

Jesus Out Here Changing Lives- And He's Still Not Done

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~ Luke 24:13-49; Mark 7:31-37

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Introduction:

Good Morning! Happy easter! He is Risen!

ME:

- There's a pretty neat quote that is often attributed to Michelangelo.
- Not to be confused with the Ninja Turtle, Michelangelo was a master of renaissance art and was known for the Sistine Chapel and many famous sculptures.
- "I saw the angel in the marble and carved until I set him free."
- 4 Famous statues: Michelangelo's "the Captives"
- It's like the figures are emerging from the stone. They are still trapped and waiting to come out.
- But they can't be released from the stone themselves, they must be released by the sculptor
- It makes for a strong Parallel to our own lives.
- This week I came across an interesting quote by an author named Theodore Roeder, and about these statues he wrote: "When I looked at those partial figures, they stirred up in me a deep longing to be completed, an ache to be set free from that which distorts and disguises in prisons and inhibits my humanness, my wholeness. But as with those statues, I cannot liberate myself for that I need the hand of another."

WE:

- It's Easter! We are celebrating the empty tomb, the risen Jesus, and his victory over sin and death
- This is the biggest moment in history

- We hear testimonies of how Jesus is changing and transforming lives but sometimes we feel like we might be missing out
- We even read scripture and feel like sometimes our life doesn't look like what we read
- We sing the songs and hear the sermon and we say, "He is risen, he is risen indeed" but Monday comes and we still feel the same
- We know the story but we don't always feel the joy of it
- The resurrection changed everything... but we're still learning how to live inside that change.

Scripture doesn't leave that abstract. let's look at what actually is happening when people encounter the risen Jesus

GOD:

This morning we're going to look at two different passages so you can find both now if you like. We're going to go to Luke chapter 24 first and then we're going to go to Mark chapter 7.

Turn to Luke chapter 24. This is where Jesus has risen from the grave. The women have already found the tomb empty. They went and told the other disciples, most of whom didn't believe them but Peter ran back to the tomb and saw the empty tomb. Then we get this awesome moment where Jesus begins to start appearing to people after his resurrection.

Luke 24

¹ 13 That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles[a] from Jerusalem, 14 and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. 15 While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. 16 But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. 17 And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. 18 Then one of them, named Cleopas,

answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" 19 And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, 20 and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. 21 But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. 22 Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, 23 and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. 24 Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." 25 And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

28 So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, 29 but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them. 30 When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. 31 And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. 32 They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" 33 And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, 34 saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" 35 Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

- So here we see these two disciples walking away from Jerusalem. They're confused and disappointed and they're just really trying to process everything that's happened to them
- **And Jesus walks up beside them, but they don't recognise him.**

- Pause and think about that imagery for a minute.
 - they're walking with Jesus.
 - They're talking to Jesus.
 - They're hearing the truth right from Jesus' mouth
 - and they still don't see him
- And that's a reality that you can be close to Jesus and still not truly see him in all his glory
- We see Jesus connecting the dots for them. He is essentially reinterpreting all of scripture around himself from the law, the prophets, and the promises, and showing that the cross was actually not a failure; it was the plan.
- And then their eyes were opened and they recognised him.
- As they reflected back there is this wonderful line: "Were not our hearts burning within us?"
- And this is where it really connects with our experiences that we can be around church and in the Christian bubble but we desperately need the Holy Spirit to open up our eyes so we can truly see the magnificence of Jesus Christ
- And when Jesus opens your eyes, your heart does not stay cold.
- The revelation of who Jesus really is leads to transformation.
- But let's keep reading!

36 As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you!" 37 But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. 38 And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 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." 40 And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. 41 And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate before them.

44 Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46 and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, 47 and that repentance for[c] the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

- Now we're back in the upper room, and Jesus appears. The disciples have been hiding. The doors are locked, they're filled with fear and anxiety, and Jesus shows up and says, "Peace be with you"
- Then he shows his hands and his feet.
- And they can even see Jesus in front of them and they still don't fully believe it
- And it's not that they were doubting; it's that they were just so overwhelmed with the reality of encountering the risen Jesus
- And of course he eats some fish to continue to convince them
- And their fear turns to joy and their confusion turns to clarity and they're in awe
- And then of course in verse 45 it says, "He opened their minds to understand the scriptures."
- Again, they're right in front of Jesus and they still can't fully comprehend his word until he opens their eyes to really truly understand

And this is where we can turn to Mark chapter 7

- But this pattern of people encountering Jesus and their eyes opening and their hearts waking up and fear giving way to joy shouldn't surprise us because he's always been doing that in his ministry

- And this encounter in Mark 7 is just a beautiful picture of who Jesus is and what he does when he encounters people

. 31 Then he returned from the region of Tyre and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. 32 And they brought to him a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment, and they begged him to lay his hand on him. 33 And taking him aside from the crowd privately, he put his fingers into his ears, and after spitting touched his tongue. 34 And looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." 35 And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. 36 And Jesus[h] charged them to tell no one. But the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. 37 And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

- So, we see this man who can't hear and he can't speak clearly and people bring him to Jesus and I love what Jesus does
- He doesn't make a scene. He just pulls him aside and gets personal with him
- Then he touches him and sets him free
- Just like this man experienced liberation by the touch of Jesus Christ, so everyone who encounters him in a deep and profound way experiences freedom in their lives.
- And this interaction has this symbolic element to it: when we Encounter Jesus. We are liberated from our deafness and are able to hear and understand the Word of God.
- Once we hear the word of God, we can establish our lives upon it
- It reminds me of Isaiah 6 where it says "*People listen carefully but do not understand; watch closely but learn nothing.*"
- Jesus helps set us free to hear his Word and Praise his name!
- Jesus opens ears and loosens tongues. He's not just helping a man; he's announcing a kingdom.

- Each of these scenes (the road to Emmaus, the upper room, and this healing) are all scenes that show Jesus revealing himself, restoring the people that he's with, and a response from the individuals of Understanding and Worship
- But notice the response to people having their understanding opened by Jesus is never neutral

No one encounters the risen Jesus and stays the same. They can't stay quiet!

YOU:

- If Jesus is alive, and this is what happens when people encounter him, then what does that say about your life?
- You say you've encountered Jesus. You say you believe that he's alive
But sometimes our lives are still quiet, and our joy feels muted, and our faith stays private.
- We claim resurrection but we live like nothing's opened
- And let me be clear, this is not about guilt or trying harder or being flashier with our faith. This is about recognising something deeper
- When Jesus truly opens something in you, it comes out of you not in a forced way but in an overflow
- Because you don't have to be told to share about Jesus when he's changed your life
- For some of you, Jesus has changed your life. You know it and you've seen it
- But somewhere along the way you find yourself getting comfortable in your faith and quiet in your faith and you forgot
- Not because Jesus stopped working but because we stopped noticing.
- Maybe today isn't about doing more, but rather maybe it's about seeing Jesus again.
- And then there's some here today. You've been around all of this church stuff. You've heard about Jesus. You've seen pieces of this kingdom of God that we keep talking about but if you're honest your eyes really haven't been opened like you see happening here in the scriptures

- You've been around Jesus, face to face with him but you haven't experienced what happens when he opens your life

Gospel Call:

- Well, the good news is that Easter isn't 'try to open your life to God'
- The good news is that Jesus opens what you can't
- Just like the disciples on the road, the disciples in the room, the man who needed healing
- Jesus is the one who stepped in and he spoke to them and he healed them and he changed them. He opened their eyes
- Just like those statues we talked about at the beginning: trapped in stone and longing to be free. They are unable to break themselves out.
- That's not just art, that's us. We can't set ourselves free; we can't carve ourselves out; we need the hand of another.
- And Jesus is the one who can set you free
- He lived, died, and rose again and then he walked out of that grave.
- All you need to do is confess your sin, and confess that Jesus is Lord, and trust him as your saviour.
- All of history changed two thousand years ago when Jesus got out of that tomb

And the same Jesus who walked out of that tomb will begin a work in you that you could never do on your own

WE:

- For fifty years Jesus has been opening eyes and ears and loosening tongues in this place
- Jesus hasn't been just building an organisation or gathering a bunch of people together for no reason. He's been forming a people

- And we are a people who have seen too much to stay quiet

We are a people who have experienced God's freedom

And we're a people who have encountered the risen Jesus

- That's who we are and that's who we will continue to be
- We'll continue to speak, we'll continue to praise, we'll continue to tell the story because when Jesus opens lives, we don't stay silent
- And we will continue to grow to be a church that strives to love God and serve others so that lives are changed!
- All because – He is risen! He is risen indeed.

Let's pray.

Jesus, thank you that you are alive. Thank you for the cross and thank you that the tomb is empty, that sin is forgiven, death is defeated, and hope is real.

Thank you that you are still at work here. Thank you that you that after 50 years, you are still opening eyes and still changing lives!

Would you open our hearts to see you more clearly and respond to what you've done? Would you encourage those who are tired, would you reignite the love for people who have been distracted from you. For the people who feel stuck, would you bring them freedom? For those who are feeling distant, would you draw near to them?

Would you reveal yourself to us all, and don't let us stay quiet, rather let our lives reflect the joy of the risen Jesus. We love you, and we trust you. In your name, amen.

Benediction

1 Peter 1:3

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”