

# Meeting With Jesus

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Date: 17 January 2021

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[ 0 : 00 ] will warm your hearts and give you confidence in the Jesus who has risen in these strange pandemic days. First, the risen Jesus meets us. Apologetics.

Second, the risen Jesus encourages us. Devotions. And third, the risen Jesus commissions us. Mission.

So first of all then, the risen Jesus meets us. Apologetics. Apologetics. And behold, Jesus met them.

I wonder if there are any more grand words in any language of men than this. And Jesus met them. These ladies, until so recently having lived through a nightmare, are now met by the risen Jesus. And there's that word, behold again. It's also unexpected that in this garden graveyard where lie the dead, the Lord of life meets them.

[ 1 : 06 ] Until recently, they had not dreamed that such a thing was even possible. But now the possible has become a reality. And as they worship him, these precious followers of Jesus know for certain that he really has risen.

You know, for many, one of the biggest obstacles to belief in the Christian gospel is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. And so for people like this, they could not even dream that such a thing is possible.

That the resurrection of Jesus could even be possible, let alone real. But to them and to us, we read the words, and to behold, Jesus met them.

He makes no real attempt to prove his resurrection. He just stops these women in their tracks, and he meets them where they are. Let me apply this truth in an apologetic direction in two ways. First of all, I want you to understand that dead men don't meet anyone. Dead men don't meet anyone. Dead men are lifeless.

[ 2 : 31 ] They are incapable of any activity whatsoever. But Jesus is not dead. He is risen to new life, and he meets these women in the garden graveyard. Now, the verb met, the word met, rather, is a verb, a doing word, an active word, a conscious word.

It takes intention, it takes purpose, and it takes effort to meet someone. Simply put, dead men don't meet anyone. They're incapable of any activity because they're dead, by definition.

They don't meet anyone. They don't speak to anyone like Jesus does in this passage. Let me put the logic like this.

Proposition one, dead men are incapable of activity. Proposition two, Jesus met with and spoke to these women, and that constitutes activity.

Therefore, in the light of proposition one, and proposition two, Jesus is not dead, but alive.

[ 3 : 47 ] Philosophers call this a logical syllogism. Dead men are incapable of activity. Jesus met with these women, which constitutes activity.

Therefore, Jesus is alive. In other words, the only way you can deny the resurrection of Jesus is to call into question all human, the divine logic. And in that direction lies the madness of universal skepticism.

Have confidence in historical and factual basis for the resurrection. Have confidence and believe this morning.

Secondly, I want you to notice the physicality of Jesus meeting. The physicality of Jesus meeting. Matthew very consciously states, they came up and took hold of his feet.

They took hold of his feet. Now, the early church, the church to which Matthew was writing, was plagued by false teaching. The apostle John especially had to deal with a type of false teaching called Gnosticism, which denied that Jesus had a real body.

[ 4 : 58 ] He just seemed to be real. The false teachers believed that matter, things you could taste, touch and see, was evil. That only spirit was pure.

And therefore, Jesus could not have a material body. So John's concerned all the way through his New Testament writings to remind the Christian church that Jesus was a real man.

That he could be touched and he could be heard. He could be seen. He could be handled. In parts of the modern church, the Gnostic idea has enjoyed a resurgence.

And so for many, the resurrection of Jesus was not physical. We saw this in action during a Sunday worship service in a church in Bamba back in October, where when we said the Apostles' Creed together, they had taken out the words, on the third day Jesus rose, and they took out the words from the dead.

Because for these theologians, such a thing is impossible that someone should physically rise from the dead. And rational men and women have no right to believe in impossible things.

[ 6 : 11 ] Well, a thankfully decreasing number of Christian theologians deny the physical resurrection of Jesus. Because they want to remove the offense and the obstacle of having to believe in his physical resurrection.

Because according to Matthew, his resurrection is physical. The risen Jesus is physical. You can't grab the feet, hold on to the feet of a ghost.

Which is what these godly ladies do. A physical Jesus who has been raised to new life. What I'm saying is this.

As we read and absorb Matthew 28, 8 through 10, we're being inexorably drawn once more to the historicity and factuality of the physical resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

This is apologetics at its very, very best. The defense of the physical resurrection of Jesus from the dead. First, that Jesus did something dead men don't do.

[ 7 : 17 ] He actively met someone. And second, that the living Jesus who met with these women was physical. Corporeal. Evangelical atheists say that as Christians we have taken leave of our senses.

That we're staking our lives on the lie that there is a god. I want to respectfully disagree with them, given what we read here in Matthew 28, verses 8 through 10.

Christians are running toward reason, not away from it. We're staking our lives on a fact, not a fantasy. On truth, not trash.

2,000 years ago, in a garden just outside the present day city of Jerusalem, a group of women were met by a Jesus who three days previous had been put to death by crucifixion.

Jesus is risen from the dead. History and logic is on your side. Were these the only verses we had in our language? The apologetics of Matthew 28, 8 through 10 is enough to stake our faith, our reason, and our life upon.

[ 8 : 30 ] Now, I've told you this story many times before, but I'm not tired of telling it because it's my own testimony. During my second year of study at the Feed Church College in Edinburgh, I went through a period of doubt.

I was studying theology, and yet, though I didn't tell anyone, I didn't even tell my wife, Kathmar. I was going through a period of profound doubt.

I was learning every day in college about God. But I was really struggling. My devotions were normal, and I was preaching virtually every Sunday.

But I had lost altogether my confidence in God and the gospel. What brought me back was a long walk I took in Kathmar's home village, where I reflected on the factuality and the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

A long walk. It took me hours and hours and hours. You can't get round the historicity and factuality of this event without calling into question all human and divine reason.

[ 9 : 42 ] And in that path lies the madness of universal scepticism. It is this reality of the resurrection of our Lord which restored my confidence in God and the gospel.

Now, I say these things because perhaps there are some this morning who were rather like me all those years ago, going through a period of profound doubt. You're asking the question, as so many are.

Where is God in COVID-19? And for me to say to you that there are easy answers to this question is just plain wrong. However, walk with me.

As 2,000 years ago, in a garden just outside Jerusalem, a group of faithful women are met by a Jesus who just three days previous had been put to death on a cross.

I can't tell you what God is doing with COVID-19. But I can assure you that given the historicity and factuality of the resurrection of his son, God does know what he is doing.

[10:57] The risen Jesus meets us. Apologetics. Second, the risen Jesus encourages us devotions. The risen Jesus encourages us devotions.

Because perhaps for many of us, most of us, you know, apologetics isn't such a big deal. Our minds are dominated perhaps by more mundane matters like COVID-19, like illness, like social problems, like food economics.

Or perhaps our hearts long for company because we're just so lonely. Our nerves are cracking because we're so afraid. Our minds are breaking because we're so pessimistic about the future. We're rather like the psalmist perhaps in Psalm 31 who says, I don't concern myself with things too high to understand, like apologetics. Well, what is there here in these verses for the broken heart? For the Christian who's drowning under the pressure of one of the most challenging years Scotland has known for generations? Well, there's much in every way.

[12:07] Much in every way. Consider how it is that Jesus meets with these women as they're running to obey the word of the angel. Or to put it another way, Jesus meets with them in the path of their duty.

This is where the risen Jesus will meet with you also. In the path of your daily duty. In the duty of loving your families. Of praying for your friends. Of supporting those who need you.

Don't give up your daily duties. Because it's here. The risen Jesus. By his spirit. Through his word. Will meet with you.

And sometimes the mundane. Will be transformed. Into the monocolus. And then also consider with me. The first word of Jesus.

Greetings. Greetings. It's a common word. It's derived from the word for joy. The woman who simultaneously, according to verse 8, are filled with fear and joy.

[13:09] Are met with a Jesus who wants them to be joyful. How shall their fear and sadness be transformed into joy? It is as they meet with and hear the words of the risen Jesus.

Are you struggling for joy? Could it be that you have forgotten that the Jesus who you read all about in the Bible.

You meet with him in the spirit. And he alone could give you joy. But then notice also that Jesus says to them.

Do not be afraid. Do not be afraid. As they run from the tomb. We read in verse 8. That they were filled both with fear and joy. And it wasn't a good kind of fear either.

Perhaps they were afraid. Because they dare not believe. That what the angel had told them was true. About the resurrection of Jesus. Perhaps they were afraid. Because they thought the disciples wouldn't believe them. When they went to tell them about the resurrection of Jesus.

[14:13] Or perhaps they were afraid. Because of what the Jews would do to them. Or whatever reasons lay behind their fear. They were afraid. And Jesus says to them. Do not be afraid.

I find this transfixion. That the risen Jesus did not save the first words of his post-resurrection glory for the religious authorities of his day.

He could have appeared in the midst of the son of his son. Which had condemned him to death. And his first few words could have been words of judgment upon them.

He could have appeared in the palace of the Roman proconsul Pilate. The representative of Roman power in Judea. And smashing the palace to ruins. He could have denounced the power of Rome and its tyranny.

But no. The post-risen Jesus. Like the pre-risen Jesus. Saves his first words. For the bruised reeds.

[15:19] And the smoldering flaxes. For his fearful people. Because they. Are his number one priority. He says to the woman.

Do not be afraid. And although I truly believe that the power of his voice was sufficient to calm their fears. Added to that is his very appearance before them.

And his victory therefore over death and the grave. Over Jewish and Roman power. His victory unto life and salvation.

And to us as his people. The bruised reeds and the smoldering flaxes. Who cling to him by faith. He says. Stop being afraid.

Do you feel rather like that bruised reed of which Jesus spoke? Smoldering white. And is COVID-19 the. The blistering wind. Snuffing you out.

[16:21] Filling your heart with fear. Jesus says to you. Focus on COVID. And you will be afraid.

Focus on Christ. And stop being afraid. For if Christ can triumph over the grave. He can triumph over the virus. As we read this in Matthew 28.

8 through 10. From a devotional perspective. We're being. We're being called on to focus. Our hearts. And our minds. And our attentions. On the risen Jesus.

Coronavirus. I'm sure we can all agree. Has had its. Pound of our minds flesh. Let Christ. Master your mind. And not COVID. Devotionally.

This passage is calling upon each one of you. To renew devotion. To hearing the risen Christ's voice. In scripture. And speaking to him. Of your fears.

[17:21] In prayer. To be strengthened. By grace. And to grow in the grace. And knowledge. Of the Jesus. Who says to you. Even at this very precise moment.

Stop being afraid. I for many of us. If not for most of us. What matters. Is our day-to-day relationship. With God. And the state.

Of our minds. Whatever it is. That fills you with fear. And after all. It may have nothing to do. With this present crisis. Take it to the risen Christ.

He's got power. Over death and the grave. He's even got power. Over your fears. And then I'll just. Lastly.

In this passage. That these women. Having clasped his feet. Were worshipping him. They were worshipping him. We don't actually read. That their worship. Consisted in word.

[18:19] Because the passage. Doesn't say. That they said anything. To Jesus. At all. The passionate. Silence. Of their worship. Shouted louder.

Than any word. They could speak. Because words. After all. They can be faked. But this kind of worship. Where these women.

Fall to their knees. And grab a hold. Of his feet. Cannot be mimicked. This is genuine worship. When we clasp. The feet. Of Jesus.

In passionate silence. Well. There's an old. Scottish expression. To describe this. We say. There are times.

When it's better felt. But it is felt. To put it another way. There are times. When we struggle. To put into words. The way that we feel. But that's okay.

[19:14] Because God. Knows. The voice. Of our hearts. So when I went to see Kenneth. A few weeks ago. After he lost. His beloved wife.

Georgina. There were no words. He could speak. It was better felt. Than told. Or the joy in a mother's eyes. When she sees her newborn child.

It's really better felt. Than told. In general. I want to get away from the. It's better felt than told. But here in Matthew 28. 8 through 10. When it comes to these women.

Women's worship of Jesus. It's better felt than told. The heart's got its own language. Which sometimes. Is very difficult. To translate. Into the languages.

Of men. They're worshipping him. For his power over death. They're worshipping him. For his resurrection. And I believe. More than anything else.

[20:09] They're worshipping him. For who he is. And just for being with them. There and there. In their case. Their worship.

Is better felt than told. It's okay. That sometimes. We can't find words. To express. Our devotion to Christ. It's okay. That sometimes. Our hearts burn within us. And although we.

Can't explain why that is. We can't really explain. Any more than that. What I'm saying to you. Is there are times. When it's okay. To feel your way. Through scripture. Feel your emotion.

Feel the joy. Of this passage. And then relate it. To how the risen Jesus. Is with you. Always. Defying.

The restrictions. Our governments. Have placed upon us. To avoid social interaction. I can't. Understand. And experience.

[21:06] The joy. That Jesus Christ. Reigns supreme. Over all things. Stop being afraid. Worship. The risen Christ. In the wholeness.

Of a gospel. Transformed heart. The risen Jesus. Encourages us. Devotions. And then lastly.

Very briefly. This morning. The risen Jesus. Commissions us. Mission. The risen Jesus. Commissions us. We've got apologetics. Devotions. And then missions. I don't want to spend too long on this last point.

Because in weeks to come. As you understand. We're going to be almost exclusively concentrating on the great commission of Jesus. To take the word of the gospel to all the nations. And to make disciples for him.

And yet there's two very important features of. In the mission. Jesus sets these godly women in Matthew 28. 18 through 20. 8 through 10 rather. And how that mission impacts our mission.

[ 22 : 06 ] In the first instance. I want you to notice something that we spoke about last week. But I want to re-emphasize it. Listen again to Jesus' words in verse 10.

Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee. There they will see him. Go and tell my brothers. He commissioned his brothers. The disciples. To go to Galilee.

For there they will see him. The same disciples who a few days previous. Had abandoned and forsaken him. In the hour of his greatest need. When he came on the cross. They had scattered. They had hidden. For the fear of their lives. They had forsaken him. Yet he. Would not forsake them. Rather he insists upon calling them his brothers.

And what I'm saying here. Is that in order to engage in mission. For the risen Jesus. As these disciples will. We must be in this familial. Close family relationship with him.

[ 23 : 09 ] All too often we talk about missions. In terms of numbers. And programs. Systems and ideas. But first and foremost. Mission is the expression. Expression of the heart of a Christian.

Who knows that she's been forgiven. Of all her sin. And though she doesn't deserve it. She's a child of God. With God as her father. And Christ as her elder brother.

Mission is the outpouring of gratitude to Christ. For his forgiveness. For his forgiveness and restoration. For his reconciling gospel. And for the peace he has made with us.

Made for us with God. If we want to interest one another in missions. The best place to start isn't with pictures and prayer letters. It's by returning to the cross where Jesus died.

To forgive our forsaking of him. To restore us to God. To make us God's beloved adopted children. God's adopted children. God will remorse us.

[ 24 : 11 ] So forget systems and ideas. Get back to the cross. And the power of the mission of the gospel. Remember do we not those outstanding missionary. Those outstanding words of the missionary C.T. Stud.

Who said if Christ be God and died for me. Then no sacrifice is too great for me to make for him. That's mission. At its finest and best.

And then in the second instance. I want you to notice. Where these women are to tell the disciples to go. Galilee. Back to where the public ministry of Jesus began.

But why not Jerusalem? Why not Zion Hill? Well you will know that Galilee is called by another name in the Bible. Namely Galilee of the Gentiles.

That's its other name. Galilee was an area of Israel which was heavily populated by Gentiles. Some communities in Galilee were Jewish. And some were Gentile.

[ 25 : 13 ] But most were made up of mixtures of the two. In other words of all the regions in historic Israel. Galilee contained the most Gentiles.

The great commission of Jesus as we'll see in a couple of weeks time. Concerns the spread of the gospel to the Gentiles. The so-called nations. Jesus' instruction here in Matthew 28.10 is a foretaste of that commission.

But the message of the resurrection shall not be merely for the Jew. But also for the Gentile. That is rising from the dead. The message for the whole world.

Whether you're Jewish or whether you're Scottish. Whether you're American or African. Whoever you are. The apologetic. The devotional. And the missional message of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Is for you. Go and tell the world. That although we're living through a global pandemic. Jesus is risen from the dead. And he lives in sovereign glory.

[ 26 : 16 ] Inviting all men and women everywhere. To come to faith in him. The risen Christ is still in the business of meeting people. He's still in the business of encouraging people.

He is still in the business of filling us with purpose and meaning. In life. Have you met him? For yourself. Well I do hope that this minister's five minutes have been worth it.

Forget the minister. Focus on the Christ. Have you met? With the risen Christ. He can. And will. Change your life.

Just like he changed the lives of. Of these women. To him. Who lives. Now and forever. With glory. Evermore.

Let us pray. Our loving Heavenly Father. It's good for all of us to hear these words. But it's especially good for those of us who are going through really hard times.

[ 27 : 22 ] Once again we remember the Allah family. Give the family confidence in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. As the first fruits of the resurrection of Georgina.

We also remember. We also remember Shona Mordand. Norman Alice's daughter-in-law. And we are going through a very difficult time with her occurrence of cancer.

Father be with her and with David and with the whole family. We thank you that just as you, O Lord, raised your son from the dead. So you can crush this virus.

And you can deal with cancer. Be within her heart, Lord. As you know the confidence that Jesus Christ brings. Father, we commit ourselves to you now.

We would that every single one of us on this call have met with you. Just like these women. In Jesus' name. Amen.