

“Jesus’ Body and Bible Study”

4/28/19 (from last week’s sunrise service); Luke 24:44-49
by Rev. Steve Hammond for FBC of Newport, NH

//36 While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.”

37 They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. 38 He said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? 39 Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.”

40 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. 41 And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate it in their presence.

44 He said to them, “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.”

45 Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. 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. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”//

—Luke 24:36-49 (ESV)

Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed!

Isn't it interesting to see the risen Jesus Christ standing there with his disciples in that upper room (or wherever it was at that point) giving them a Bible study on himself? Giving them a Bible study on the crucifixion, on the resurrection and more . . . all the while, there he is standing there with them. You would think his standing there would be enough—for ever and ever.

It is enough, his standing there. But so too was the cross, where Jesus said, “It is finished!” There was a certain completeness about the cross and the finishing of God's work there. But no one could see the cross in its true glory then. And now, in the very presence of the resurrected Jesus, the disciples were still not quite able to take in the full glory of the resurrection.

If you could just see the cross for what it truly is, then you would see the resurrection. Of course if you could see the resurrection for what it truly is, then you would also see the cross in a whole new way as well.

But how are you going to see it?

Jesus provided what was needed.

1. He gave them his ‘Body of Proof’.

Actually this didn't make as instant a hit as one might imagine. Much of the time the disciples didn't recognize Jesus in this body. It was Mary's ears not her eyes that worked for her. The road to Emmaeus was traveled all the way into town without recognizing Jesus. It was the breaking of the bread that did it for

them. And in our text the disciples saw Jesus' body and thought he was a ghost. Whereupon they put the ghost theory to the test by giving him some broiled fish.

Isn't this like us? We have the body of Jesus actually. And we have a hard time recognizing it. It's great when we do finally see Jesus in our midst of two or three gathered in his name, especially at the breaking of bread. But such eyesight isn't always automatic. We need more help.

And more help is just what Jesus did.

2. He gave Them a Bible Study.

What really got through to those disciples was a Bible Study. Along with the fact that the risen Jesus was giving it to them. (And of course Pentecost and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, but that's a sermon for later.) It's the Bible Study that deserves notice here. Luke only gives the general outline as "the law and the prophets," which was—the entire Old Testament! But I think we're on solid ground if we highlight some of the likely scriptures Jesus could well have pointed to as he showed them how the scriptures had predicted the necessity of the cross and the resurrection of the Messiah.

Here's a short list:

- The prophesy to Eve about the war between the seed of the devil and the seed of the woman. And how her seed would defeat the serpent, even though the savior seed would be struck himself.
- Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac and the substitution by that ram provided by God, as it was found stuck in a thicket.
- The evil intended for Joseph by his brothers, as he was good as dead to his father, abandoned by his brothers, yet rose up as a ruler and savior for the land of Egypt; because God intended it all for good.
- The birth of Israel coming through the blood of the Passover, where they were protected by the "blood of the lamb" from that terrible plague of the killing of the first born sons.

Then there's the Psalms:

- "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Words Jesus said as he was crucified. But words introducing Psalm 22, which also has:
- "They have pierced my hands and my feet"; and . . .
- "They cast lots for my clothing"; but the Psalm turns to triumph and ends with the strong word of victory as it cries out, "Finished!"
- And the Prophets, like Isaiah saying: "He was despised, and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief";
- "He was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. The punishment that brought our peace was on him; and by his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray. Everyone has turned to his own way; and Yahweh has laid on him the iniquity of us all."
- And like Daniel going both into the pit of the lions' den and out of the pit of the lions' den—a lot more alive than what he should have been.

Conclusion:

So, don't think you have to be back in the first century to see Jesus and the significance of the cross and resurrection. We all have the challenge of seeing the body of Jesus. The Apostles with his physical body, and us with his church body. It is a challenge at times. But it is also greatly rewarding when our eyes are properly opened, by faith.

But one of the things those early disciples had, which is exactly what we have as well, is the Bible and Bible study. Hey, we even have the New Testament. They only had the Old Testament at that time.

Let your eyes and ears of faith be opened to the reality of Jesus, his cross and resurrection, by letting God's Word and Spirit speak to you as you read and study the scriptures. For they have been telling the story faithfully from the beginning. And they will enable us to join them in saying:

He is risen!

He is risen indeed!