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Sermon Notes

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The Resurrected Christ's First Appearance to the Apostles

Luke 24:36-49

It all started in a simple upper room in Jerusalem.

It was not one of the great rooms in the history of the world, lavishly appointed like the King of France, Louis XIVth's council room in Versailles, the "Hall of Mirrors," which had ornate frescoes on the ceiling and huge mirrors to give the illusion of infinite grandeur... the illusion of omnipotence... the illusion of an eternal reign for the "Sun King"... the most powerful monarch on earth

Such are the pathetic attempts of frail mortal kings to grasp what they cannot have... a reign of eternal life, of eternal power, of eternal glory. So King Louis puts up his mirrors and tricks the eye... that was the room where he met the delegates and representatives of other European monarchs

No, the room I have in mind was much more simply decorated and furnished. Just big enough for Jesus to recline at table with his apostles the night before His crucifixion

Simple enough to be affordable by a humble carpenter from Nazareth who was being supported by some women out of their personal means

Nothing too fancy, nothing too grand... Just big enough for 120 people to meet for prayer

But no room in the history of architecture has seen more glory, no room has witnessed more raw human emotion, more drama than that humble upper room the night the resurrected Christ first showed Himself to the Apostles

One can hardly recreate the scene adequately, or say what it must have felt like to have been one of the apostles in the upper room.

The twelve apostles had been chosen by Jesus after He'd spent a night in prayer on a mountain with His heavenly Father

They were originally commissioned for a simple purpose:

Mark 3:14-15 He appointed twelve-- designating them apostles--that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach ¹⁵ and to have authority to drive out demons.

“To be with him...”: to walk with him, talk with him, be eyewitnesses of his life and ministry

“sent out by him to preach”: to proclaim the gospel of the forgiveness of sins through faith in Christ

“to have authority to drive out demons”: to dislodge Satan from his position of kingly power over the bodies and souls of men

Twelve there were originally, but Jesus knew the truth:

John 6:70-71 Then Jesus replied, "Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!" ⁷¹ (He meant Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, who, though one of the Twelve, was later to betray him.)

Now the number has been reduced by one... Judas has betrayed Jesus, taken his pathetic little reward... thirty pieces of silver in exchange for his eternal soul; the thirty pieces were thrown into the temple, and Judas had already hanged himself and was gone

Jesus had suffered on the cross and had died... his dead body had been removed from the bloody cross and wrapped up in strips of linen by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea; he had been buried in Joseph's new tomb, a large stone had been rolled in front of the entrance and the men had gone away... women sat down near the tomb, mournful witnesses to the saddest thing the dark history of the world

The Apostles had deserted Christ and fled for their lives; Peter had denied knowing Jesus; all of them were terrified, locked in that simple upper room that they feared would be the scene of their own arrest as well

The Twelve Apostles had now become the Eleven... So Luke 24:9 and 33 refer instead to the “Eleven”... both verses speak of reports coming in that strange day of an empty tomb, and of astonishing reports of encounters with the Resurrected Lord

Luke 24:1-8 speak of women going to the tomb to complete the burial process and seeing instead the stone rolled back from the entrance, the body gone, and angels telling them that Jesus had risen

Luke 24:9 When [the women] came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others.

Peter and John went and investigated and found everything just as the women had said

Luke 24:13-32 speak of two unnamed disciples on the road to Emmaus having an incredible encounter with a stranger who proved to them that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead... they didn't know who this stranger was until He broke bread with them... then their eyes were opened and they suddenly realized who he was... then he disappeared

Again, they went to report it to the Eleven:

Luke 24:33-35 They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together ³⁴ and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." ³⁵ Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

But to the Eleven Apostles, Christ had not yet appeared. Not until now

The first appearance of Christ to His Apostles shows the certainty of Christ's resurrection, the psychological effects of that truth on human hearts, the fulfillment of centuries of prophecy concerning this momentous event. It was also the awesome launching pad of the gospel, and of the church's epoch-making witness to the dying world.

I. The Physical Certainty of Christ's Resurrection

Luke 24:36-43 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.

A Physical Presence

A. The evidence of sight

1. "Jesus himself stood"...
2. John tells us, 'though the doors were locked for fear of the Jews...'
3. Apparently he came right through that barrier as he had come right through the rock walls of the tomb
4. Here was Jesus... clearly seen by them, looking as he had before His death... they knew it was Him... he was not hidden from them, but they knew
5. YET somehow He must have looked different too

B. The evidence of sound

1. Jesus' greeting rang out clear and strong... but gentle and loving: **"Peace be with you"**

2. This is not merely a throwaway line or just a common greeting
3. It has theological teeth to it
4. It was the very reason he came to earth... to bring peace between sinners and a holy God

The night Jesus was born:

Luke 2:13-14 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

Ephesians 2:17 He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.

Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ

Christ's death on the cross had won for His people an everlasting peace with God... deep, rich, full, complete peace... to the victor go the spoils; Jesus had won the triumph of peace with God and was now coming to lay the treasure at the feet of His loved ones

C. The Evidence of Touch

Luke 24:39-40 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.

1. Christ gives everything they need for proof
2. Physical touch was conclusive evidence of the bodily resurrection from the dead
3. They were struggling with doubts (more about that in a moment)... especially with the thought that maybe he was a ghost
4. physical touch of his body would lay that to rest forever
5. Why did he show them his hands and feet in particular?? remember the test for doubting Thomas

John 20:25 he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it."

John 20:27-28 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." ²⁸ Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

- a. God had chosen to leave these physical reminders of his suffering as evidence that it was Christ himself
 - b. Also as great emblems of his sacrificial love for them
 - c. This was not necessary... we have no mention of his back being still flayed open by the scourging... or of torn flesh on his brow from the crown of thorns
 - d. These small wounds on his hands, feet, and side were simply for evidence
6. Note the incredible significance of all this physical evidence of a BODY
- a. Jesus has a physical body that can be touched
 - b. It has “flesh and bones”
 - c. Do not trouble yourself over the fact that he doesn’t mention blood... how could he prove his body had blood
 - d. It was a living, breathing, human body
 - e. So we will be as well!!
 - f. AND we will live in a physical universe... the New Heaven and New Earth
 - g. Away then with all the wispy, mystical, floating on the clouds of heaven visions of our future life
 - i) Eternally strumming on harps
 - ii) A permanent “out of body experience”
 - iii) The resurrection of Christ makes such a view actually heretical... unorthodox
 - iv) We will have physical resurrection bodies in the pattern of Christ’s

Charles Wesley’s triumphant hymn, “Christ the Lord is Risen Today”

Made like Him, like Him we rise, Alleluia!
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies, Alleluia!

1 Corinthians 15:48-52 As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹ And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven. ⁵⁰ I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹ Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed-- ⁵²

in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

D. The Evidence of Taste

Luke 24:41-43 *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.*

1. As they still struggled with doubt (more on that in a moment), Christ gives them more evidence
2. He actually EATS in their presence!! A piece of broiled fish
 - a. Some newer manuscripts also mention a piece of honeycomb
 - b. In any case... he EATS
3. What could be more physical than that??
 - a. A great deal of mystery involved in this
 - b. However, it is significant that many of his post-resurrection appearances mention food
 - i) How with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, he broke bread with them
 - ii) How in John 21 he made them a breakfast of broiled fish by the Sea of Galilee
 - iii) How in Acts 1, it says

Acts 1:4-5 *On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵ For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."*

- iv) And how here he eats broiled fish right in front of them
4. The certainty of the resurrection was established beyond all doubt in their minds

II. The Psychological Effects of Christ's Resurrection

Christ, the good shepherd made it plain what would happen to his flock when he died:

Matthew 26:31-32 *Then Jesus told them, "This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written: "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the*

flock will be scattered.'* ³² *But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee."

The central reason for His post-resurrection appearances was to heal His disciples and prepare them to turn the world upsidedown

He came to move their hearts... from fear to courage, from doubt to faith, from sadness to joy, from dullness to amazement

A. From Fear to Courage

1. The disciples were enslaved to fear before the resurrection

- a. afraid of the Jews

John 20:19 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"

- b. afraid of the Romans... who had the power of crucifixion
- c. afraid even of Jesus

Luke 24:37 They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost.

- d. ultimately... afraid of death

Hebrews 2:15 [by his resurrection Jesus freed] those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

2. After Jesus' resurrection, they had lost all fear of death

- a. Boldly proclaiming the gospel in downtown Jerusalem on Pentecost with no fear at all
- b. Standing up to the Jewish authorities in the Sanhedrin

Acts 4:11-13 He is "the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone.'* ¹² *Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."* ¹³ *When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.

- c. This courageous proclamation was the beginning of the spread of the gospel to the ends of the earth

B. From Doubt to Faith

Luke 24:38 He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds?"

1. Jesus reads their minds and knows that stray thoughts were rising up and warring against the evidence of their own eyes
2. faith had to be established so they could overcome their doubts
3. None of the disciples expected the resurrection... none of them
4. This is to their shame, as Jesus pointed out to the disciples on the Road to Emmaus
5. but they were skeptical... not just Thomas
 - a. Peter and John did not believe the testimony of the women about the empty tomb and ran to see for themselves
 - b. None of the disciples expected this!! And when they saw him, they doubted the testimony of their own eyes
 - c. This continued even as the evidence mounted
6. Amazingly... even their JOY hindered their FAITH

Luke 24:41 And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?"

- a. Have you ever used the expression "Too good to be true"?
- b. There is a basic pessimism in the statement
 - i) Sadder and wiser... the older you get, the more disappointing life becomes
 - ii) The way of the world is that everything you hope for eventually gets ruined in some way
 - iii) If you really want something, you'll never get it... or if you do get it, you'll wish in the end you didn't
- c. Jesus' resurrection breaks all that to pieces
- d. They didn't believe because it was the thing they yearned for the most
 - i) Everything they ever yearned for was now realized
 - ii) They would live forever

- iii) Jesus was actually the Messiah, the King of all the Jews
- iv) His Kingdom would endure forever
- v) His love and kindness would be their portion, their inheritance
- vi) They were going to live forever
- vii) Their fellowship with each other would last forever
- viii) There would be a place for each of them in his Father's house

AND INFINITELY MORE BESIDES!!!!

God is so good, so loving that, after the resurrection of Christ, we should have a new saying
 "Too good NOT to be true!!!"

Ephesians 3:20 [God] is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine

- 7. Jesus is constantly working on this... THEIR FAITH
 - a. He talks about it constantly
 - b. Eventually he must root it in one place... the Scriptures
 - c. So he does at the end of this account... more in a moment

C. From Sadness to Joy

Few people in history have ever experienced the wrenching sorrow that the disciples did... it overwhelmed them and left them limp in Gethsemane, and that was before Jesus was arrested and crucified

Luke 22:45 When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow.

So Jesus prepared them for this wrenching journey:

John 16:20-22 I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. ²¹ A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. ²² So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.

- 1. The two disciples on the road to Emmaus were walking along downcast, discouraged, depressed, deeply saddened

***Luke 24:17 He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?"
They stood still, their faces downcast.***

“Downcast” = gloomy, dejected... you knew from looking at them how sad they were at the death of Jesus

2. The two disciples on the road to Emmaus represented all the disciples... deep sadness
3. Jesus’ resurrection is the historical basis for eternal joy
 - a. As we have just seen... it was as if their joy crowded out their sorrow

Psalm 126:1-3 When the LORD brought back the captives to Zion, we were like men who dreamed. ² Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them." ³ The LORD has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy.

- b. “If I’m dreaming, please don’t wake me!!”
- c. No you’re not dreaming! Christ has indeed risen, and all God’s lavish promises are going to come true
- d. Look how the account ends:

Luke 24:50-53 When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. ⁵¹ While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. ⁵² Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. ⁵³ And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

D. From Dullness to Amazement

1. the two disciples were dull to the promises of God...
2. “Foolish and slow of heart to believe”
3. Jesus says in another place, “are you still so dull”
4. Slowness to believe is a spiritual dullness that clouds the mind
5. Jesus wants them ALIVE and filled with wonder and amazement

III. The Scriptural Predictions of Christ’s Resurrection

A. Faith Has a Resting Place: The Scriptures Alone

1. Prophecies led the way in the law of Moses, the Psalms, and the prophets
2. Eyewitness accounts follow in the Gospels and the rest of the New Testament

3. Eyewitness accounts are unavailable to us apart from Scripture
4. So Jesus focuses the disciples on what the Scripture has said

Luke 24:44 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."

5. The will of God is this; we will believe in Christ and in His resurrection from the Scripture or not at all

Romans 10:17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

6. After John saw the physical evidence for the resurrection he stated the deficiency in his understanding

John 20:8-9 Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. ⁹ (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.)

B. Christ Opened their Minds to Understand the Scripture

1. the disciples on the road to Emmaus were slow to believe the Scriptures

Luke 24:25-27 He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

2. Their reaction: more alive about the scriptures than any other aspect of their encounter

Luke 24:32 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?"

3. So here he does the same thing for his apostles

Luke 24:44-47 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 Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

4. "He opened their minds" shows Christ's power over the way we think

5. He is able to take away the dullness and to show us HIMSELF in the scriptures
 - a. How his deity and humanity are taught in Daniel 7's "Son of Man" passage
 - b. How his crucifixion is predicted in Psalm 22
 - c. How every animal sacrifice instituted in the law of Moses, especially the Passover, was a picture of his own death on the cross for sins
 - d. How substitution for our sins was taught in Isaiah 53
 - e. How resurrection was taught in Psalm 16

C. On What Basis Have We Not Seen and Yet Have Believed?

1. We were not there in the upper room
2. We did not get to see Jesus enter the room
3. We did not get to touch him and see that he had flesh and bones
4. We did not get to look at the wounds on his hands and feet and side
5. we did not get to enter the empty tomb and see the grave clothes
6. BUT faith is still possible... based on the scriptures alone

John 20:29-31 Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." ³⁰ Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Ask him to open your mind so that you can understand the Scriptures!!!

IV. The Historical Results of Christ's Resurrection

Luke 24:46-49 He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance and 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."

A. The Role of the Apostles: Eyewitnesses

1. no one else had seen the resurrected Christ with such intimacy as they had

2. their task was to testify to what their eyes had seen, their ears heard, their hands to touched

1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched-- this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.

3. this eyewitness testimony of Christ's resurrection would be the foundation of the church

B. The Message of the Apostles: Repentance and Forgiveness of Sins

1. What incredible good news!!!
2. Christ's death on the cross is sufficient for the forgiveness of ALL of our sins
3. We can have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ
4. We can live forever!!!

C. The Power of the Apostles: The Promised Holy Spirit

1. even after that first resurrection day appearance, the apostles still were in the upper room with the doors locked
2. only after they were clothed with power from on high, from the Holy Spirit, were they able to fulfill this mission of preaching
3. on the day of Pentecost, the power of the Holy Spirit fell on them and they poured out into the street to preach their message... repentance and forgiveness of sins in Christ's name

D. The Success of the Apostles: From Jerusalem to the Ends of the Earth

1. Almost every tribe and language and nation on earth has heard this message
2. The work will continue until every nation has had a witness

V. Application

A. Come to Christ

B. Know the Certainty of Your Faith: Christ has INDEED been raised from the dead

C. Know the implications of your faith

1. as Christ has been raised, so shall you

D. Allow your faith to transform you as the apostles were transformed

He came to move their hearts... from fear to courage, from doubt to faith, from sadness to joy, from dullness to amazement

E. Live for the Spread of the Gospel