

The King has Risen

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Date: 21 April 2019

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[0 : 00] Let me start with a question that I'd like you to talk to your neighbor about. Can you keep a secret? Over to you. Can you keep a secret? I wonder, let me just break into your questions there.

I wonder what you said. Everyone thinks they can keep a secret, don't they? I wonder if I ask the people around you, close to you, what your abilities are like. I saw lots of husbands sort of elbowing wives and lots of wives rolling their eyes at their husbands there.

Let's test this out. Would you keep it a secret if you won Tatts Lotto? Maybe. Depends how much, doesn't it? Would you keep it a secret if you found out something scandalous about someone you knew?

Ooh, depends. Would you keep it a secret if you found out the cure for a disease? No, no. I guess the logical rule is if it can help some harmful things, things that can damage our reputation, keep that a secret.

Helpful things tell people. That's the rule. It's an important question because in our passage today, we'll meet a bunch of people who break the rule when it comes to secrets.

[1 : 12] They meet the risen Jesus. He's alive again that first Easter. Alive again after being publicly executed by the state. It was very dangerous to be associated with him.

The temperature for Christians was still pretty hot. But instead of keeping it a secret, they break the rule and tell people. And this is really important for us today because 2,000 years later, the temperature is still pretty hot for Christians.

Talking about Jesus, quoting him publicly in the Bible, lands you in hot water. The rule says harmful things keep it a secret.

But by the end of this passage, we will see why and how we can break this rule. We're going to see why and how we can break this rule. Luke is going to show us three episodes, three groups of people who meet Jesus.

There's the women at the tomb. There's walking on the Emmaus Road. And then there's Jesus with his disciples. They're the three episodes. I put them on your handout. And on the screen ahead, please, Paul.

[2 : 20] What I've done is each of the episodes follows this same cycle. Confusion, revelation, certainty, proclamation is a repeating cycle.

And just before we go any further, I hope that as you see this cycle here, this repeating sequence of events, it shows you that the Bible is not some random assembly of rumor or myth, but structured and ordered with a purpose.

Luke's purpose is on the screen again, please, Paul. There's Luke's purpose. He gathers eyewitness accounts, not rumors, about publicly known things, the things that have been fulfilled among us.

He wants to write an orderly account, we're told at the end of verse three there. Why? So that you may know the certainty of the things you've been taught. Luke is very purposeful.

He wants to give certainty. Thanks, Paul. And you can see that logic in each episode. We'll see it. People are confused about who Jesus is, that he's dead and now alive.

[3 : 26] They get some revelation that leads to certainty. Certainty enough that they would not keep it a secret, that they would break the rule and tell people. So let's look at the episodes.

This is the first one, episode one. I'm going to read from verse one. On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. These women are the same women from verse 55 and 56 above.

They saw Jesus' tomb. They saw how his body was laid in it. The next day, clearly they've gone to the right tomb. They've got spices with them. They're preparing to anoint a body, a dead body.

But instead, they meet some angels. Now, unlike the movies, angels are not like overweight babies with sort of wings. In the Bible, angels are very terrifying creatures.

The angels have to calm the ladies down. They say in verse five, why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here. He is risen. That's confusion.

[4 : 33] The women are confused. This is Revelation, verse six. Remember how he told you while he was still with you in Galilee. The son of man must be delivered over the hands of sinners, be crucified on the third day and rise again.

We're told that they remembered his words. That is Revelation. This is certainty. In Luke's gospel, three times in his own words, Jesus predicted his death.

Now, you don't have to be a God to predict your own death. I'm going to do it right now. So I predict that if I go to certain parts of Syria with my clergy collar and dressed as a priest, I predict that I will get shot.

Now, I predict that if I go to Tullamarine Airport with an old ticking clock and some wires hanging out of my jacket, I will get shot. I predict that if I eat cheesecake, I will die. Cheese and a cake, they should not go together in creation.

But somehow people do it. I think it's an abomination. Very sinful. Cheesecake. No, I'm only joking. But the point is this. The point is this. You don't have to be God to predict your own death.

[5 : 41] But you do to predict your own resurrection. I dare anyone to stake their reputation to invent a religion that hangs on your own resurrection prediction.

You're rising to new life three days later. But that's what Jesus did. In his own words, Jesus claimed to be the son of man. That's God's ruling king. These women get to a tomb.

They find it empty. The only explanation or this evidence proves that his rule extends even beyond death. There's an empty tomb.

Historians will tell you that in the first century, a woman's testimony was inadmissible in court. That means if you're going to start a religion based off a resurrection, you would never use women as your first eyewitnesses.

Unless that's the way it happens. Luke names these women in verse 10. Seems a bit unnecessary. Historians will tell you that that's Luke naming his eyewitness sources.

[6 : 47] That is certainty. This certainty led the women to tell the remaining disciples that Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. That is proclamation.

News too good to keep a secret. That's episode one. Let's look at episode two. In this episode, we meet two men on the road to Emmaus. They were followers of Jesus.

They've just had an awful weekend. Very sad because Jesus has just been killed on Friday. But then Jesus shows up. Verse 16. We're told their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

He asked them, what? What are you discussing together as you walk along? They were confused by his question. Verse 18. Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who doesn't know the things that have happened in there in these days?

They were confused about the women's testimony. That's verse 22 to 24. But more than anything, they're confused. How is it that the Jesus they followed could suffer and die?

[7 : 51] How is that possible? Verse 21. We hoped he was the one who would redeem Israel. The men are confused. And so here comes some revelation.

Verse 25. He said, How foolish you are and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, that is the Old Testament, he explained to them what was said in all the scriptures concerning himself.

Really often when I'm here, I keep telling you about the value of going to your small group, joining a small group Bible study. Imagine if this week Jesus turned up to lead your Bible study.

That would be some week, I reckon. Jesus said these men were foolish and slow to believe. They were foolish to be sad, as if Jesus' death was the end of him.

They were slow to believe. Verse 26. That the Messiah had to suffer. Verse 7 says that the Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners and to be crucified.

[9 : 01] Verse 46 says the Messiah will suffer. Jesus' death was necessary. It was a must. It had to happen. These men were foolish to be sad that somehow God's plans had gone wrong.

You see, this was the only way to rescue God's people. Jesus' death for our sin. His innocence for our guilt.

We heard that on Good Friday from Isaiah 53. He was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace. If they read Moses and the prophets, the Old Testament, they would know that Jesus' payment for sin, or that the payment for sin, is always death. Moses says the blood of a spotless lamb will do the trick. It will pay the price. That's Jesus from the Old Testament. His blood for ours.

[10:06] His resurrection means that his payment worked. That death couldn't hold him. These men were foolish to be sad. As if the God of the Old Testament couldn't raise Jesus from the dead. They were slow to believe. They were confused. And so here comes some revelation. Verse 27. Beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

All the things in the Old Testament about Jesus. That is revelation. Verse 31. We're told that after Jesus broke the bread, then their eyes were opened and they recognized him.

It's a really strange thing, isn't it? That they followed Jesus for years. They walked seven miles down the road with him. They had him over for dinner that night, but still didn't recognize his face. It's a very odd thing, isn't it? But I think Jesus does that for us here in the room. For us 2,000 years later. You see, unless you are 2,000 years old, no one has seen Jesus face to face, literally.

[11:16] Does that mean we in this room can be less certain that he is alive? No. Because, in these verses, as soon as the men recognize him, verse 31, says he disappeared from their sight.

It wasn't knowing his face that did the trick. What they really needed was their scriptures and his words, Jesus' words. Just like we do.

We need the scriptures and Jesus' words. Luke says that Bible revelation is more important than facial recognition. You can see this to prove it in verse 32.

Have a look at verse 32 to prove it. They asked each other, were not our hearts burning within us while? While he talked to us on the road.

While he opened the scriptures to us. Not when we had dinner with him and saw his face. It's not facial recognition, but Bible revelation that causes their hearts to burn within them.

[12:24] The great news for us is that as long as you have Moses and the prophets, the Old Testament, you have everything they had. Yeah, they got to see Jesus face to face.

They had conversations with him. But revelation from the scriptures is what we really need. In fact, our scriptures include their testimony and Jesus' words.

We call it the New Testament. What it means is this. It means that Jesus doesn't have to show up in your kitchen or show up at your workplace or show up at your school for you to be certain.

You can meet him face to face, as it were, every time you open the scriptures. Bible revelation leads to certainty.

In fact, these men were so certain that verse 33 happened. They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. They went back seven miles on foot in the dark to Jerusalem.

[13:25] A very dangerous thing to do. To walk at night time in that part of the world. There they found the eleven and those with them assembled together and saying, It is true, the Lord is risen.

There is proclamation. They told everyone they knew. And let's look at the last episode. Episode 3. Verse 36.

While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, Peace be with you. They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, Why are you troubled?

And why do doubts rise in your mind? See, they think they're seeing a ghost. They're confused. And so in verse 39 to 43, we get what I call the three ghost tests. Have you ever seen a ghost?

Has anyone ever seen a ghost? No one will believe you. If you say, I reckon I've seen a ghost, but no one believes me to this day. But here are three tests when you do see one. So the first one, verse 39.

[14:21] 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. Touch the ghost.

Ghosts, you can't touch them normally. The second test, Jesus invites them to check out his hands and his feet where they put the nails in. You see, I'm not just any body.

I'm the same body you saw on Friday killed in front of you. That's the second test. The third test is the fun one. It's the eating test. So next time you're walking to the toilet at three o'clock in the

morning, as you do, and you see a ghost in your kitchen, ask the ghost to eat a tin of tuna. There you go. Just ask them to do that. Now, if the tin of John West sort of falls, they eat it, and it doesn't, you know, like it doesn't sort of fall out of their tummy. It's not a ghost. It's your husband. Go back to bed. If it is a ghost, though, you should call your local priest. Don't call me because I'll be hiding under the bed. Jesus passes these tests. [15:24] He says, see, I'm physically alive after being physically dead. The men are still confused. Verse 41 says, And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, they're sort of confused.

Bit of disbelief, bit of joy. They're not really sure. And so like the two men on the way to Emmaus, Emmaus, it's not until Jesus reveals himself, until he opens the Bible that they know for sure. Sure. Verse 45. This is the revelation. Then he opened their minds so they could understand the scriptures. He told them, this is what is written, that the Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day.

Verse 48 says, You are witnesses of these things. How can they make sense of the things they have touched and seen? The things they have witnessed.

What is the explanation? The only one is that Jesus must be the Messiah. Victorious over death even. That is revelation. It leads them to verse 52, worshipping Jesus, to blessing God.

[16:36] Verse 53. They are certain. Here's the interesting bit today. We need to finish with proclamation, but we've run out of Bible. Do you see that with the very end of Luke's gospel?

And I think Luke does that deliberately. It's his purpose to hang proclamation in the air, to leave the story deliberately open. You see, Luke is inviting everyone, anyone who is certain about Jesus and his resurrection to add to the story, to tell others or proclaim it to others themselves.

Jesus commands this, in fact, in verse 46. Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached, will be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

And that is exactly what these first disciples did. They preached. It's in the book of Acts, which we're going to do later this year. They preached, sins forgiven, another chance with God for anyone who bothers to repent.

And as they preached this gospel, rather than keep it a secret, it changed the ancient world. It changed religious structures and the culture around them. It changed empires, particularly the Roman one, just as it has changed the lives of millions and millions of believers down through the ages who are certain that Jesus is alive.

[18:12] Luke invites all people who are certain of this to take their part to complete the story, to tell our family and friends so their lives can be changed just as ours are.

We don't need to be able to see and touch Jesus. Remember, it's Bible revelation, not sort of facial recognition. Every week, your loved ones can come here to Holy Trinity where you'll hear the scriptures faithfully revealed.

Why not invite them to come along? We can always put out more chairs. That would be a good start. I realize that some of us have a very limited opportunity to invite others or to tell people.

That's okay. I think, why don't you join us by praying for people who can proclaim. Praying for our mission partners overseas and our mission partners on the university campuses.

That's what they do. They tell people about Jesus. Praying for the ministry of the scriptures here at the church. Those two are amazing ways to take your part in the story, to pray that his mission would continue.

[19:26] But for everyone else here in the room who is able to tell people, who is able to invite others, if you don't know what to say or perhaps for social or personal or family reasons, you're too afraid and you'd rather keep Jesus a secret, can I urge you to go back through Luke's cycle of logic here?

The logic is that our confusions and fears are cured by more Bible, more revelation until you are certain enough to tell. Why not join a Bible group?

We say it all the time. Why not commit to coming every single week if you can? Why not commit to listening intently in the sermon as lots of you do?

Read any part of the Bible you're comfortable with. Jesus says it's all about him anyway. That's fine. But handle the scriptures with care. They can make your heart burn within you.

Revelation cures confusion. It leads to certainty. Certainty makes us brave against our fears. Certainty makes us bold against the PC social culture of Melbourne.

[20 : 43] Certainty means you're prepared to break the rule about secrets because you can't help but tell people what Jesus has done in your life for you.

This is what we see in Acts. It was illegal for them to talk about Jesus. Of those first disciples almost every single one of them was arrested and persecuted and killed.

We said the rule is that harmful things things that can damage our reputation keep it secret. but they were so certain that the God who was able to raise Jesus from the dead could raise them from the dead that they gave everything.

They broke the rules even if it cost them their lives. Confusion is cured by Bible revelation which leads to certainty which leads to proclamation telling people the more certain we are that Jesus is alive the more we will tell people the more likely we are to suffer for it in this culture the more likely our loved ones will have sins forgiven and a new eternal life so they too can have a really happy Easter like the rest of us.

Should I pray that we would do that? Let's pray. Father God we declare that Jesus is not dead but he is alive.

[22 : 12] that his new life means that we can have new life. Help us risk everything to tell people. We're so afraid. We're so crippled by social convention.

Please give us more Bible so we can become more certain so we can't help but tell people what Jesus has done for us.

We need your help. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.