an illusion due to the traumatic experience of Christ’s death on the cross. But Simon Peter wanted to check it out. Look at verse 12. “Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.” The graveclothes of Jesus in the empty tomb was potential evidence of Christ’s resurrection. Yet, he didn’t respond by saying, *“Praise God! He must have risen!”* No. He just wondered to himself what had happened.

We wonder why Simon Peter and other disciples could not believe Christ’s resurrection right away. Well. My best guess is that it’s because they felt everything happening during the last few days was unreal. The death of Christ was a big shock, which they had not been prepared for. They could not digest the death of Jesus. They couldn’t even visit Jesus’ tomb yet. But they now heard from the women that Jesus’ body was missing, and Christ had risen. To them, it just didn’t make sense. Everything was moving too fast. But the truth is that Christ has risen from the dead. We also need to sit down and ponder the meaning of his death and resurrection.

 In verses 13-32, we read the story of the Risen Christ who appeared to the two men on the way to their hometown, Emmaus. This story is unique to Luke’s account. Luke has a purpose in sharing this story. Look at verses 13-16. “Now that same day, two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognizing him.” (Pic#1) This picture illustrates something we should remember: The Risen Christ walks with us, talks with us, and eats with us even when we don’t realize it. Interestingly enough, when Jesus came to them, he didn’t identify himself, *“Hey, guys! I am the Risen Christ. How are you doing?”* No. Verse 16 states that “they were kept from recognizing him.”

What does it mean that they were kept from recognizing him? It could mean that the Risen Christ intentionally kept himself from their recognition. What does it mean to us spiritually now? It means that the Risen Christ is invisible to us now, but he is real. **“Invisible but real!”**

 Let’s read verses 17-24. “He asked them, ‘What are you discussing together as you walk along?’ They stood still, their faces downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, ‘Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?’ ‘What things?’ he asked. ‘About Jesus of Nazareth,’ they replied, ‘He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn’t find his body. They came ad told us that they had seen a vision of angels who said he was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they didn’t see Jesus.” Even though the two disciples heard the surprising news of the resurrection of Jesus, it didn’t move their hearts at all.

Why not? They were just too sad and disappointed by the death of Jesus, who they expected to be the hope, maybe the only hope for their nation Israel. They were disappointed because their hope for the redemption of Israel had disappeared entirely. In other words, Jesus didn’t redeem their nation Israel as they expected. But instead, Jesus was shamefully punished like criminals by the hands of their enemy, the Roman Empire. It was a total injustice. I am sure they ground their teeth in anger. Yet, what could they do about it? Well, nothing. With a profound sense of disappointment, they went back to their hometown.

Let’s think a little more. I see that the disciples were disappointed because Jesus’ death completely shattered their hope for Israel, more specifically, the redemption of Israel. The hope of Israel is not the hope of God’s kingdom, which Jesus came to preach and establish. I think Luke included this story because these two disappointed men represent the people of Israel, including Jesus’ disciples, who were expecting the redemption of their nation Israel. Here, we learn that if we put our hope in the world or the things of the world, we cannot see the kingdom of God.

How did Jesus help these two men who were deeply saddened? Let’s read verses 25-27. “He said to them, ‘How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.” The Risen Christ had an intensive Bible study with these two men. The contemporary Jewish understanding of the Messiah has nothing to do with suffering, humiliation, or death. The Messiah they expected was a mighty and victorious conqueror, like King David. But according to Jesus’ instruction, all the Scriptures teach that the Messiah should suffer many things first before entering his glory.

Even though we don’t know what scripture Jesus quoted, we can name a few. First, God cursed the serpent in the Garden, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” (Gen. 3:15) Jesus probably quoted from Isaiah 53, particularly verses 10-11, which state “Yet it was the Lord’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge, my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.” Jesus also used the sign of Jonah to explain his death and resurrection. He said in Matthew 12:40, “For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” What about Psalm 16:10, which states, “Because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay.” I am sure that besides these, Jesus could have quoted numerous Scripture passages. Throughout his ministry on earth, Jesus had struggled to help his disciples replace their earthbound messianic kingdom with the Biblical messianic kingdom through his suffering, death, and resurrection. Yet, his disciples didn’t change much.

 In verses 28-29, as they approached their destination, the sun was going down. Yet, Jesus acted as if he wanted to continue to travel. But they urged him to stay with them, and Jesus went in to stay with them. Look at verses 30-32. “When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, ‘Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”

Interestingly, we see that while Jesus walked and talked with them, they could not recognize the Risen Christ. But when Jesus broke beat and shared the meal, their spiritual eyes were opened to realize that the Risen Christ had been with them all along the way. They also said that their hearts felt mysteriously warm as Jesus talked with them and explained the scripture. I think their experience was the indwelling of the Holy Spirit along with the sense of peace.

Let me close the sermon. Christ’s resurrection is a historical fact. But in the eyes of Luke, Christ’s resurrection is not just a historical fact. The Risen Christ is with us in person through the Holy Spirit now and forever. He walks with us, talks with us, and eats with us even when we realize it (Pic#1). Eternal life is God living in us. The Risen Christ, the eternal life, is invisible but real. He is our life, joy, peace, hope, strength, wisdom, meaning, and reward. We don’t need to visit the empty tomb to see Jesus. He is not there because he has risen! We need to acknowledge and admit the disappointment that blocks our faith in the Risen Christ. We also need to invite him into our hearts personally, remember his words from the scripture, and share the feast of love bread of life. **“He is not here: He has risen!”**