

# Jesus: The Answer to the Troubled Heart

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     Amen. May God add his blessing to these readings from his holy word. And if we turn back again to Luke's gospel, Luke chapter 24, as you see on the screen there, the sermon, the heading of the sermon, Jesus, the answer to the troubled heart, and the three general points we're going to follow that you see there, the presumption of fear, as we see in the disciples and their initial reaction to seeing Jesus, the risen Jesus. And then the probing question, even questions that Jesus asked his disciples about why they were troubled, why they were frightened. And then the third point, we're going to look at the proof, the evidence of Jesus' person, his risen, resurrected body.

Now, those of you who've been here or have attended services in the last few weeks, when looking at some of the questions that Jesus asked others, questions concerning understanding of who Jesus is, understanding his identity, and questions too concerning the faith, the nature of faith from those whom Jesus calls to serve him. And even, as we've seen recently, even a question for which Jesus had no answer when he asked that question on the cross. Questions then given by Jesus to his disciples, questions given to Mary Magdalene, and a question even to his heavenly Father. Remember when Jesus was with the disciples in the Sea of Galilee, that stormy sea, remember he asked them why they were afraid, because Jesus was with them. They need not have been afraid. And remember on the cross, he asked his Father, Jesus, and is bearing the sins of the world, Jesus asked, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? And then to a weeping, Mary Magdalene, asking her why, why she was weeping?

Why? Why? Why? Because her weeping was misplaced. She had assumed that Jesus was still dead, Jesus' body somehow stolen. But Jesus assuring her that, no, he's alive, and that she has to continue to love him and trust him and serve him. But this morning we're going to consider another of Jesus' questions, Jesus' questions given again to the disciples. Two associated questions that we read there in Luke 24.

Why are you troubled? And why did doubts arise in your hearts? But remember also there's a third question that Jesus asked at that same time. The question that seems so basic and yet so utterly profound when he asked, why or have you anything here to eat? Now, of course, the first two of these three questions were very much in the same vein as the question that Jesus asked Mary Magdalene when he asked her why she was weeping and whom she was seeking. As we said, she'd been seeking a dead Jesus.

She'd assumed Jesus was still dead. Thought that his body had been taken away because the tomb had been empty. But the risen Lord Jesus, he'd assured her and reassured her of his presence. He's alive.

[ 3 : 33 ] His soul now reunited to his glorious body. He's a resurrected body. It's physical in every sense, but it's no longer subject to death and decay. And it's this whole aspect of the risen Lord Jesus and his real presence, his glorious resurrected body. So we're going to spend some time thinking on this morning as we seek to worship our Savior, as we seek to know him better and seek to bow before the Lamb of God, the Lamb who's the Lion, as we saw a few weeks ago, the Lion of the Church. We're worshiping, we're coming before the living Lord Jesus. And so we want to consider the evidence of who he is and his resurrection and who he is for the sake of his people. Now, let's be clear here. We're never to be confined to a church calendar, you know, as if to say we can only think of the birth of Jesus at

Christmastime. We can only think of the risen Lord Jesus at Easter time. Of course, these times are very helpful for us to focus our hearts on who Jesus is. But let's use the opportunities that God gives us at all times to proclaim the incarnate, crucified, and risen Savior. Let's do that not just at set times of the year, but throughout the year. So this morning we're going to focus our hearts and minds on the risen Lord Jesus. And to think of the consequence of his resurrection for his disciples and indeed for you who follow him as Lord and Savior. So let's look then at the passage we read, the details, and the first point that we're going to look at, the presumption of fear. Verse 36 and 37, as they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, peace to you. But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit.

So what about the reaction then of the disciples, the first sighting of Jesus after his resurrection? I mean, they knew that Jesus had died. They knew that Jesus had been buried. They'd heard firsthand accounts from women who'd actually witnessed the empty tomb. They'd heard from these two followers of Jesus on that road to Emmaus, these followers who spoke about their having met with the risen Lord Jesus. But when all of a sudden Jesus appears in the manner by which he appears, in his resurrected form, and appearing before them just as they're talking about him, they're terrified. They're afraid. Their eyes can't quite take in that they're seeing the risen Lord Jesus.

Jesus, fully man, fully divine. The same Lord Jesus that they'd followed for three years. He's now risen from the dead. I mean, in fear, they're presuming that they're seeing Jesus in spirit form, a sort of an ethereal, kind of ghostly, formless Jesus. But they needn't fear. As you don't need to fear or be surprised when Jesus appears to you. Now, I don't mean in any physical form. Of course, Jesus, his body has ascended into heaven.

But think of his appearing to you through his word. And as he speaks to you, as you hear his voice speaking to you through his word, as he confirms to you that, yes, he is risen.

[ 7 : 15 ] And he's assuring you of his presence with you always. Not to be afraid. You know when you're in the presence of somebody famous, maybe somebody who's a particularly great standing in some field of work or life. Have you ever been before someone like that?

Sometimes you can be so tongue-tied, even afraid to utter anything coherent to them. But Jesus bids you to come to him.

And he calls you. He says, don't be afraid. He's the friend of sinners. He's your brother. He's the shepherd who feeds his lambs. He feeds you in his grace.

He's your loving saviour in whose presence we are and whose presence we rejoice. Yes, of course, we fear him. That fear in the sense of reverence. We fear him because of who he is.

He is the eternal Son of God. But let's know that comfort, that comfort of being in his presence. Being in the presence of the Lord Jesus, the risen, fully man, fully divine Lord Jesus.

[ 8 : 25 ] And is that how you know him? Are you in communion with Jesus? Do you rejoice in his presence with you? Because he delights to be with you.

He calls you by name. He promises to be with you always. That's a sure promise. So dwell on that in faith. And practice that. Yes, practice the presence of the Lord.

That discipline that we need to so emphasize and practice in communion with him. As we do so by prayer and meditating on his word.

Get close to Jesus. But maybe you're afraid to come near him. Maybe because of some particular sin that's maybe marred your life.

And you're presuming in fear. Maybe asking how can the Lord Jesus want me in his presence? How can the Holy Son of God want a sinner such as myself to commune with him?

[ 9 : 24 ] But Jesus calls you to himself. Come unto me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. And it may well be that you've echoed the words of Peter.

Remember some time before when Peter said to Jesus, depart from me for I'm a sinful man. But Jesus will not depart from you who come to him in faith.

He loves you. He died for you. And he bids you to come to him as he leads you in that path of life that leads you to that heavenly home. Where in that heavenly home, you who are his, who love him, will one day gaze on him.

You'll gaze in the presence of the risen Lord Jesus and gaze on him eternally. And you'll know that the perfection of delight in being in his presence eternally.

It's where all who have gone before us who rejoice in the eternal presence of Jesus. Even those 11 disciples there in that room.

[ 10 : 31 ] But what about Jesus in his words of assurance to these 11 disciples there in that room, that evening of his resurrection, that resurrection day? What does Jesus say to them that's going to give the evidence that he truly has risen?

That he's not in spirit form. He's the same Jesus, albeit now he has a glorified body. What about his words to them? The probing question or questions of Jesus.

Let's read the verses again. 38 and 39. And he said to them, Why are you troubled? And why did doubts arise in your hearts?

See my hands and my feet that it is I myself. Touch me and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have. You know, the last recorded question of Jesus that we find in scripture was that question that Jesus gave on the cross when Jesus asked his father, Why?

Why have you forsaken me? But now we see another why question. Another why question is asked. And this time it's the question that Jesus asks as the risen Lord Jesus.

[ 11 : 44 ] Why are you troubled? Why did doubts arise in your hearts? Why? In other words, for what reason? Jesus is saying there's no substantial reason for you being troubled and seeing me.

There's no reason for you to doubt my physical resurrection. And so to calm their fears and allay their doubts, he shows them his nail-pierced hands and his nail-pierced feet.

And he asks them even to touch him. Now a spirit has no physical body to touch or to see. And so by his word, by his physical presence, he's telling his disciples that his fears are misplaced, that their doubts have no foundation.

And you know that there are many who doubt the resurrection of Jesus. We have to say, sadly, even within churches, many who dispute the physical resurrection of Jesus.

Of course, we have the extremes, the extremes of churchmen, churchmen such as the former bishop of Edinburgh, who still asserts that the resurrection of Jesus, as he says, is merely a metaphor, whatever that means in reality.

[ 12 : 56 ] And then you've got the humanist sceptics that always seem to be wheeled out at Easter time and don't just cast doubts in the resurrection of Jesus, but utterly reject it. What about you?

What about you? You must believe Scripture. Believe in the infallible, inerrant Word of God. And have that peace of mind, that true peace of heart and mind to know that Jesus is risen.

And just cast aside even the thinnest of doubts as to his physical resurrection. And look at the evidence again in his word that Jesus revealed there on that day, one of his resurrection.

And it's the evidence that, well, as we read in 1 John, John the disciple, John the apostle, when he wrote in that first letter to the churches, when he confirmed his having heard and seen and touched the one in whom all believers have fellowship.

And you, by faith, you have heard and you hear the voice of Jesus. And you who are in him, you, by faith, you see him.

[ 14 : 08 ] And you have that fellowship with him as you see him, as you hear him. If you follow the Lord Jesus, the good shepherd, yes, you've touched him by faith. And so that hearing, that seeing, that touching by faith, well, let's just go back to something we said earlier.

That's, of course, going to be realized in full when you enter the glory of heaven, when you depart from this earthly scene and you see him face to face.

And it's that transforming grace of Jesus, that transforming grace that changes hearts that once doubted, that grace that's changed you and changed me to believe in him, to trust in him, the living Lord Jesus.

So what about then, our third point, the proof, the proof of Jesus' person, the evidence that Jesus shows. Let's read from verse 40 to 43 again.

And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, have you anything here to eat? They gave him a piece of broiled fish and he took it and ate before them.

[ 15 : 22 ] So let's just follow the thread, as it were. I mean, the disciples, certainly initially anyway, they're not quite there yet. I mean, as Jesus shows them his nail-pierced hands and his feet, as evident that really is he who was crucified on the cross.

So at least they're being moved from being troubled and terrified, thinking that, you know, at one time that they're seeing a ghost, a spirit. And they still can't quite believe that this is Jesus.

You know, have you, and while they still disbelieve for joy, in other words, you know, this is almost too good to be true. They still can't quite take in that the person, the one who's standing there is Jesus.

But in Jesus' wonderful compassion, he gives them proof that they accept. And he does it in the most marvelous way. He asks them for something to eat.

No bodiless spirit would need food. No formless spirit would want anything to eat. But the risen Jesus, Jesus fully risen, fully in his physical form, he will eat.

[ 16 : 36 ] And, you know, you can just picture the disciples in that room, maybe, you know, gingerly handing over a piece of fish to Jesus and their growing faith are convinced now that this truly is the Lord Jesus who's risen from the dead.

He's alive. And that body of Jesus is a body capable of eating and drinking. There's now no place for doubt. That's what the Apostle Peter wrote not that long after that event in that room.

Peter, when he was writing, or speaking rather, of his being with Jesus, he read in Acts 10 when he spoke of himself and the other disciples as witnesses who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.

But how does that impact your life? The truth of the risen Lord Jesus, how's that impacting your life? Well, let's make this absolutely clear that we dismiss out of hand any kind of suggestion that Jesus merely appeared to be what he claimed.

In other words, that old ancient heresy, that heresy that says that Jesus wasn't fully human, but simply appeared as a man, but without the substance of humanity.

[ 17 : 53 ] In other words, that denial of his physical humanity, that denial of when Jesus was born, born in human flesh, there's that denial that he really was human and fully human, and again a denial of the fully risen physical resurrection of Jesus.

But we affirm the truth of what Scripture tells us our catechism affirms. Catechism 21, who's the redeemer of God's elect? And the answer, the only redeemer of God's elect is, present tense, is, not was, but is, the Lord Jesus Christ, who being the eternal Son of God became man, and so was, and continues to be, God and man, in two distinct natures, and one person forever.

Because you can't divide Jesus. You can't divide the Lord Jesus. He's one person. He has a human nature, a divine nature. So that's the theological truth that, I pray, every believer affirms by faith.

As every disciple there in that room, they believed when at one time they were doubting. So don't ever minimize Jesus' human nature as somehow being of little importance.

I mean, he had all the functions of humanity, like us, sin accepted. And that surely gives you that tremendous comfort, realizing that he knows you.

[ 19 : 18 ] That he knows you even in your weaknesses. He always is divine. And, you know, Jesus is our high priest. He's there in heaven. He intercedes for us because he understands your needs.

Listen to the words of Hebrews 4, verse 15. We do not have a high priest who's unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

But I think we have to say this as well. Well, we must never minimize Jesus' physical body, never minimize his human nature, neither must we ever minimize our own physical being.

Because Jesus' humanity confirms your humanity. humanity, that humanity given to you by God the Creator. So don't ignore the humanity that you possess.

And I was reminded of that a few years ago at a general assembly. Someone got up to speak about the souls, about all the souls who are there, the souls who are there. But one of the commissioners reminded us that we can't just simply speak of people as souls.

[ 20 : 33 ] I mean, we've got bodies to be used to the glory of God. And we have that promise of glorified bodies at the resurrection of the dead when Jesus returns.

So let's be humbled before our Lord and Saviour. Because the questions that Jesus asked his disciples there in that sealed room, he asks you even now about himself.

Why are you troubled? And why did doubts arise in your hearts? So have that resolve not to be troubled concerning the reality of the risen Lord Jesus.

And resolve not to doubt, never to doubt that he's alive, that his bodily presence is in heaven. He's the Lamb that was slain and the saints of God praising Jesus, the Lamb of God, worthy as the Lamb who was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing.

And be assured of this also. You who know the living Lord Jesus as your Saviour, his resurrection guarantees your resurrection unto eternal life and the day that Jesus returns.

[ 21 : 50 ] So have that resurrection hope in your hearts because Jesus rose from the dead. But what about any of you here in the building or watching online?

What if any of you remain unconvinced and you're still doubting even the physical resurrection of Jesus from the dead? Well, I'm pleading with you, look again at the word that we've just read and call upon God to open your heart and open your mind to receive his word by faith.

Because if Jesus is a dead Jesus, then his church is a dead church. And all who profess to follow the living Lord Jesus, well, if Jesus is dead, then we're all deluded and death's just going to be an end of everything.

But listen again to the words of Jesus. These words that are uttered so often at times of interment at the graveside. Remember when the minister reads words, the words of Jesus, the words that give that resurrection hope to all who have died in the Lord.

The words that are read, the words of Jesus, I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me though he were dead, yet shall he live. Are you just going to dismiss that hope?

[ 23 : 12 ] Or won't you join with the Lord's people and yes, meet with the living Lord Jesus and put your faith in him now and always because it's in Jesus that you find all the answers to your questions in Jesus.

He's the answer to your doubts and your fears. I pray then that you'll know that joy in the Lord in rejoicing in him, the living, risen Lord Jesus.

Amen. Let us pray. Our Heavenly Father, we give thanks that you give us that great comfort from your word, the comfort of the knowledge of the risen Lord Jesus, he who was raised from death to life and whose power is such that we know ourselves and who are in Christ, that resurrection power.

Lord, increase our faith, we pray. Cast out any doubts that remain even concerning our Savior. May you strengthen our faith to believe and to continue to believe and to follow him who calls us to himself.

Hear us, Lord, as we continue in worship before you now, as we sing from your word. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. We're going to close in Psalm 143, Psalm 143, the Scottish Psalter version, and it's verse 6 to verse 8.

[ 24 : 53 ] Lo, I do stretch my hands to thee, my help alone, for thou well understandst all my complaint and moan, my thirsting soul desires, and longeth after thee, as thirsty ground requires with rain refreshed to be.

6 to 8, Psalm 143, and please remain seated. Psalm 16, yeah, okay, Psalm 16, 7 to 11.

My mistake, my apologies, and it will be the Sing Psalms version. Sing Psalms 16, 7 to 11.

It's good not to be infallible. The land, I'll praise the Lord, my God, whose counsel guides my choice, and even in the night, my heart recalls instructions, voice.

Psalm 16, Psalm 16,