

The disciples meet the Risen Jesus * Luke 24:33-53
Easter Sunday * April 4, 2021 * Langford Community Church * Graham Gladstone

The older I get, the less – I find – I can do. I mean, in a lot of ways, I’m still a strapping young lad but even so, I can’t do everything I used to do. My body just doesn’t work the way it used to. And some of you are going ‘wait ‘til you get to be 70-80-90 years old!’

(And by the way, if you’re under thirty, you should check out the article that I posted in Facebook. This person did a study of what it’s like to be older – they put on prosthetics and binders to see what it feels like to be eighty – it’s a really eye-opening read that really helped me to understand aging. Our bodies change as we age).

And it’s not just age that changes our bodies, is it? Illness and pain all take their toll and I know that many of you can testify to that reality. In many ways, our bodies are limited.

Which makes Easter really good news. The fact of Jesus’ resurrection means that we will not always be limited by these fleshly bodies; when we believe in the risen Saviour, we are going to rise in glorified bodies.

To show you why I say that, I want to take you to the Easter stories in Luke 24 and we’re going to look specifically at Luke 24, verse 36 and onward. Luke 24:36.

Now as you turn there, let me set the stage for you.

On Good Friday, the authorities crucified Jesus and His disciples watched as He was laid in a tomb; first thing on Sunday morning, some women went to *that* tomb and discovered that not only was the stone blocking the entrance rolled away, but Jesus’ body was gone. They saw two angelic messengers who said ‘Why are you looking for the living among the dead? He is not here; He is risen!’ and the women ran off to share the good news with the other disciples.

Meanwhile, a couple other disciples were headed out of town on the Emmaus Road when a mysterious stranger showed up beside them to give them the greatest Bible study in history. He went through and showed them that everything that Jesus had just suffered was anticipated in the OT. When they stopped to have supper together, they realized that it was in fact Jesus who was with them and with that, He disappeared. So those two disciples got up at once and headed into Jerusalem where the rest of the disciples were just starting put together all the evidence that Jesus was indeed alive.

And that brings us to Luke 24:36.

36 While [the disciples] were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."

37 They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost.

38 He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds?"

39 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."

40 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet.

41 And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?"

42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate it in their presence.

Now this passage of Scripture is straight up meant to show us that Jesus truly is alive. He was dead and then He rose to life again. Luke wrote this down in his Gospel so that a guy name Theophilus would know that what he believed was true. (That's Luke 1:3-4).ⁱ

And that's why Jesus appears to the disciples and says to them – verse 39 – 'it's me, it's not a ghost – see, here, touch the wounds which bear (match the?) the marks of my crucifixion and see for yourself that I am truly alive.' This is Jesus showing us that He has truly died and risen again. That is, after all, what Easter is all about.

Often though, we'll stop there and focus our attention on JESUS' resurrection and that makes a lot of sense! It is tremendous news! But I want to take it one step further today to consider the *implications* of His resurrection, namely that since He rose again, we can have confidence that we will too. 1 Corinthians 6:14 says "By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also." That means that even if we die, we will rise again in glorified bodies. Easter is not just about Jesus' resurrection but the promise of our own.

And if you look closely at this account, you'll actually see some hints about what our resurrected bodies will be like.

Look back at the passage. Verse 39, verse 43 – around there – these verses tell us that our resurrected bodies will be physical bodies, not unlike the ones we already have. I mean, first off, they recognize that it's Him. They are dumbfounded with joy and amazement that it really is the guy they'd seen die on the cross. And second, Jesus does things that show that He has a real material existence here. Verse 39, Jesus says 'Touch me and see – a ghost doesn't have flesh and bone;' verse 43 He takes and eats some fish.

Our resurrected bodies, our eternal existence is not floating around on clouds like disembodied spirits; our eternal existence will be in real, physical bodies that have some connection to the bodies that we have now. We are not looking forward to 'Heaven' per say – like off in the clouds – but life in the New Heavens and New Earth – the restored world – that God will remake on the footprint of this one. We will recognize our loved ones; the things that we love about our bodies now will remain in our eternal ones. We will rise again into tangible bodies.

But, those tangible, resurrected bodies will not be limited the way our physical ones are now. Verse 36, the disciples were standing around in a room talking among themselves when suddenly – 'Jesus stood among them.' The two going off to Emmaus had seen Him just 'disappear.' This seems to say that our bodies will not be limited the way that our current ones are. 2 Corinthians 5 says that these bodies are like tents compared to the eternal mansions that we're going to dwell in. And they will not be limited the way our physical ones are now. Wanna see the top of Mt Everest? You'll be able to run there. Wanna tend your garden without getting tired? That's how our resurrected bodies will work. Wanna go water-skiing in your eighties? (Well, for that you just need to talk to Bob Robinson) ;)

Our resurrected bodies will be real tangible bodies, just like have now, but glorified and unhindered by the limits that we currently experience. And it's all because Jesus rose again.

Because He died to restore us to God and rose again to defeat death, we too shall rise when we believe in Him.

See our sin separates us from God. When we ignore Him and go our own way, we are walking away from the only true source of life in the world. We are accumulating an enormous debt against Him with eternal consequences and in the meantime, our bodies break down as a consequence of living in a fallen world.

But God is so rich in mercy that He chose to rescue us from sin by sending His Son to pay for that sin. Jesus died on the Cross, bearing OUR sin, to bring us back to God. And then the Father raised Jesus back to life to prove that death no longer holds sway over God's people.

That's what Jesus was talking about in verse 46 – Jesus goes back into the OT and says - "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

Jesus suffered and died for our sin and rose from the dead on the third day – that's Easter – and when we turn from sin (that's repentance) and turn to God to live for Him (that's faith), we take hold of all that Jesus died to secure for us. Our sins are forgiven and we are drawn back into relationship with God, with the utmost confidence that we will live forever with Him in glorified, resurrected bodies. 2 Corinthians 4:14 says that '...the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and [we will dwell together with Him] in his presence.' (2Co 4:14 NIV).

When you believe in the risen Saviour, you are going to rise in a glorified body. When you trust in Him, you will rise like Him.

Now let's think about what this means for us.

When you believe in the risen Saviour, you are going to rise in a glorified body.

The obvious place to start is – do you believe in the risen Saviour?

Jesus laid down His life for you. He bore my sin on the Cross and your sin on the Cross so that we could be forgiven and renewed – He "ROSE" because He "DIED" in my place! What are you doing with that gift of grace? Put your faith in the risen Saviour. Pour out your heart to Him, confessing the ways you've strayed and He will wipe the slate clean and give you eternal life. Believe in the risen Saviour.

Because – when you believe in the risen Saviour, you're going to rise in a glorified body. None of this floating around like angels eating cream cheese. You are going to live in a body that makes Olympic athletes look like chumps.

You may be suffering and struggling now, but your eternal existence will be in a tangible body that has no limits. Maybe it's hard to lift your arms, maybe you get winded going up the stairs, maybe you're like me and you can't stop shaking; when you trust in Him, Jesus is with you to help you to persevere through this life and to give you a glorified body in the next. Unless Jesus comes back first, we will all experience death, but if we're trusting in the risen Saviour, we're going to rise just like He did, in bodies that are miles ahead of what we have now. Let that give you encouragement to press on.

1 Corinthians 15 puts it like this:

42 So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable;

43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power;

44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body....

49 And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven (1Cor 15:42-49 NIV).

When you believe in the risen Saviour, you are going to rise in a glorified body.

ⁱ 3 With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴ so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.