

Encountering the Risen King!

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[0 : 00] You know the drill. Christ is risen. He is risen indeed.! The other day, Hannah, my wife, and the kids went to the Kabloom Festival.

! Have you been there? In Sylvan? No one has been there. Well, I haven't been there either. It's the flower. It's a flower festival, apparently.

And Hannah came home and said, it's really good. You should go sometime. But I said, really? No, it can't be that good. It's just flowers. So Hannah tried to convince me.

So Hannah pulled up the first evidence, photos, and said, no, look at all these flowers. They're so beautiful. And besides, there are other things as well.

But I was still skeptical and said, I don't think I'll enjoy it. Flowers only look good in the photos, but not in real life. And then Hannah gave me the second evidence, people's testimonies, and said, look at all those Google reviews.

[1 : 12] Almost 500, more than 500 people gave the place four and a half, almost four and a half stars. That's pretty good. Now, this normally settles it, right?

Testimonies are important evidence. No one here has been there, so there's no one here who can bear testimonies. So I didn't go further.

I didn't want any trouble. But I could have said, well, how do I know if they're not paid reviewers? So the last thing that would need to happen for Hannah to convince me is personal experience.

She just needs to take me there. Well, today is Easter Sunday. On Good Friday, we remember the death of Jesus. Jesus, and today we celebrate his resurrection.

Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. I'm going to keep saying this over and over again in the middle of the sermon, just to keep you awake.

[2 : 23] But the resurrection is really hard to believe, isn't it? Jesus came back from the grave? Really? Who can believe that? No one can come back from the grave.

No one. And so, like me, in my illustration, naturally people's response when they hear about the resurrection is, no, I don't believe it.

And so this last chapter of Luke gives us some evidence. The chapter starts with a group of women who went to Jesus' tomb on a Sunday morning, hoping to see Jesus' body.

But in verse 3, the body was not there. The tomb was empty. And here's the first piece of evidence for the resurrection.

The body was gone. And I think this is important evidence, because over the next few years, when the first Christians went around Jerusalem, in the same city, telling everyone that Jesus was resurrected, the Roman and Jewish leaders could have produced the body of Jesus and said, don't believe them.

[3 : 34] They're lying. Here's the body of Jesus. But they did not. In fact, the Jewish leaders agreed that the tomb was empty. It's just that they came up with another story.

The disciples stole it. The body was gone. But that evidence might not be enough for you. So fast forward to verse 10.

The women told Jesus' disciples what they had seen, but the disciples did not believe them. This is because, unfortunately, testimonies of women back then were not highly valued.

That's why, in verse 11, the disciples thought the testimony was just nonsense, or literally, idle talk. But I think this is the second evidence that the resurrection did happen.

Because if the first Christians had made up the story, they wouldn't have made up a story with women as first witnesses in that culture. And they wouldn't have pictured the first disciples of Jesus as doubters either.

[4 : 46] They would have made themselves as the heroes of the story. But again, that evidence might not be enough for you.

So we jump to verse 36. Jesus revealed himself to all of the disciples. And even here, they did not believe that anyone could rise from the dead.

In verse 37, they thought that they had seen a ghost, not a real person. No, no one rises from the dead. This must be a ghost. Until they touched his body and saw him eat.

Jesus was alive physically. And here is the third evidence. We have testimonies of people seeing Jesus alive within days of his death.

This was not a legend that took decades to develop. Legends take decades because they have to wait for the first testimonies, testifiers to die before they can develop.

[6 : 03] But in Paul's letter to the Corinthians, he even said that Jesus revealed himself to about 500 people. And he said, some were still alive. In other words, go and ask them.

And just like in my illustration, 500 reviews about the place are pretty good.

And so here as well, people's testimonies, 500 testimonies, more than that, are important. 500 people seeing Jesus at the same time.

That's a pretty big deal. Another piece of evidence, of course, that is related to this is what this caused to the first disciples. Because later on, their behavior changed 180 degrees from hiding in fear to going out there and facing death and imprisonment for the sake of the testimony.

They could not have made up the story. The apostles would not have been willing to die for something that they knew was a lie if they had made it up. So here we have a bunch of evidence for Jesus' resurrection.

[7 : 26] Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Of course, the resurrection can't be proven scientifically. Science can only study a repeatable event and the resurrection is not a repeatable event.

Not yet. It will be a repeatable event, but not yet. But based on the study of history, the evidence is pretty good.

And also, individually, each of these pieces of evidence can't prove 100% that Jesus is alive, but together, I think they make a pretty good case that Jesus is alive.

But a pretty good case is often not enough, is it, to dedicate our soul, our life, our all. Pretty good case.

like me, in my illustration, you might still choose to say, yes, but, but this, but that, but those 500 people could have been conned.

[8 : 41] Just like in my illustration, no evidence is enough unless there's personal experience, a personal encounter.

And certainly, the disciples, too, did not believe until they personally encountered Jesus. And so, after presenting all these pieces of evidence to you, I'd like to take you through a story that is unique to the Gospel of Luke, a story about two disciples of Jesus who personally encountered the risen Jesus.

in verse 13 to 17. Two of Jesus' disciples were walking from Jerusalem towards a village named, called Emmaus, probably to go home.

There was no reason for them to stay in Jerusalem now. Their Messiah was dead. So, they were going home. At the end of verse 17, their faces were downcast.

They were utterly disappointed and probably feeling hopeless because they had unmet expectations of how things should be with the Messiah.

[9 : 59] This is what they said in verse 19 to 21. Jesus was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people, but the chief priests, how dare they, the chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death and they crucified him.

He died. There's nothing more to be done. But, we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. Pay attention to the past tense there.

We had hoped. The hope was no longer. They had all these expectations for Jesus, but now their Messiah was dead. And they did not know what to do with the realization.

And pay attention to what they said in verse 24. And some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, that the tomb was empty, the body was not there.

But they did not see Jesus. The first disciples encountered the first piece of evidence that the body was missing, the tomb was empty, but they still did not believe because they did not see the resurrected Jesus.

[11 : 22] Just like many people today, they too did not believe the resurrection that easily. They needed to see Jesus themselves. And so, they were still hopeless.

Their hope in Jesus was crushed because of his death. And I think this is what life is like without the resurrection.

When death strikes, we are left in hopelessness, gloom, darkness, disappointment, frustration, depression.

either it's the death of someone we love or the prospect of our own death or the idea of death in general. Why would God allow death?

It makes us feel hopeless. Death is just the enemy of all. Just like the Bible says in another place, everything becomes meaningless when death is involved because all our pleasure, all our knowledge, wealth, work, our life all end with death.

[12 : 39] And so, the disciples here were feeling downcast and hopeless. Their mission died because their Messiah died. And even after hearing about the possibility that Jesus might have been resurrected from the women, they still could not believe their hopelessness overcame them.

I wonder if you've ever felt the same hopelessness because of death. But here's the good news. Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Jesus is alive. Someone has overcome death. One person. And here in verse 15, he personally revealed himself to the disciples. He was walking along with them, but they could not see who he was because of their preconceived belief.

They just could not believe that Jesus could rise from the dead. And so, they did not see who he was. That can't be Jesus. Jesus did basically two things while he was with them.

[13 : 59] Verse 25 to 27, he provided an explanation through the Bible that his death had been God's plan all along, as he expressed in the Old Testament.

Like in our Old Testament reading in Hosea, Hosea 6, where Israel is pictured as being torn by God, but on the third day, God will revive them.

This was written hundreds of years before Jesus. And in the original context, it's talking about Israel, obviously. But really, this passage is ultimately about Jesus' death and resurrection.

He was literally revived on the third day. And there are many passages like this in the Old Testament that point to Jesus.

And so, the point was, Jesus' death was not some failure in God's plan. It had all been decreed, and in that decree, Jesus would also be resurrected, revived, on the third day.

[15 : 10] There's no need to be hopeless. So, first, Jesus gave them a biblical explanation about himself and about why he must die, and then he must be resurrected.

And then second, Jesus got closer and provided not only personal explanation, but also personal communion, in verse 28 to 29.

30. They arrived at the village of the two disciples, and they invited Jesus to stay with them.

This was just a normal Middle Eastern hospitality. And then he did. He stayed with them. And then in verse 30, instead of the hosts giving Jesus a meal, which is normal hospitality, it was Jesus who provided something that reminded them of the Last Supper.

He took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to them. That's remarkably similar to the Last Supper.

[16 : 27] And then suddenly in verse 31, their eyes were opened and they recognized him. The empty tomb did not convince them that Jesus was alive.

A personal encounter did. Christ is risen. He's risen indeed.

And many people in the whole world have encountered him and still are encountering him today. and this is still the primary way that Jesus reveals himself to people through the exposition of the Bible and the breaking of the bread, which is the symbol of fellowship of the church.

I encountered the risen Jesus in that way. When I was 17, I became an agnostic. I wasn't sure if God existed and if he did, I wasn't sure which God he was.

I stopped going to church and I began looking at other religions and philosophies. In the meantime, my young adult pastor at the time noticed that I had been gone.

[17 : 44] I had disappeared from the church. This was a year after. And so he asked a close friend of mine to catch up with me or to spy on me. Long story short, this friend of mine answered my questions and although at the end I still wasn't sure about Christianity, I was a very skeptical young man, I decided to pray to Jesus.

Not to confess him as my king and savior, but to ask for a personal revelation. Looking back now, it was a really brave challenge to me.

Jesus, if you're there, let me see you. Jesus did not reveal himself physically right there and then, but he used these means, the Bible and the fellowship of the church.

And this is what happened. After that prayer, my friend challenged me to take a leap of faith and to try to see things from the other side. And so I did. I took a leap of faith and tried to see things from the other side.

with the assumption that Christianity was true to see if it was so. You know, kind of like having a scientific hypothesis. We assume that the hypothesis is true before doing the experiment and then we do the experiment to see if it's proven to be true.

[19 : 11] From then on, I began to study the Bible more diligently and asked my pastors and my friends questions. And slowly I began to see that from the other side, from the perspective of a Christian, life just made sense.

For example, it makes sense that humans long for love, even though sometimes the love is broken, because we are created in the image of the God who is love.

Seeing things from the perspective of Christianity enabled me to see things, things more clearly. But I still did not see Jesus clearly.

And that process was happening over probably two or three years after I asked Jesus to reveal himself to me. And then suddenly, I remember this very clearly, one night as I was running on a treadmill and I was listening to a Christian song and the lyrics said, we have found our hope, we have found our peace, we have found our rest in the one who loves.

I remember clearly that that's when everything that I had learned through Bible reading and through church fellowships just came together in my mind and revealed Jesus to me.

[20 : 42] And I could see him. not physically. The Bible is clear that he's no longer on earth. He has ascended to heaven and is seated on the right hand of the Father.

But I could see Jesus spiritually. I could see his beauty. I could see that he's glorious and I'm so dirty compared to him. I could see that he's merciful although I'm so sinful.

I could see his grace. love to me. And I just had to get off the treadmill because I was brought down to my knees and I cried like a baby.

That's when I started personally encounter the resurrected Jesus. And from then on I experienced him personally more and more.

I've experienced healing, physical healing when I prayed to Jesus. seemingly impossible prayers had been answered. Perhaps some people here might have encountered Jesus in that way.

[21 : 52] I know some people who look back in their lives and see Jesus guiding them through life. I've received strength that was certainly not from myself in getting out of my porn addiction.

That was a slavery. I could not have made it out myself. love. I've received comfort through depression, many seasons of depression.

I've experienced surges of joy when I read the Bible. These are not from me, friends.

Jesus is alive. I'm not saying that everyone who encounters Jesus personally will experience all of this. But these things helped me encounter the resurrected Jesus.

Christ is risen. His risen indeed. The historical arguments for Jesus' resurrection are super important.

[22 : 55] We need to know the historical arguments. But just like the disciples here, it's a personal encounter with Jesus that changed my life. And more and more, many people around the world are encountering Jesus, the risen king.

You can read about it in the UK, in America. More and more people are encountering Jesus. And like the disciples here, and like me, it changes their lives.

This is how their lives changed. In verse 31 to 32, they realized that it was the resurrected Jesus. They realized that he's indeed alive.

Friends, to realize that someone came back from the dead is not a trivial thing. It doesn't happen every day. And so, second, they went from being hopeless to being hopeful.

In verse 32, their hearts were not downcast anymore. They were burning within them. Earlier, they said, Jesus died, but we had hoped that he would redeem Israel.

[24 : 11] And now, death no longer has its thing. And we can say, we can say now, Jesus died, and that's how he redeemed Israel. Because he came back from the dead.

And then, third, in verse 33, they just had to tell people. At once, it says, they returned to Jerusalem. It was nighttime already. But they didn't care. Their hearts were burning, and they just had to tell someone. Their personal encounter changed everything.

They had to tell someone. And when they got back to Jerusalem, before they were able to say anything, it turns out that another disciple, Simon Peter, also had had a personal encounter with Jesus.

And they could not have waited for the two guests to settle in before telling them. they went in through the door, and they just said, it's true, the Lord has risen.

[25 : 29] Your life changes when you encounter the risen King Jesus. Because suddenly you realize that someone has defeated death.

death no longer has its thing. Suddenly you realize that there is hope for the sick and dying, for the martyrs, for the losers of the world, for everyone, because death is really the enemy of everyone. There is hope because Jesus can bring them back into eternal life in eternal glory. he has found the way because he has overcome death.

Suddenly you realize that you don't have to experience the death that is the consequence of sin and brokenness anymore, because Jesus has paid it all on the cross, and he came back proving that the payment has been finalized.

suddenly you realize that you can encounter the risen Jesus because he's alive, and you see that he is just so gloriously beautiful that you just have to tell others about him, like finding the best food in town or seeing the most glorious scenery.

[26 : 59] You just have to take a picture and share it. Or invite someone, hey, you must go there. It's a great thing.

You must try. This is not the best food in town or the most glorious scenery. This is someone who came back from the dead, friends.

That's not something that happens every day. And no wonder when Jesus talked about the preaching of forgiveness of sins to all nations in verse 47.

He did not frame it as a command in this gospel, like do this, but as a promise. This is what is written. The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day.

And just as that has happened, repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations. He did not frame it as a command, but as a promise.

[27 : 58] It will happen. because if you've encountered the reason Jesus, you want him to be preached everywhere. This news is too good to be kept private.

Too good. So, friends, if you haven't believed in Jesus yet, pray that the reason King Jesus might reveal himself to you.

I pray that you do. And because he reveals himself primarily through his word, through the scriptures, in the context of the fellowship of Christians, consider asking a Christian friend, probably from this church, to read the Bible with you.

I pray that Jesus will reveal himself to you through that, that you'll be able to see his beauty and glory. Or if you don't know anyone here, ask me and I'll help you find someone.

And if you have believed in Jesus, be reassured that Christ is risen. He's risen indeed.

[29 : 20] At times we might doubt. I have doubted. time and time again. But then I remember, I remember the evidence that Jesus has indeed risen.

And I remember my personal encounter with Jesus. And I remember my current personal relationship with him. And then I get reassured that, yeah, he's alive.

He's not dead. And then let the risen King Jesus change your life until you can't help but tell others about him.

Pray. Pray. Let me see more and more of your beauty so that I get to share it. Let my heart be burned in a good way.

Just like the first disciples. Let's pray. pray. Father, we thank you for this great reminder that Jesus has indeed risen.

[30 : 32] And there is hope in this life. So help us, Lord, with the power of your spirit to remember this hope every single day and to live it out and to share it with others.

in the name of Jesus, the one who is alive, we pray. Amen.