

Easter Service 2009

"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."
The Lord Jesus Christ

Outline:

- I. THE PREDICTIONS JESUS MADE OF HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION: His disciples did not understand
- II. THE FEAR OF THE DISCIPLES PRIOR TO SEEING THE RISEN LORD
 - A. God's word needs to be enough: The word of God is not a staple of the christian faith it is *the* staple
- III. THE FEAR OF THE DISCIPLES DISPELLED: two things after Christ's passion transformed the disciples' lives
- IV. THE BLESSING AND CHALLENGE TO US TODAY: Do we believe as these early eyewitnesses believed?
 - A. This was the question asked to Martha, "Believest thou this?"
 - B. Her brother was dead still when Jesus asked this question!
 - C. She replied, "Yea, Lord: I Believe...", Do we?
 - D. If so then what what are we waiting for?!

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I. THE PREDICTIONS JESUS MADE OF HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION: His disciples did not understand

- A. As much as our Lord tried to warn His disciples they just did not understand what he was talking about.
- B. He would speak very explicitly about what he would accomplish on the cross and that after the cross he would rise the third day.
- C. Consider some of these passages:

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
16:21	8:31	9:22	2:19-21
17:22	9:31, 32	18:31-33, 34	
20:17-19	10:32-34	24:1-9	

- D. Despite the numerous accounts that we have of our Lord for-warning His disciples of His death and resurrection they didn't get it. In fact it seems that because of their ignorance and lack of asking for clarification because of fear (Mark 9:32) they completely ignored these statements! Consider the following...

1. Matthew 16:21-23

"From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."

2. Matthew 20:18-21

"Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again. Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom."

- E. This is hardly the response that you would expect from men who hear from their leader, teacher, master, and most amazing friend they could ever have in their midst that he will soon be put to death and then rise from the dead. Did they suffer from sadducee like skepticism of resurrection theology? Or were they so griped with fear at the thought of Jesus dying that they didn't hear anything beyond the predictive statements Jesus made of His death? Wether it was bad theology, fear, or just doubting the words of our Lord the end result was all the same, they had no clue. They were without understanding concerning the matter. And this we know to be

true because it was recorded in the gospel accounts

1. Mark 9:32

“But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.”

...and Luke tells us that these things were hidden from them...

2. Luke 18:34 “And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.”

“But they didn't understand a thing he said. Its significance was hidden from them, and they failed to grasp what he was talking about.” (NLT)

3. Even at the triumphant entry His disciples did not fully grasp what was happening. Listen to what John writes about the occasion...

John 12:16

“These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then *remembered* they that these things were written of him, and [that] they had done these things unto him.”

Like so many other things that were brought back to the front of their minds with absolute clarity and understanding after and only after Jesus was glorified i.e. when he had ascended up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of the Father after His resurrection.

4. What they remembered was not their lack of understanding or their frustration in not understanding our Lords words but they simply remembered the Lords words and simultaneously as that memory came to them so to did the understanding of the word spoken to them! I think the Lord has done this with all of us at one tome or another.

F. So even though His death and resurrection were secret things His disciples did not understand it!

G. And of corse this incredibly important event was prophesied of in the Old Testament as well.

II. THE FEAR OF THE DISCIPLES PRIOR TO SEEING THE RISEN LORD

A. Tragically their lack of understanding lead to them being fearful and unbelieving.

1. This is true of us today! We need to seek the Lord for understanding so that as we read His word we get built up and not discouraged. So many have said to me that they just don't get the Bible and their just frustrated when they read it. Well that can happen to any of us but that is no excuse to sweep the Lord's words under the carpet and forget about them. He would have us wait on Him so that understanding would come! The disciples all received understanding later but probably should have dealt with their lack of understanding by asking Jesus what exactly He was talking about.

B. We can easily see that the disciples were living in fear from the point of Jesus' arrest till they saw Him again after He had been raised from the dead. Consider the following verses

1. Matthew 26:56

"In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me. But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. *Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.*"

2. John 18:15

"And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. *But Peter stood at the door without.* Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter."

Matthew 26:58

"*But Peter followed him afar off* unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end."

3. John 20:19

"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, *when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews*, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you."

4. Matthew 26:69-75

"Now Peter sat without in the palace: and *a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.* And when he was gone out into the porch, *another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This [fellow] was also with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.* And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, *Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee. Then began he to curse and to swear, [saying], I know not the man.* And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly."

C. All this fear was not eliminated until they had seen their Lord again. Not until they had that experience of being able to see, touch, hear and even eat with Jesus was their fear relieved.

D. Personally I understand their fear. In fact it's quite logical to think of being fearful at this point. I would have been one of those that feared greatly as well.

E. Some of their fear no doubt was because they thought if they did that to our leader what will they do unto us?

1. We should see a great lesson for us to learn here. That is, we need to trust in the word of God! God's word is not a staple in our Christian lives but it is *the* staple! Nothing, including experiences, can substitute it!. If God says anything it should demand our every bit of confidence and that should settle all things

pertaining to life and godliness.

2. God's word promises that he is unchanging in Malachi 3:6, Hebrews 13:8, so to His word is as sure as He is.

He promises that He will always be with us in Hebrew 13:5, so why are you in despair because of loneliness?

He promises that He will provide all our need in Philippians 4:19, so why are you fretting about that which you lack?

He promises that he will give us words to speak in the hour that we need them in Luke 12:11,12 so why are so timid to share our faith?

Don't be unbelieving but believing! God has never given us a reason to doubt what He has said in plain text therefor our circumstances should never dictate the way we feel or how we decide what we do next. It is "in returning and rest that you shall ye be saved; and it is in quietness and in confidence [that] shall be your strength." Trust in what He has said!

- F. The good news is that the fear that they had would not be remaining for very Long at all.

III. THE FEAR OF THE DISCIPLES DISPELLED: two things after Christ's passion transformed the disciples' lives

- A. The account that John gives us is very interesting. It was resurrection morning and the disciples received word that Jesus was alive from Mary Magdalene who had already been to the tomb and saw that it was empty. At her words Peter and John jumped to their feet and ran to the sepulcher and...

1. John 20:4-8

"...the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulcher. And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulcher, and seeth the linen clothes lie, And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulcher, and he saw, and believed."

- a) John "saw" = βλέπω (βλέπω) this word means to perceive by the use of the eyes. The basic word which simply put is to see.
- b) Peter "seeth" = θεωρέω (θεωρέω) this word means to view attentively, take a view of, survey or to view mentally, consider.
- c) I think Peter left the seen of the empty tomb perhaps a little more hopeful than John did!

- B. It was not until later that evening that the fears were completely removed! Jesus came to them where they were still in hiding behind locked doors.

1. John 20:19,20

“came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace [be] unto you. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.”

2. Of course Thomas had his time to see the Lord too but not until after another eight days had passed!

John 20:24-27

“But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: [then] came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace [be] unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust [it] into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

3. The very next chapter the Lord shows up at the sea of Galilee when the disciples were fishing. Here Jesus prepared a meal for them and dined with them! This was the third time that Jesus appeared to His disciples.

John 21 (The whole thing)

- C. Well no one can deny that these early disciples had their lives changed because they saw the resurrected Lord. We haven't seen Him though and yet in faith our lives are changed too! Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe is what our Lord said to Thomas.
- D. These that saw the Lord went on to live bold lives for the Lord. All the apostles died a martyrs death except John and none did turn their backs on following the Lord!
- E. After the resurrection their preaching was with great boldness and all their fears were turned to faith.

IV. THE BLESSING AND CHALLENGE TO US TODAY: Do we believe as these early eyewitnesses believed?

A. The Blessings

Because of the resurrection...

A living
Hope

1. He has “begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,” 1 Peter 1:3-4

Justified

2. We have been justified-that is declared righteous.

Romans 4:25

“Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”

Baring
Fruit unto
God

3. And being “joined” to the Risen Lord we will bare fruit unto God as it says in

Romans 7:4

“Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, [even] to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.”

Saved
from Wrath

4. Through the “life” of Jesus Christ, believers will be saved.

Romans 5:9-10

“Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”

A High
Priest

5. We have an ever living High Priest at the right Hand of God that makes intercession for us continually.

Romans 8:34

“Who [is] he that condemneth? [It is] Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”

Hebrew 7:25

“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

The Power
of God

6. We can know the power of God that is toward us and working on our behalf.

Ephesians 1:18-20

“The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,”

Because
He lives
we will
Live also!

7. We can know that we too will be resurrected

1 Thessalonians 4:14

“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.”

2 Corinthians 4:14

“Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present [us] with you.”

We know that God will raise us up because God rose Him up. We are so united to Christ by faith that if He rose, we must. If the Spirit of Him who raised up Christ from the dead dwells in us also, He who raised up Christ from the dead

will also quicken our mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in us (Rom 8:11).
The resurrection of Jesus Christ has robbed death of its terrors for the believer
(1 Cor 15:55-57).

B. The Challenge: do we believe as these early eyewitnesses believed?

John 11:17-27

1. This was the question asked to Martha, "Believest thou this?"
2. Her brother was still dead when Jesus asked this question!
3. She replied, "Yea, Lord: I Believe...", Do we?
4. If so then what what would be holding us back knowing all that we have in Christ because of His resurrection.