

Eyewitness to the Resurrected Savior

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 15 December 2024

Preacher: Nathan Rambeck

[0 : 00] Go ahead and open up our Bibles to the last chapter in Mark. And by the way, the bulletin says that the title of this message is going to be on Jesus' commission to his disciples.

We're actually not going to get that far today. I, after kind of going over my notes this week, I decided there's just too much here in these resurrection appearances of Jesus to talk about. And I don't want to necessarily do a two-hour sermon. I reserve the right to do that in the future. No, I don't think so.

I know that we all have limits to our attention span, including me. And so, but today we're going to be looking at Jesus' appearance.

Last week we looked at Jesus' burial and then his resurrection from the dead. And the first ones to discover Jesus' empty tomb were some ladies.

[1 : 05] And we talked about those ladies we have identified by name. Mary, the mother of James, which is really Mary, the mother of Jesus. Mary Magdalene.

And then also Salome, who we know is the mother of James and John, two of Jesus' disciples.

Today we're going to look, starting at verse 9, and just look at really just a few verses.

But Mark here greatly summarizes what happens after Jesus rises from the dead. That's a very short summary. One of the other things that we're going to look at, not next week, because next week will be more of a Christmas message.

But the week after, we're going to finish up with the book of Mark by considering really verses 9 through 20, which are actually disputed in some Bibles.

Some people say these verses should not be included in our Bibles today. And we'll look at that question, kind of weigh the evidence, look at the debate throughout history, and take a closer look at that.

[2 : 15] And also just take a broader view of how did we get the Bible that we have today? How did that happen? There are some, for example, the Catholic Church, they actually have extra books that we don't have in our Bibles.

And why is that the case? We'll look at a few of those things, but specifically focusing here on this longer version of Mark. But we're going to take a closer look at Mary Magdalene, who she is, because that's one of the appearances that is detailed here in Mark.

And also these two disciples that are on the road. And then finally we're going to look at one of the things that Jesus emphasized to his disciples, the 11 that it describes him finally seeing.

The importance of faith and believing without seeing. Let's go ahead and read this passage. It's just a, I'm not sure how many verses, verses 9 through 13, four verses.

Now when he arose on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven demons. She went and told those who had been with him as they mourned and wept.

[3 : 29] And when they heard that he was alive and had seen, and had been seen by her, they did not believe. After that, he appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country.

And they went and told it to the rest. But they did not believe them either. Later he appeared to the 11 as they sat at the table.

And he rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart because they did not believe those who had seen him after he had risen. So verses 9 through 14 there is what we'll look at today.

Like I said, the other gospels, there are four gospels, actually describe quite a bit further some of the details around Jesus' appearance to many people on that Sunday of the resurrection.

But then also later on. Now, it can be a challenge because these are four different accounts from four different eyewitnesses.

[4 : 38] People who were there, actually probably more than four. Luke, we know, was written by a Gentile. Luke was a Gentile. Actually, that's somewhat disputed. But most people believe that Luke was a Gentile.

But there's no indication that Luke was an eyewitness to any of the things that he wrote in his gospel. But he describes how he interviewed, basically, eyewitnesses.

And that's where he, those are the sources that he used to write his account of the story of Jesus Christ. But as you read through these four different accounts of the post-resurrection appearances, it can be a little bit confusing.

And some have actually used that to say, well, it looks like there's some contradictions here. There is a type of Bible, I don't know if it's, I don't know if you call it a Bible per se, but it's called a Harmony of the Gospels.

Does anybody have anything like that? You can get a book, and it basically takes all four gospels, and it tries to harmonize them. You'll see four different columns, and in each column is a passage either from Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John.

[5 : 51] Sometimes it's only, the column only contains, or those four columns, three of them are empty, and there's only text in one, because that gospel only described that event.

Sometimes all four columns will be filled with text. Some will have more, some will have less. And the whole idea is to try to take that story, and this is not just the resurrection appearances.

It does this for the entire account of the Gospels. But it helps you to kind of see, well, what were the different eyewitness accounts? Some things, like I said, were witnessed in just one of the Gospels, some two, some three, and some in all four.

So you can buy a physical book that has something like that, or you can just Google Gospel Harmony and find an online version, which can be helpful as you read the Gospels.

But reconciling exactly what happened here after the empty tomb, or from the empty tomb on, and really all that happened on that Sunday can be a challenge.

[7 : 04] Jesus, while he was on the earth, you know, he was just walking around with everybody, with his disciples. He was basically constantly with his disciples. But after he rose from the dead, he became somewhat of a man of mystery.

He wasn't just hanging out with the disciples like he was before. He would show up and appear to some people, a few, sometimes to all 12, sometimes to even larger crowds. But then he would disappear again.

And this happened for over the course of several weeks until finally he had one last gathering, and then he ascended up into heaven. I just wanted to describe some of the different accounts, or list really, some of the different accounts of him appearing to people after his resurrection.

On just this one day, on this Sunday, it says that he first appeared to Mary Magdalene. We're going to be looking at that closer. He appeared to her alone at the garden tomb.

It also says that he appeared to the other women who had gone to the tomb. And then it says that there were two disciples. There are two accounts.

[8 : 14] Some people think they're the same. Others, you know, maybe you're not so convinced. But we'll be looking at one of those accounts here in Mark. And then there's also a reference to Jesus appearing to Peter by himself.

There's no detailed account of it, just a reference to that in two different places. One actually is not even in the Gospels. One reference to Jesus appearing to Peter is actually by Paul in Corinthians. We'll look at that passage a little bit later on. And then after that first day, oh, and then, sorry, at the end of that day, it references Jesus appearing to some of the disciples.

And then later on that evening, possibly, it's a little bit unclear, but he appeared to all 11 of the disciples. And then later on, there's appearances to some of the disciples while they were fishing, if you remember that story.

And then he saw the 11 again at another time in Galilee. And then there's a reference to him actually appearing before over 500 of his followers all at once.

[9 : 21] There's also a reference to him appearing to his biological brother, if you will, James, at some point. And then also to the other disciples.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 15, there's a reference. In 1 Corinthians chapter 15 is a passage about the gospel of our salvation.

What is the gospel? The gospel is that Jesus died and he rose again for our sins. But it says this in 1 Corinthians chapter 15, verses 3 through 8, talking about all the people that Jesus appeared to you.

It says this, For I delivered to you, first of all, that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.

By the way, that is the gospel message. You know, it's amazing today. So many people confuse what is the gospel. Is the gospel, is it just following Jesus in some kind of generic way?

[10:24] Is the gospel doing some of the things that Jesus commanded? No, those things are good, but the gospel, the message, the good news, is that Jesus died for your sins.

That he died, he was buried, and then he rose again on the third day. That is the gospel message. That's the message that we need people to hear and that needs to be believed.

Verse 5, And then he transitions, talking about the gospel, and then he talks about all the people who were eyewitnesses to the resurrection. And that he was seen by Cephas.

That's a reference to Peter. Then by the twelve. Was it really the twelve? No, it was actually eleven, right? He didn't appear to Judas, but why does he say the twelve?

That was kind of a nickname given to his disciples. That's why it says the twelve. 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.

[11:22] This is Paul writing years later, after all these things happened, but as he's writing to the Corinthians, telling them, hey, you have reasons to believe these things are true, and by the way, don't just take my word for it.

There are still people alive today. You can go and check out for yourself. And I imagine some actually did. And this is one of the reasons why the Bible has been found to be so trustworthy, is because there's so many opportunities in all of these writings for people, at the time, to go check it out and say, I didn't find anybody who saw these things.

These guys are just making all this up. And then what would have happened? People would have realized, this is a load of bunk, and these scriptures would not have been carried down from generation to generation like they have to us today.

After that, he was seen by James. That's a reference to the Lord's brother. Then by all the apostles. And then it says this, then last of all, he was seen by me also, as one born out of due time.

This is interesting. Paul talks about him being an eyewitness to the resurrected Christ. And it's interesting because when did he see Jesus?

[12:40] After, we don't know if he was an eyewitness to Jesus before his crucifixion. I don't think he ever says. But it doesn't seem like he saw Jesus between the time that he rose from the dead and he ascended.

But Paul saw the resurrected Jesus both on that road to Damascus, and also through visions and dreams later on.

And that was an important thing because Paul had a special mission as the apostle to the Gentiles. We'll obviously be talking about that in later weeks as we look at the Great Commission in a couple weeks.

But let's look at this appearance to Mary Magdalene. It says in Mark 16, verse 9, Now, when he arose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven demons.

Now, we know because we just read this last week, that at the tomb, there were several women who went. The three that we mentioned. But then also, there's references to other women, too, that are unnamed.

[13:45] So we don't know exactly how many women went to the tomb that morning. But it can be a little bit confusing because it indicates here that he appeared only to Mary Magdalene by herself.

And so what exactly happened here? It's not completely clear.

There are not details tying all of these accounts together. But there are ways to kind of put all the different stories together that makes sense.

And this happens in any kind of testimony, right? Sometimes you might talk to two or three people and get some different stories, and it doesn't seem like they really line up. But then when you have some additional details added, you find out, oh, okay, I was making some assumptions here about this or that, but I shouldn't have made those kinds of assumptions.

So big picture, this is likely what happened. Mary Magdalene and the other women went to that empty tomb. They saw when they got there, the stone rolled away.

[14:59] We know that because we read in Mark that there were some women, at least, that went into the tomb and they saw, was it one or two angels? Accounts show different things.

But when we give a testimony, do we always have to give every detail? No. So you can talk about just the one angel or you can talk about both, and it's fine either way.

There's no account that says there was only one angel, right? But the women went in and they saw an angel, and then they went and left and went to go get the disciples to tell them.

Well, what we see with Mary Magdalene is that she went specifically, and she went and got two of the disciples, Peter and John.

At least those are the ones that are mentioned that go back with her, back to the tomb. And so what it appears like, this is kind of what we can surmise, is that as these ladies went to the tomb, Mary Magdalene probably saw the open tomb and realized something had happened.

[16:05] And so she immediately goes back to find Peter and John, who are probably somewhere else than the other disciples. And if you remember, when all the disciples fled, there were two that actually stayed in the city.

Who were those? It was Peter and John. Remember, Peter followed Jesus kind of at a distance, and it says John did as well. And so it's likely that they were actually maybe even staying in the city of Jerusalem.

So Mary Magdalene likely sees the open tomb, doesn't see the angels because we find out from her testimony when she goes back to Peter and John, she says somebody took his body and I don't know who.

When you read the account, it seems like she was probably there and she saw the angels. Why would she say that to Peter and John? But what likely happened was she left sooner before she saw the angels.

The other women went inside the tomb, and that's where they interacted with the angel. And then as the rest of the story goes, these women also went back to the disciples as well.

[17:13] But then there's a little bit of a different account. They go back to the disciples and describe how there was the empty tomb, and they saw these angels, and Jesus is risen. Well, it's likely that these women, they went to some of the other disciples who were probably back in Bethany.

That's where Jesus typically stayed when he went to Jerusalem. That's where a lot of them stayed. They would stay overnight in Bethany, which was just outside the city on the Mount of Olives. So there's lots of details.

There's actually a great, as many of you are familiar with the Answers in Genesis ministry, they do the Ark and the Creation Museum. They have a great page on their website that gives kind of an overview of what likely might have happened based on all of the details.

And you realize when you stop making some of the assumptions that all the disciples must have been together and that all the women must have stayed together as they went to the tomb and they went back to the disciple, when you remove those assumptions, you start to see, okay, this actually does make sense.

So back to Mary Magdalene. When she sees Jesus, it's not the first time that she goes to the tomb. It's actually the second time.

[18:26] When she's there the first time, she goes back and gets Peter and John. And then it says that she returns. And I didn't write this down. I can't remember which gospel account, but it describes that Peter and John run as fast as they can back to the tomb.

They see the empty tomb. They find the grave clothes. And then they leave. But then it says that Mary Magdalene stayed behind. And that is when Jesus appeared to her.

She saw him and thought at first that he was a gardener. And she asked this gardener, do you know what they did with Jesus' body?

Please tell me so that I can take his body. At this point, she still thought that Jesus was dead. Somebody had just stolen the body. But it was at that time that Jesus said her name, Mary. And as soon as she heard her name from him, she realized that it was her Savior. I want to just mention something just related to this account.

[19 : 31] But the Bible is pretty clear that Mary Magdalene was the very first person to see Jesus after he rose from the dead.

And I think we can consider that quite a privilege, right, to be the first one that Jesus really reveals himself to. He didn't have to appear to her first.

At least it doesn't seem to me that that is the case. But I think we can see how dear Mary Magdalene was to Jesus.

And I think it was because Jesus was so dear to her. There's not a lot in Scripture about who Mary Magdalene was, but there's enough to know kind of where she's coming from and why Jesus was so dear to her.

The Bible says that she was a prostitute. She was a woman who sold herself to men, selling her the sacred vessel that God gave to her, her own body, selling it to men for cheap thrills.

[20 : 47] And that's a vile thing to do. She was a very sinful woman. Not sometimes, a lot of times we think of sinners as being victims of her circumstances.

And a lot of times those kinds of things come into play. But we ought not to downplay the seriousness of sin. You know, especially today, we have efforts in our modern culture, right, to downplay prostitution.

What's the name for it? We call it today sex work, right? As if it's some kind of reasonable work that you can do. Hollywood and the modern culture try to normalize prostitution.

She was a prostitute who sold herself to men. But also, the Bible says that there were seven demons cast out of her by Jesus.

She was filled with demons. And why was that? Why do we think that she was filled with demons? Well, almost certainly, because this is what we see over and over and over again, she was filled with demons because she invited them in.

[22 : 04] Through witchcraft, worshipping demons, sometimes drug use, other occult activities. And is that unique to that period, to that era?

Or are these things that people do even today? Play with demonic powers, the occult. In fact, I just read this earlier this week, an account online of somebody who talked about how they've been taking drugs, hallucinogenic drugs, for years and years.

And this, just recently, they had an experience. They experienced, you know, talking to other entities before through these hallucinogenic drugs.

But this time, it went really south. And he found himself naked in public, being arrested by police because of that. The demons who he had been talking to all those years finally took him over the line, if you will.

But this Mary Magdalene, who was a prostitute, a whore, filled with demons, had found forgiveness. And rescued through Jesus Christ.

[23 : 23] She owed a great debt. And that great debt was forgiven by Jesus. There's a story, and some people think maybe this actually describes Mary Magdalene.

It's not clear. Some people say, no, it can't be. Others say, yeah, maybe it is. But we can see from this story of a woman going to Jesus when he was at the home of a Pharisee named Simon.

This woman comes in, and she anoints Jesus, washes his feet, anoints him with oil, and she is called by this Pharisee a sinner.

And this Pharisee says, why are you letting this woman come in? I'm going to read just a portion of this. It's quite a long passage, but I'm just going to read a portion. It's in Luke 7, verse 43.

Luke 7, 43. Simon, again, this is not Simon Peter. This is a Pharisee whose house Jesus was at. Simon answered and said, sorry, this is starting in the middle of a story.

[24 : 32] Jesus had told a parable, and many of you may remember this, about two people who owed a debt, right? One owed a tremendous debt, and the other owed a small debt.

And at the end, both debts were forgiven. But he asked the question, who would be more grateful? Who would love the forgiver more? The one who had the greater debt or the one who had the smaller debt?

Simon answered, Luke 7, 43, and said, I suppose the one whom he forgave more. And Jesus said to him, you have rightly judged.

Then he turned to the woman and said to Simon, do you see this woman? I entered your house. You gave me no water for my feet, but she has washed my feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head.

You gave me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss my feet since the time I came in. You did not anoint my head with oil, but this woman has anointed my feet with fragrant oil.

[25 : 37] Therefore I say to you, her sin, her sins, which are many, notice he does not dismiss her sins as no matter as, he doesn't diminish the weight of her sin, but he says this, therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven.

For she loved much, but to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little. And we see this play out, and I've seen this in my own experience, those who come from a life of just debauchery and just gross sinful behavior, and they find the Lord, they find forgiveness in the Lord, and you see such a love in their hearts for the Lord because of what he did for them, whereas those who maybe grew up in the Christian faith, they didn't really, you know, sow their wild oats or whatever they might call it these days.

We're all sinners, right? We all have all sinned, some in big ways, some in smaller, but don't have that same passion for the Lord. I think if we would all take a close look at our own hearts and where we've been, especially in the past, a lot of times, some of us, maybe we would have done the things that others did, but maybe we just didn't have the, quote, courage, we're too afraid of the consequences or what people would think, but really we wanted to do those things in our hearts. We would see that group, how big the weight of sin was in our own hearts. We would be more grateful and more loving of him. And so, going back to Mary Magdalene, I think that her love for him was just so tremendous.

We know that she followed him in his ministry up in Galilee, and she followed him down to Jerusalem. The Bible indicates that her and some other women helped care for him and the disciples while he was doing his earthly ministry.

[27 : 39] But she had a deep affection for him, and I think we can see here that he had a deep affection for her as well. I want to just take this as an opportunity to talk about women in the Bible because if you read accounts in the Bible and you kind of count up the accounts of women and men, what are you going to find?

There's a lot more references to men in the Bible than women. One of my kids asked me about that one time, and, well, why is that the case? And I think this is just something you see throughout all of history, not just the Bible, that men tend to take a more front and center role in history, in stories. And a lot of times, women are more in the background. And I think that just speaks to the nature of God's design, right? God created men and women differently. Is that true?

I know there's a lot of confusion out in the world, but this is undeniable by nature, but also the Bible tells us. Men and women are different. God created men to lead, to conquer, to build things. And he created women to help, to assist, but also to comfort, to care, to nurture. And those leadership, those building roles tend to be more front and center, more visible, more in the foreground.

[29 : 02] And the nurturing, the caring, the helping, more in the background. And our modern culture thinks, well, that's not fair, or whatever, and we have all kinds of confusion, trying to undermine the natural order of things, the way that really God designed things to be.

But I think some have made a mistake in observing this fact of nature, this less prominent role that women have in the Bible or in history, and seen it as an indicator that God has less care or concern for women.

Or maybe their contributions in the world are less valuable. But I think it would be utterly foolish to make a mistake.

like that. You know, there's a passage in 1 Corinthians 12 about the body of Christ.

And we're all different, right? We have different roles. And Paul uses the picture of a physical body, hands, arms, toes, ears, nose, a mouth, all these different parts of a body, to describe this group of people we call the church, and how each person plays a different role.

[30 : 25] And he makes a point that some of those members are more prominent, they're more out in the open, more visible, and others are more in the background, more private, if you will.

And I want to read this from 1 Corinthians 12, starting in verse 20. 1 Corinthians 12, 20. 1 Corinthians 12, 20. 1 Corinthians 12, 20. But now, indeed, there are many members, yet one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you, nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor. And our unpresentable parts have greater modesty, but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, and that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. [31 : 30] Now, this isn't specifically or per se speaking of any differences between men and women, but I think we can apply that, this scripture, to that.

Right, those members of the body that are more out in the open, out in public, have really less honor, even though visibly there's more honor there.

But it's important, Paul says, to give additional honor, to give specific honor, to give special honor to those that are more private as he describes it.

and so I think this is something that we should do when it comes to men and women. And I think we've done a better job of this in different parts of our history.

I think about, I don't know, do we call it the Victorian era? And, you know, one of the things that, who's the author?

[32 : 30] I can't even remember her name. Jane, Jane Austen, thank you. she writes about stories about these kinds of things. And there's a lot of romance and those kinds of things. But one of the things that you find is that there is this honor given by men to women in that era that you don't see in other parts of history.

And I think that's wonderful. Just simple things like, you know, opening up a door for a woman. Or men standing up as a woman comes to be seated at the table.

There are instances of men laying down their coats, right, for a woman so she doesn't get her feet muddy. And those are examples, I think, of what the Bible is talking about here.

We also have throughout probably a greater portion of history kind of the opposite where women, because they're in a position of weakness and vulnerability, are stomped on. men abuse their strength, their power, their position, their authority when really they should be doing what the Bible teaches and giving additional honor, extra honor, special honor to women.

There's been, I notice, culturally a reaction to feminism today, both in the secular world but also in the Christian world. And I think rightly so, feminism has been a blight on our modern culture.

[34 : 00] It is a rebellion really against God's design. But many times as we see, a reaction can turn into an overreaction and I see these things in the culture where men are kind of saying, hey, wait a second, this feminism stuff is for the birds and it's not really natural and so we men, we need to take our position again.

and restore the patriarchy. Patriarchy is good but it turns into men treating women like trash or less honorable than they should.

We have these movements, I don't know if you've heard of these, the red pill movement, men going their own way, men's rights movement, and a lot of it is just angry, angry men a lot of whom I think didn't grow up with good fathers who are just kind of lashing out at some of the things that they see and they maybe make good, they see how things are broken but then they don't understand the right way to do things.

These kinds of things I think have even infected the church where there's an overemphasis on the authority of men and a demeaning of women and their role. In fact, I heard a sermon clip a few months back where a pastor was bragging about how he told his wife, his wife was reading a theology book, a book about some kind of, a Bible doctrines book, and he told her, you're not allowed to read that book.

I don't want you to get ahead of me on anything. So she needed to make sure she gets his permission to read theology books anyway. I'm sure the cooking books maybe were fine but not the theology books.

[35 : 58] And I think that is just this overreaction and it's so easy, right, to get on one ditch or the other when it comes to anything. And when we read the scriptures, instead of reacting to what's going on in the culture, we read the scriptures and we can try to stay on that narrow path right in the middle.

Peter speaks to this specifically. He speaks to husbands. He says this in 1 Peter 3 verse 7, Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding. He's talking about your wife. With understanding, giving honor to the wife as to the weaker vessel and as being heirs together of the grace of life that your prayers may not be hindered. men, your wife, she is the weaker vessel. She's more vulnerable. She's in a position of care and nurture and serving others that has tremendous value, more than I think we can even imagine. We ought to honor the women in our lives as much as we can, find opportunities to honor them, just like Jesus did here with Mary Magdalene.

[37 : 15] Let's go on to verse 16, or excuse me, verse 10 in Mark chapter 16. She went and told those who had been with him as they wept or mourned and wept.

So remember, Mary had gone to the tomb, left before she found out what happened, got the disciples, then went back with them. They saw the empty tomb. She stays there. They leave. She meets Jesus there in the garden tomb, right outside the garden, right outside the tomb in the garden, and then she goes back again to the disciples to say, hey, they didn't steal his body.

He's actually alive. I saw him. So that's what it's described here in this short brief sentence. Verse 11, it says this, and when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe.

And you can imagine, you can understand, this is unbelievable. But we'll find out in a second that Jesus wasn't as quite as understanding. It tells another story.

[38 : 24] Again, this is so brief. It's described in more detail. In fact, I think we'll take the time, since we have some time, we'll take the time to read what I think is the same account in Luke, but much more expanded.

It looks like this is, it says here, he appeared, verse 12, that he appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the countryside.

So he's appearing to two disciples, unnamed, as they're going into the countryside. There's another account in Luke, Luke chapter 24, verse 13. You can turn there because we're going to actually read through this quite a bit.

And it speaks about two disciples who are going on their way to a place called Emmaus, which by the way, is in the countryside. And so it seems that almost certainly this is the same account. One very brief in one sentence and this other one actually several paragraphs long. But let's read this just so that we have a better understanding of exactly what happened.

[39 : 26] Luke chapter 24, verse 13. Now behold, two of them, that was two of the disciples, and again, we don't know if this is two of the twelve disciples or two of kind of the greater group of disciples.

because they're not named. Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. And they talked together of all these things which had happened, talking about Jesus being crucified.

And so it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were restrained so that they did not know him. Now you'll notice back in Mark, it said that Jesus appeared in a different form.

And so there's kind of two different approaches to, there was, they weren't, they didn't immediately recognize Jesus is the point. And does it mean that Jesus like was a shapeshifter or something and he appeared as, you know, some other guy?

I don't think that's the case. I think he was probably just dressed in a way that they didn't recognize him. That's probably what the case was. But also their eyes were restrained so there was an intentional restraining of their eyes to be able to recognize him.

[40 : 39] And he said to them, what kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad? Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to him, are you the only stranger in Jerusalem and have you not known the things which happened there in these days?

And he said to them, what things? So they said to him, the things concerning Jesus of Nazareth who was a prophet, mighty indeed and word. Before God and all the people, now the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death and crucified him.

But we were hoping that it was he who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all of this, today is the third day since these things happened. Yes, and certain women of our company who arrived at the tomb early astonished us when they did not find his body.

They came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said he was alive. And certain 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. Then he said to them, O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?

[41 : 48] Now at this point, they still don't know who this guy is.

But he's expounding all these scriptures. Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and he indicated that he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us, for it is toward the evening, and the day is far spent.

And he went to stay with them. Now it came to pass, as he sat at the table with them, that he took bread, and blessed it, and he broke it, and gave it to them.

Then their eyes were opened, and they knew him, and he vanished from their sight. They said to one another, Did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us on the road, and while he opened the scripture to us?

There was this burning in their heart when Jesus was speaking to them, but they didn't recognize who he was. Their eyes were intentionally kind of restrained, the Bible says, but he, isn't that kind of a fun way for him to reveal himself?

[42 : 57] As he goes to eat with them, and he breaks the bread, and he blesses it just like he did the day before. And then they recognized who he was.

And then it says what? He vanished. What does that mean? Did he run out? There's actually indications that Jesus kind of just dematerialized. There's another account where he actually goes to see the twelve, they're inside of a room, and he's just like there all of a sudden.

It's actually a very interesting question about the kind of body that Jesus has now, that immortal body, the same kind that will be given to us.

moving along here in Mark, it says this, and they, Mark 16, verse 13, and they went and they told it to the rest, but they did not believe them either.

So they run back to the other disciples, and those disciples did not believe their testimony either. verse 14, later he appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table, and he rebuked their unbelief and their hardness of heart because they did not believe those who had seen him after he had risen.

[44 : 16] I was talking about this passage with my, with Jamie, and as we were driving in the car the other day, and she said, bummer.

And so I put that on my notes. This is a bummer, right? The first time you see Jesus after he's raised from the dead, he rebukes you because you didn't believe. And, you know, how many people did believe just because they heard the testimony?

Are there any? I don't see in any of these accounts those who just heard a testimony from somebody else without seeing Jesus in front of their eyes, and they actually believed. There isn't anybody.

But still, Jesus is, hey, you should have believed the eyewitnesses. You should have believed their testimony. What did he just tell these people on the road to Emmaus?

You should have believed the prophets. The prophets told you this for centuries. One of the things that this shows us is God's love for this whole concept of faith.

[45 : 20] And a lot of people are confused on what is faith anyway? Is faith just believing what anybody tells you? Is that what faith is? Well, no. That's called stupidity. Right?

Somebody comes and tells you any kind of story and you just believe it? That's insane. We would never do that. But faith is believing a credible account, an account from somebody that is trustworthy, whether it's a friend or whether it's from history.

And all the evidence seems to come together and it points to this one truth. You don't see it with your eyes. It's maybe a promise for the future or a resurrection of a person like we're talking about here.

You don't see it with your eyes, but you know it must be true because the evidence all points to it. That's what faith is. So our faith is not an unreasonable faith, an illogical faith.

It is a reasonable faith based on evidence. But God wants us to believe things, things that he promises us, things that he has done that we don't see.

[46 : 22] He wants us to believe them because there's value to that. We don't always understand why. You know, the vast majority of those who trust in Christ, who believe that Jesus died on the cross for their sins, have never seen Jesus.

Not with their eyes, right? I would venture to say that that describes all of us in this room. That we all who are trusting in Jesus right now have not seen him with our physical eyes.

And this is what, this is the history of most of Christianity, right? There are very, very few people who can say, I saw Jesus risen from the dead with my own eyes.

God has pleasure when it comes to faith. There's a whole chapter in Hebrews, Hebrews chapter 11, and it describes all these men, men and women, one person after the next, about how they believed, how they had faith in the promises of God, even though they didn't see it, even though they didn't receive the promise, because the promise was off in the future.

It says this in Hebrews chapter 11, verse 6, without faith, it is impossible to please him. God is pleased when we believe him.

[47 : 50] There's another story, and this is in the book of John, the gospel of John, chapter 20, and it's about a disciple named Thomas.

And Thomas is famous for what? He's famous for doubting. We actually give him the nickname Doubting Thomas. Because what did he say when the disciples told him, Jesus is alive, we saw him, because he actually wasn't there.

The first time Jesus appeared to the 12 or the 11, Thomas wasn't there. He was, I don't know what he was doing, but he was not there. And all the other disciples told him, we saw Jesus alive, and he said, I don't believe you.

And he said, you know what? The only way I'm going to believe you, if Jesus stands in front of me, and I can actually touch the holes in his hand. And put my hand in his side.

It's the only way I'm going to believe you. And that incredible account where Jesus shows up to Thomas, and he says, hey Thomas, here I am. You want to put your hands there?

[48 : 54] You want to put your fingers into my side, into that hole that is there? And this is how it finishes off. John, chapter 20, verse 29. This is what he says to Thomas.

Jesus said to him, Thomas, because you have seen me, you have believed, and blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. Those who trust in Christ without seeing him with their own eyes have a special blessing, are especially blessed beyond those who believed, like Thomas, like the other 11, because they saw.

And who does that describe? Well, hopefully that describes us. You know, we will have, all of us who trust in Christ, we will have an entire eternity to live a life of sight where we can see and walk with Jesus side by side, face to face.

We'll have an entire eternity of that. But God has determined that in this short, brief period of life that we live, that he wants us to walk by faith, right?

There's that passage from Paul also in Corinthians, we walk by faith and not by sight. That's the kind of life that we live, and God is especially pleased by it.

[50 : 16] There's a passage from Peter. Again, Peter is one of the ones who saw Jesus. This is in 1 Peter 1, verse 3. And Peter says this, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

He's speaking about this resurrection, and through that resurrection of the dead, we have hope to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that does not fade away, reserved in the heaven for you.

Who are kept by the power of God through faith. That's how we receive this salvation. It's through our faith. Through faith for salvation, ready to be revealed at the last time.

You see, even though we're believing now, there's some things we receive now, but even those things we believe by faith. But there's a future coming in which all of the things that are promised to us who believe will become reality, will become fulfilled.

In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom

having not seen, you love.

[51 : 50] Though now you do not see him, yet believing you rejoice with joy, inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

You see, there's this short time where it's just our faith. And sometimes it seems exhausting. And we're just waiting for that time that's going to come in which we'll see him face to face, this body that we suffer in, through pain, sometimes persecution.

All those things are going to be over. And we won't have to live that life of faith anymore. But for now, that faith, which is called here a test, is working something in us.

It's doing something in us that I think a thousand years from now, we will understand just how valuable it was.

The last verse here in 2 Corinthians 4.16. Paul's talking about the things that we suffer in this world, and we hold on to the faith that we have in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

[52 : 54] 2 Corinthians 4.16. Therefore, we do not lose heart, even though our outward man is perishing, our outward man is dying. Yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. While we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.

For things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. And so, even though we don't always understand why we have to wait, why can't Jesus just come to me in a vision or a dream, just give me a few minutes.

I want to see you. Take away this pain and suffering. I want to experience that new body that you promised us who believe, the glory indescribable, that eternal weight of glory, it says, that is being worked in us.

And so, I think that we ought to take opportunities, even though we don't always understand, to thank God and say, God, I thank you for the life of faith. We have this opportunity, we won't have ever again, I don't think, to live a life of faith that will work something in us that God has determined is so valuable.

[54 : 29] That's why he put us in this position. Are you grateful today for the life of faith? Are you grateful for all of his promises, the things that he gives us to hold on to?

Amen? Let's pray. Father, thank you for all that you accomplished. You appeared to all these men and women, and they are eyewitnesses.

You needed to appear to some people. If you didn't appear to anyone, of course, there wouldn't be any eyewitnesses to tell the next generation that Jesus was alive. But you have determined that, for most of us anyway, that we would trust in you because of the evidence, not because of the eyewitness testimony, because of everything that points, all the words from the scriptures that point to you.

And we thank you for the opportunity to live our lives by faith. And I ask that we would do that, pleasing you, trusting in you, that work would have its weight of glory done in us.

We thank you for being our help, our guide, our comfort, whenever we have times of need. Thank you for dying for us and giving us eternal life just by trusting in you.

[55 : 46] We thank you for all these things. In Jesus' name, amen.