

*Sermon by Terry Trivette*  
***That's a Good Question – 18***  
**Luke 24:36-48**

**“Resurrection Results: What a Living Jesus Means to You”**

1. In 1968, a little-known film director named George Romero made a splash onto American Pop-Culture with the release of his black-and-white horror movie, *Night of the Living Dead*. The low-budget movie is the story of young couple, Ben and Barbara, who try to survive the night in a Pennsylvania farmhouse, as they are being attacked by a legion of zombie-like dead people who have somehow come back to life. After a decade, the movie had so captivated the culture that it had grossed a whopping \$42 million dollars.<sup>i</sup>
2. For some people, the story of the resurrection of Jesus Christ may sound a little like a strange piece of fiction. The Bible's straightforward and historical account of the bodily resurrection of Jesus *is* an amazing claim.
3. Nevertheless, based on the testimony of Scripture, and the witness of the Holy Spirit, the Church has for 2,000 years affirmed the doctrine that Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the third day.
4. One of the earliest Christian creeds, or statements of faith, *The Apostle's Creed*, states that: “[Jesus] suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day He rose again.”
5. The bodily resurrection of Jesus is one of the dogmatic doctrines of the Church. Yet, it is so much more than a doctrine. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is more than a point on a confessional creed, or church catechism.
6. The fact that Jesus rose from the dead on the third day is a life-altering, heart-inspiring, Church-empowering truth.
7. In Luke 24, we find the story of one of Christ's appearances to His disciples after His resurrection. When He showed up in their meeting, they were shocked and scared. The living Lord asked them, “Why are ye troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your hearts?”
8. By studying this meeting of the resurrected Jesus and His disciples, we are able to draw from it three important truths. These truths reveal what a living Jesus means to you.
9. I want to put these three truths in the form of statements. The first one is this:

**I. DON'T WORRY - JESUS IS RISEN!**

1. Luke chapter 24 records the events on the day of Christ's resurrection. Though some women had discovered the vacated tomb early in the morning, and angels had testified to His resurrection, throughout this chapter, the disciples are a disheartened, discouraged group.

2. When the resurrected Jesus finally appeared to them later that evening, He found that they were still a largely worried and troubled crew.

3. In verse 38, when the Lord saw their emotional state, He asked them, "Why are ye troubled?" That word "troubled", is translated from a word that means "to stir up", and was used to describe the agitating or troubling of water.

4. When the Lord saw the troubled and worried hearts of His disciples, He used the truth of His resurrection to ease their worries.

5. Notice a couple of things about our Lord's resurrection that helps to overcome our worries. First of all, because He is risen:

#### **A. There is hope**

1. Just three days before this particular evening, these disciples had seen their whole world collapse, as the Roman guards had carried their Lord away, and put Him to death.

2. For them, Good Friday was the blackest, bleakest day of their lives. When Jesus cried, "It is finished", those words had meant something very different for these men.

3. In their minds, the death of Jesus really was the end. It was the end of their Master's ministry, the end of their spiritual instruction, and the end of their kingdom hopes.

4. But, on Sunday evening, when Jesus held out His nailed pierced hands and feet, though they were wounded, they were alive, and hope sprang anew for these troubled disciples.

5. If their Lord was alive, then all their dreams lived as well. If their Lord was alive, then their salvation was assured. If their Lord was live, the kingdom would indeed come. His resurrection brought them an injection of renewed hope!

6. There are times when our hearts are "stirred up" with worry. There are times when we, as His disciples today, see black clouds of trial, and bleak storms of struggle, just as they did.

7. In those moments, we can look back to an empty tomb, to the truth of His resurrection, and we can say:

*Because He lives I can face tomorrow,  
Because He lives all fear is gone,  
Because I know, He holds the future,  
Life is worth the living just because He lives!*

8. Notice something else the truth of His resurrection does for our worries. Because He is risen, there is not only hope, but notice also that:

## **B. There is help**

1. Why were the disciples all crowded away together in this room? The truth is; they were hiding. John 20:19 says, "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews..."
2. The disciples feared that since the Jews had taken and executed their Lord, surely they were the next ones on the list. With their Master dead, they lived in fear of their enemies.
3. But, on Sunday evening, their fears were abolished by the sight of Jesus, standing before them, holding out His living hands and feet for all of them to see.
4. Obviously, their enemies were not able to kill the Lord of Glory! With Him alive, there would be no stopping them as they spread the good news of the gospel.
5. At times, we are tempted to look at the climate of this world, and the growing numbers of those who oppose our Christ and His kingdom, and we feel outnumbered and overwhelmed.
6. When it seems as if we are losing the battle against sin, and its forces of modernism, atheism, liberalism, and hedonism, remember that Jesus is risen, and through His resurrection power, the Church marches forward, and the "gates of hell shall not prevail" against us!
7. A few weeks ago, investigative reporter Bob Woodward made some news when he told Larry King that he had knowledge of a "secret weapon" that had enabled the United States to turn the tide of the war in Iraq. While Woodward did not say exactly what this "secret weapon" is, he said, "some day in history it will be described to people's amazement."<sup>ii</sup>
8. Some historians wonder how the Christian faith has spread from Palestine to the far reaches of the globe. The answer is a not-so secret weapon. The Founder of our faith rose from the dead, and lives to help His people progress His kingdom.

9. The worried disciples were inspired and energized by the truth of the risen Lord. In much the same way, the truth of the resurrection should rob our hearts of worry, and fill us hope for the work Christ has given us to do.

10. There is a second principle we draw from this text. Our first truth was this: *don't worry, Jesus is risen*. Our second truth is this:

## **II. DON'T WONDER - JESUS IS REAL!**

1. Look again at the question our Lord posed to the bewildered disciples on that resurrection evening. In verse 38, He asked, "Why are ye troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your hearts?"

2. Notice that phrase "thoughts arise". It literally speaks of questions or reasoning coming into a heart. It gives the idea of speculations or doubts.

3. Jesus asked the shocked and awed disciples why there were questions arising in their hearts as they looked at His resurrected body.

4. There are some today who have heard the claim that Jesus rose from the dead, and while they understand it as a doctrinal principle, they struggle to understand it as a practical reality.

5. Like the first disciples, there are some today who are confused about the reality of the resurrection. Notice a couple of truths we draw from this text to help with the questions that come from the empty tomb. Notice first of all that:

### **A. He is fully alive**

1. In our text, Luke records the initial reaction of the disciples when they first saw Jesus standing in the room. Verse 37 says, "But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit."

2. The disciples felt like they had seen a ghost. Though they likely recognized the face and figure of their Master, they did not fully process what they were seeing, and assumed that it was His spirit.

3. Like the disciples of old, there are probably many who think of Jesus' resurrection body as something akin to that of a ghost. Some probably think of Him as a sort of "Casper the Friendly Christ".

4. There is no room for this based on the words of our text. Notice verse 39. Jesus said, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."

5. The resurrection body of Jesus was essentially the same physical body He first inhabited when He entered the virgin womb of Mary, some 33 years before.
6. On that first Easter Sunday morning, the dead, cold, motionless heart of Jesus of Nazareth suddenly quivered and began to beat again, pumping resurrection life to the other organs of His holy body.
7. Lungs that had exhaled a final agonizing breath, days before while hanging on the cross, suddenly drew in a fresh breath of Sunday morning air within the stillness of that garden tomb.
8. Cold, dead, motionless hands with nail holes in them, suddenly clinched into a strong fist, as the Son of God answered the call of His Father, and stood to life inside the crypt He had borrowed.
9. Make no mistake about it, we aren't worshipping a ghost. Our Lord is fully alive! Notice something else we draw from this text about the reality of our Lord's resurrection. Notice not only that He is fully alive, but notice also that:

## **B. He is forever alive**

1. If you scour the remainder of Scripture, and study the pages of history, you will never find a time in which the Lord Jesus died again.
2. In fact, if you read the book of Hebrews, you find that He "ever liveth", and is at this very moment seated beside His Father in heaven, interceding for His people.
3. If I could take you into that blessed throne room, amid the shouts of saints and songs of angels; where the Lord Jesus is right now seated, you would find that He is not some sort of mystical, ghost-God.
4. In fact, if you and I were so privileged to approach His regal throne, and if He were to extend to us the same invitation He did to His disciple on that Easter evening, and allow us to touch and handle Him, we would find that He is still as alive as we are.
5. He still has skin, and pores, and hair, and eyes and ears. He is still as alive as He was when He walked the dusty roads of Galilee.
6. And, if we were to fast-forward ten million years into the future, when this old earth has passed away, and a new heaven and a new earth are the eternal home of God's chosen people, there, in the middle of it all, seated on the throne would be none other than Jesus of Nazareth, still alive and well!
7. Do you wonder about Jesus? Don't. He is real.

*Death could not keep its prey, Jesus us my Savior,  
He tore the bars away, Jesus my Lord,*

*Up from the grave He arose,  
With a mighty triumph 'ore His foes,  
He arose a Victor from the dark domain,  
And He lives forever with His saints to reign,  
He arose! He arose! Hallelujah, Christ arose!*

8. There is one more truth we draw from this text. Our first one was this: *Don't worry – Jesus is risen.* Our second truth is: *Don't wonder – Jesus is real.* The final statement we draw from this text is this:

### **III. DON'T WAIT – JESUS IS READY!**

1. The resurrected Lord showed His hands and feet to His disciples as evidence of His bodily resurrection. Verse 41 records their reaction. It says, "...they yet believed not for joy, and wondered..."

2. Obviously, this was a lot of information for these men to absorb. Even though they were looking at the physical body of Jesus, they could not believe their eyes.

3. These disciples were reticent and hesitant to accept the truth that was presented to them. Likewise, sometimes people are slow to respond to the Lord, and the truth of His Word.

4. The reality is that there is no need to wait. We need not hesitate, for the living Lord is ready to work in our lives. Notice a couple of things the living Christ is prepared to do in your life. First of all:

#### **A. He is ready to convince you**

1. Look at verses 41 and 42. It says, "...he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb."

2. As the disciples sat with their mouths open, stunned by what they were seeing, Jesus asked them if they had anything to eat. After receiving a piece of fish, and some honeycomb, verse 43 says, "And he took it, and did eat before them."

3. This is not just an insignificant detail that Luke records here. By sitting down and eating this small meal in front of His disciples, the Lord furthered proved for them the reality of His resurrection.

4. After His meal, Luke says that He began to remind them of how He had prophesied about His resurrection. Verse 45 says, "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures."
5. The disciples were hesitant to believe what they were seeing, but their Teacher was ready to convince them of His reality.
6. Those who place their faith in Christ, who put aside their hesitance, and begin a relationship with the living Christ, find that He always convinces them of the truth and viability of His resurrection and life.
7. Ask that person that has come to Him in faith, and walks with Him day by day, studying His Word, and communing with Him in prayer. They will tell you they are as certain of His life as they are of their own.
8. In the early part of the midst of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when modernism and liberalism began to attack the most basic doctrines of the faith, there was not a more clear and intelligent voice for Christianity than that of the Presbyterian theologian, J. Gresham Machen. He once said, "The more we know of God, the more unreservedly we will trust Him."
9. Jesus is ready to convince any one who will trust Him that He is worthy of their trust. He is ready not only to convince you, but don't wait, because also:

## **B. He is ready to command you**

1. As the newly resurrected Lord continued to talk with His amazed and wide-eyed disciples, He went on to tell them in verses 46-48, "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things."
2. The empty tomb is more than a cliché, and the bodily resurrection of Jesus is more than a theological persuasion.
3. The fact that Jesus rose from the dead on the third day is the fuel that pushes His church into the uttermost parts of the earth, declaring the gospel.
4. I read an interesting paper this week, written by Dr. Russell D. Moore, who is the dean of the school of theology at Southern Seminary. The paper is entitled, "The Triumph of the Warrior-King". In that paper, Dr. Moore writes that, "The Apostle Peter sounds less like a television evangelist and more like a military strategist", when he preached at Pentecost. The reason for this, Dr. Moore says is that, "The resurrection of Jesus is good news for [His people], and bad news for the cosmic powers and their allies."<sup>iii</sup>

5. In other words, while you sit and work out the results of the resurrection for yourself, the King of kings and Lord of lords is waiting to put you to work in the progress of His kingdom over His enemies.

6. What are you waiting for? Death has been defeated; Satan and His forces are doomed; the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, and Christ is ready to use you in the march of His victory! Don't wait any longer, Christ is ready.

1. I grew up in a small, Christian school. Once a week we had chapel services, and very often in those services we would recite what they called "The Confession of Faith".

2. I don't remember it all, but I do remember saying the words, "We believe in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ."

3. So often I recited those words with little thought, and no passion. However, those are not just words! They are truth, and they are world-changing truths at that.

4. No, Jesus is not standing here with His hands and feet held out for you to touch. But as He told Thomas, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and still believe."

5. He *is* alive, and a living Lord Jesus can make all the difference in your life. Will you come to Him in faith, and let His life change yours?

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<sup>i</sup> Night of the Living Dead, *Wikipedia Article*, 9/25/08,  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Night\\_of\\_the\\_Living\\_Dead](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Night_of_the_Living_Dead)

<sup>ii</sup> Hurst, Lynda, Pentagon's Secret Weapon, 9/13/08, *thestar.com*, 9/27/08,  
<http://www.thestar.com/News/article/498545>

<sup>iii</sup> Moore, Russell D., Theology of the Warrior-King, downloaded from SBTS's website, 9/27/08,  
[http://www.henryinstitute.org/documents/Theology\\_of\\_the\\_Great\\_Commission.doc](http://www.henryinstitute.org/documents/Theology_of_the_Great_Commission.doc)