

78. Jesus Appeared to the Disciples in Jerusalem

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to share with others the message that they can become children of God. That message, shared in love, will result in an eternal impact in the lives of some of those with whom they share. In our topic today, we want to see what happened when Jesus appeared to the disciples after the resurrection.

Jesus made several appearances on the day of His resurrection. John wrote about two of these appearances. Our last topic talked about His appearance to Mary Magdalene. In this topic, we will learn about his appearance to ten of the disciples. John 20:19-23 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, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, ‘Peace *be* with you.’ When He had said this, He showed them *His* hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.’ And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they are retained.’” Here, we see that the disciples were meeting together in a room where the doors were shut because of their fear of the Jews.

Suddenly, Jesus was standing in the middle of the room with them. Then, He spoke and said, “Peace be with you.” Luke 24:37-39 tells us about the reaction of the disciples when Jesus suddenly appeared. Those verses say, “But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. And He said to them, ‘Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.’” Jesus immediately took away their fear by His actions. We read that Jesus showed the disciples His hands and His side. This way, they were able to see where the nails had gone through His hands and where the spear had entered His side as He hung on the cross. Immediately, their fear turned to great joy.

Christ again told the disciples to have peace and then Jesus gave them a commission. Jesus had said to His Father in John 17:18, “As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.” Now, Jesus told the disciples that just as the Father had sent Him into the world, He was sending them into the world. Many Christians have isolated themselves from the world instead of obeying this command that Jesus gave. Mark 16:15 says, “And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.’” This verse tells us what all Christians are to do as we are sent into the world. We are all to be faithful by sharing the message of the death and resurrection of Jesus and that He died to pay the penalty for our sins.

Jesus also explained to the disciples how they would have the power to share the message of His death and resurrection with boldness. Jesus then breathed on the disciples and told them how they would have boldness to share that message when He said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.” Those who believe and receive that message will have their sins forgiven. In contrast, those who reject that message will die in their sins and will experience eternal judgment. We are to deliver that message with love so that the Holy Spirit can convict and the Father can draw because the Son is seeking

and will save all who come to Him.

However, Thomas was not there that night. John 20:24-29 says, “Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, ‘We have seen the Lord.’ So he said to them, ‘Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.’ And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, ‘Peace to you!’ Then He said to Thomas, ‘Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand *here*, and put *it* into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.’ And Thomas answered and said to Him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ Jesus said to him, ‘Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed *are* those who have not seen and *yet* have believed.’” Here, we see that Thomas did not experience that peace for a whole week because he did not believe.

The religious leaders had heard the words of Jesus and feared that He would rise from the dead. In contrast, the disciples heard the words but never understood the message. As a result, they had to be convinced of the resurrection. That is why the first thing that Jesus did for the ten was to show them His hands and His side. Thomas also said that He would not be convinced until he saw that same evidence. The evidence was important for each of the disciples and it was important that each one be fully convinced by evidence. When choosing a replacement for Judas, Acts 1:21-22 says, ““Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.”” The key ministry of the apostles was to be witnesses of the resurrection. Jesus wanted to make sure that each of the apostles had been careful witnesses of His resurrection.

Thomas had to wait a week before he was given that eyewitness evidence that would be necessary for him to fulfill his ministry as an apostle. The disciples were gathered again a week later. This time, Thomas was there with the other disciples. The doors were shut as they had been the first time that Jesus appeared. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there in the middle of the disciples. Jesus spoke the same words that He had spoken the previous week, “Peace to you!” Jesus wanted each of the disciples to experience inner peace in their lives and He wants the same for each of us in our lives. Philippians 4 tells us how to experience peace and then Philippians 4:7 says, “And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” That was the peace that Jesus wanted Thomas and the other disciples to have.

As a result, Jesus immediately turned to Thomas and said, ‘Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.’” Here, we see that Jesus wanted Thomas to have all the evidence that He would need in order to be an effective witness of the resurrection. As we saw, Thomas had said, “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.” Jesus made sure that Thomas would not need to depend on just his sight. Jesus made certain that everything Thomas said the previous week happened. Jesus invited Thomas to put his finger where the nail prints were in His hands. Thomas was invited to

place his hand in the hole in the side of Jesus where the spear had pierced Him. By the way, this shows that this was a rather large hole so Thomas also understood why the blood and water had poured out of the hole in His side.

We see that the desire of Jesus was for Thomas to be fully convinced of the resurrection since he would be an official witness of it. We see the response of Thomas as He said, “My Lord and my God!” 1 Corinthians 15:6 says, “After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep.” Jesus knew that there would be more than five hundred witness of His resurrection. However, He also knew that most people would have to accept the testimony of official witnesses. That was why Jesus gave each apostle the opportunity to feel the nail holes in His hands and put their hands in the hole in His side. The apostles were so convinced after this that they devoted the rest of their lives to telling others. They willingly died for that belief because they were so convinced.

Although we did not personally see Jesus after His resurrection, Jesus also wants each one of us to be fully convinced. That is why John wrote the book of John. In John 20:30-31, we read, “And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” Jesus did many other miracles (signs) that are not written in the book of John. The books of Matthew, Mark and Luke had already been written for many years by the time the book of John was written and they had recorded many other miracles. However, the miracles that were written in this book were written so that we could believe the same things that Thomas and the other apostles had believed. Thomas has said after he saw Jesus, “My Lord and my God!” John wrote so that we also have the signs as evidence of the fact that Jesus is the Son of God.

Every person, who believes and receives Jesus as Thomas did, is also given the promise in these verses. Because of their belief, they will have life in His name. John 1:12-13 says, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” We received physical life at the time of our physical birth. Spiritual birth is very different from physical birth. John made it clear that spiritual birth is even more important than physical birth because spiritual life is the result of the will of God. It is this spiritual life that gives each person that receives Jesus eternal life. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain to others that they can also receive eternal life if they believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. The Lord has promised to give that life to all who will believe He is the Son of God and receive Him into their lives. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain this life-changing message.