

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-Presbyterian Church,
10 Downing St. Oakleigh, Vic., 3166]

**DHW BIBLE CLASS
LESSON 42
THE LIFE OF CHRIST**

INTRODUCTION

We learn about the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ in the previous lesson. The three women who went early to the sepulchre to anoint the body of Jesus were surprised and shocked to see that the tomb was open and empty with the clothes neatly folded. Magdalene was so shocked that she fled from the scene to report to the disciples that someone had stolen Christ's body. However, the other two women remained and an angel told them that the Lord Jesus had risen. He is alive and that they should go and tell the other disciples. On their way, the Lord Jesus appeared to them. They touched, saw and worshipped Him. When Peter and John heard about what had happened, they raced to the tomb. John reached first but did not enter the tomb. Peter came later and rushed straight in. The clothes were there but the tomb was empty. John believed but Peter was still unsure. Mary Magdalene remained while the others left the tomb site. Then someone, whom Mary thought was a gardener, appeared. He was the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus appeared to all His disciples to exhort and encourage them. He appeared only to His children after His resurrection and while He was in His glorified body. They were a defeated and discouraged lot. The Lord Jesus' appearances to them encouraged them as He has finally defeated death, man's last enemy on man's behalf. This is the final and glorious victory for if we have hope only in this life then the Christians are of all men most miserable.

OUTLINE

1. The Chief Priests Bribed the Roman Guards to Make a False Report about the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus (Matthew 28:11-15)
2. The Lord Jesus Appeared to the Emmaus Disciples (Luke 24:13-21, Mark 16:12)
3. The Lord Jesus Appeared to Peter (Luke 24:33-35, Mark 16:13, 1 Corinthians 15:5)
4. The Lord Jesus Appeared to the Eleven without Thomas in Jerusalem (Luke 24:36-49)
5. Jesus Christ Appeared to the Eleven Unbelieving Disciples (Mark 16:14-18)
6. The Lord Jesus Appeared to the Eleven with Thomas Present (John 20:26-29)

COMMENTARY

The Chief Priests Bribe the Guards

The Roman soldiers who guarded the tomb of the Lord Jesus witnessed the empty tomb and “all the things that were done.” Pilate had given the soldiers to the priests for their use to guard the tomb. So it was natural for them to report to the chief priests. When the chief priests met and discussed with the Jewish leaders, they all decided to bribe the soldiers with a large sum of money. They told the soldiers to say that the disciples of the Lord Jesus came during the night and stole the body away while they slept. If Pilate came to know about it, they assured the soldiers that they would know how to handle him. Pilate too was not above taking bribes himself. The Roman soldiers could not resist the temptation, and so they took the money and did what they were taught to say. And it became a common saying in those days.

The reaction of the Sanhedrin revealed an unbelieving heart. They did not even investigate and ascertain the facts. The last thing that the Sadducees wanted was proof of a resurrection. They were blinded by fear, greed, their own self-importance and selfish interests. They concocted a lie and then another to cover the lie. Miracles do not change sinners’ hearts, only God can. People would rather believe in a lie than to acknowledge the power of God.

The evidence of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus was recorded by the four writers. Three of them were

eyewitnesses — Matthew, Mark, and John. Luke was a physician and a scientist – someone who was not easily deluded. The evidence of the empty tomb is a strong one. But as Christians, we do not need evidence to believe for the belief is evidence itself. Without faith it is impossible to please God. Anything that is not done by faith is sin.

The Lord Jesus Appeared to the Emmaus Disciples

The Lord Jesus next appeared to Cleopas and another disciple. We do not know the identity of the other disciple. They were walking to Emmaus, a small village, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. The Lord Jesus came near them and walked alongside them. They did not recognize Jesus. Mark records that Jesus appeared “in another form” (16:12). What does this mean? Luke wrote that “their eyes were holden that they should not know Him” (24:16). This means that they were prevented from recognizing the Lord Jesus. They were engaged in earnest conversation concerning what they had heard about Jesus. The Lord Jesus observed that they were sad. These two disciples were very confused. They noted that Jesus was “a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people”. They trusted in the Lord Jesus as the one who would redeem Israel but the chief priests had condemned and crucified Him. Then they had been astounded by the testimony of some women that Jesus’ body was missing and that Jesus was alive. Other disciples who went to the

tomb found exactly what the women said but they also did not see Jesus.

The Lord Jesus chided them for being foolish and slow to believe what had been spoken by the Old Testament prophets. He then gave them a theological lesson and expounded the Scriptures to them. Their eyes were opened only after the Lord Jesus broke bread with them. After that, the Lord Jesus “vanished out of their sight.”

They rushed immediately back to Jerusalem and found the Eleven and others with them. They told them that the Lord Jesus is alive. He had appeared to Simon Peter also (1 Corinthians 15:5) but no details were recorded with regard to this. However, the details are not important. What is important is that Jesus had risen from the dead! The disciples still were sceptical and unbelieving. Only John believed although he had not seen the Lord Jesus. Their Lord is alive and death was not able to keep him. He had conquered death.

The Lord Jesus Appeared to the Eleven without Thomas in Jerusalem

That same day in the evening, being a Sunday, the disciples were gathered together behind closed doors for fear of the Jewish leaders and the people. While they were talking amongst themselves during dinner, the Lord Jesus suddenly stood in their midst unannounced. John recorded that the doors were shut. This means that the Lord Jesus entered the room without opening the door. The Lord Jesus

greeted them with “Peace unto you” but they were terrified thinking that He was a spirit. They had heard that the Lord Jesus is alive but seeing Him was another thing altogether.

The Lord Jesus Christ asked them why they were afraid. This reveals to us that while the Lord Jesus Christ was not with them, He knew what they had talked about and how they had behaved. Nothing escaped His eyes and ears. The Lord Jesus quickly calmed their fears as He told them not to be troubled or doubtful about His resurrection. He invited them to see His hands and feet, and to touch Him to assure them that He was not a spirit. A spirit does not have flesh and bones like Him. [NOTE: Jesus did not say that He has flesh and BLOOD but flesh and BONES.] He showed them His hands and feet, and His side where He had been pierced. These parts of His resurrected body still bore the marks of the crucifixion. Then Jesus asked for some food. They gave Him a piece of broiled fish and a honeycomb. He took the food and ate before their eyes.

This was positive proof of His bodily resurrection. He could be heard, seen and touched. His resurrected body was made of “flesh and bones” (Dr Whitcomb in one of his lectures remarked that the Lord Jesus did not mention “blood”) – however it was not restricted to time and space. He could appear and disappear at will, and could pass through walls.

The Lord Jesus reminded them that “all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms” concerning Him. These three sections comprise the whole Hebrew Scripture, that is, the Old Testament. He taught them out of the Scriptures, opened their minds and declared to them that His suffering, death and resurrection on the third day had been written in the Scriptures. In addition, repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. The Lord Jesus reiterated that He would send “the promise of my Father” which is the filling of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16; Acts 1:8; 2:4) upon them. They were to remain in Jerusalem until that happened, after which they would go into the world and preach the gospel. Everyone who “believes and is baptized shall be saved”. This does not mean that a person who believes and is not baptized is not saved. Other portions of Scriptures help us to understand that baptism is not a requirement for salvation. Note what follows (Mark 16b), “but he that believeth not shall be damned”. Nothing is said about not being baptized. The essential requirement is a genuine belief in Him. Baptism by itself does not save but it does not mean that baptism is not important. It is a public declaration and testimony of a genuine acceptance of the faith. Every true adult believer would desire to be identified with the Lord and Saviour. Moreover it is commanded by the Lord Jesus and is therefore not an

option. It is not a requirement for salvation but a requirement for obedience.

The Lord Jesus then “breathed on” the ten apostles (Thomas was not with them) and said: “Receive ye the Holy Ghost [Spirit]: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained” (John 20:23). This filling of the Holy Spirit was “a foretaste of the great Pentecost” when the Holy Spirit would descend upon all the disciples in a mighty way to fill them for the bold declaration of God’s Holy and perfect Word! Some interpret the above declaration to mean that the apostles have the power to forgive sins like mediators between God and men. This view is unscriptural. Forgiveness of sin comes only through repentance and believing in the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 5:31; 13:38; 26:18; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14).

Jesus Christ Appeared to the Eleven Unbelieving Disciples

It is hard to pin point exactly where this encounter occurred in the 40 days that the LORD appeared to His disciples. For the purpose of the study of this passage of God’s Word it is inserted here between the meeting of Christ with the 10 and then with the eleven. Perhaps this was what he said to the eleven after Thomas joined them.

The interpretation of Mark 16:17-18 by many Charismatics is that this is still the norm for every believer today. But the context argues that it was only

for the disciples themselves and not for us today. The disciples here included only the 11. They were upbraided for their unbelief and hardness of heart. Their hardness of heart was due to their unbelief of Christ's resurrection even after they have been told by those who had seen the resurrected Christ. These 11 were the chosen ones to begin the local church witness for the whole world. Their unbelief must be dealt with immediately.

The key phrase that have brought about the misunderstanding is Mark 16:17 which says, "And these signs shall follow them that believe." Who are the ones who believe here? The immediate context reveals the fear of the believers. They have been given the message in verses 15 and 16. They are now given the protection and the credentials in verses 17 and 18. When the eleven disciples went forth to preach the gospel of salvation, they could cast out demons and speak with new tongues (languages). This was to authenticate that the messenger of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The disciples were given the gift to "speak with new tongues" – that is, new languages which they did not go to school to learn but super naturally bestowed upon them in order to convey the gospel of salvation. This gift happened on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4-6) [Study 1 Corinthians 12-14 for a fuller understanding of the gift and the use of tongues].

The disciples could "take up serpents and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them." This does not mean an intentional handling of a snake to put God to the test. The only record was the experience of Paul who was bitten by a viper. Nothing happened to him – but the inhabitants of the island were extremely impressed by the incident (Acts 28:4-6).

The above signs were for the purpose of authenticating the calling of the eleven disciples of God and that they were sent by Him to write Scriptures and to continue the work of Christ on earth. The history of the church beginning from the Day of Pentecost through the book of Acts reveals that these signs gradually pass away when the authenticating purpose had been achieved. Once the apostles were confirmed and accepted by the church at large and were prepared to accept their guidance and leadership, miracles were not needed anymore for the "confirmation" of their ministry. The perfect and Holy Word of God was all that was needed then and now and always. This is seen in the later epistles where the mention of miracles became hardly evident.

We have seen that miracles and wonders do not convince a person to believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ. The authenticating credential of a true disciple of God and the Lord Jesus Christ today is to faithfully preach, teach and practice the Word of God and not miracles since the Scripture is

completed. The Scriptures that we have received is “a more sure word of prophecy” (2 Peter 1:19).

The apostles would form the local church witness which belonged to the nation of Israel in the Old Testament. This visible witness of God on earth would soon be born on the Day of Pentecost, to proclaim the gospel of Christ for the remission of sins. Whosoever hears and believes in the gospel of Christ will have his sins forgiven. The local Church is more than just a building where believers gather for fellowship but the visible witness to the only way back to God. The local church is also the place the Word of God is to be defended and Christians find encouragement as they witness and study God’s Word together.

The Lord Jesus Appeared to the Eleven with Thomas Present

About a week later, the disciples were gathered in a room, together with Thomas. Again the doors were shut. The Lord Jesus came and stood in the midst of them. He greeted them in the usual manner, “Peace be with you.” Then He called Thomas to reach out his finger and place it in His hands and His side. The Lord Jesus knew exactly what Thomas had said to the other disciples when they told him that they had seen Jesus. Thomas had doubted and remarked that unless he saw Jesus himself he would not believe. Immediately, Thomas cried out, “My Lord and my God.” The Lord replied, “Thomas, because thou hast seen me,

thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet hast believed.” Thomas had missed the special blessing of a stronger faith. John, in contrast, believed before he laid eyes on the risen Lord (John 20:8). This blessing is also upon all future believers who have not seen with their natural eyes, or require any signs and wonders before they believe.

Thomas was the only one recorded in the Gospel as calling the Lord Jesus “God”. The Lord Jesus did not rebuke him nor deny the title but instead acknowledged his confession.

PRACTICAL VALUE

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is *the* foundation stone of the Christian faith. He is the living and true God. Because of His resurrection, our belief, love and hope is not in vain.

While the Lord Jesus Christ is invisible to us now, nevertheless He hears, sees, knows and is conscious of all that is happening to us. He cares! Let us not doubt and fall into the sin of unbelief because we did not “see” and “feel” the hands and feet of our Lord. Each day walk closer and draw nearer to the Lord Jesus.

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ ensures every Christian’s own resurrection from the dead. When He comes again, He will change “our **vile body**, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious **body**, according to the working whereby he is able even to

subdue all things unto himself”
(Philippians 3:21). [emphasis added]

We saw how difficult it was for the early disciples and apostles, with the exception of John, to believe the resurrection. The Lord Jesus made numerous appearances in the 40 days after His resurrection to convince them. These have been faithfully recorded by the Gospel writers and they are our encouragement that He is really alive. Anyone who believes in the WORD is blessed. The Holy Spirit will indwell him and he will experience the change in his life – another indisputable evidence of the living and true God, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of mankind.
AMEN

**DAILY READING & DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS**

Daily Readings

MONDAY: Matthew 28:11-15

TUESDAY: Luke 24:13-21, Mark 16:12

WEDNESDAY: Luke 24:33-35; Mark 16:13; 1 Corinthians 15:5

THURSDAY: Luke 24:36-49; Mark 16:14-18; John 20:19-25

FRIDAY: John 20:26-20

3. After the Lord explained the Old Testament to the disciples that they speak of Him does it mean that ALL of the Old Testament speak of Christ? Does it mean therefore that we can spiritualize all the Old Testament and preach Christ everywhere in the OT?

Discussion Questions

1. What does the reaction of the chief priests to the report of the guards reveal about the heart of sinful men?

4. What can we learn from Cleopas and his companions about witnessing to other people?

2. Why did Jesus call the two disciples foolish and “slow at heart”? Does it mean that they are not born again?

5. What can we learn about the resurrected body of the Lord Jesus Christ?

6. What instructions did the Lord Jesus give to His eleven disciples and what "power from on high" was He referring to?

8. Should Christians rely on evidences to believe that the Lord Jesus rose from the dead?

7. Have you met any doubting Thomas in your life?
