

Remnant Life Church

April 16, 2023

Before the Ascension

Luke 24:13-35

The account of the resurrection of Jesus did not end on that Sunday morning

- If you remember, we looked briefly at a couple of the stories that were circulated that weekend in an effort to discredit the fact that Jesus had been seen alive
 - But Jesus Himself was going to dispel the most popular rumors being circulated
- They proclaimed, among other things that...
 - Jesus was not really dead meaning that the Romans would have failed at what they had become experts at and had successfully accomplished tens of thousands of times before
 - The women went to the wrong tomb – an unused empty tomb – and that was what they reported back to the disciples in confusion
 - A third rumor that we did not talk about was His disciples took Him
 - This was in actuality what the soldiers guarding the tomb were instructed to say
 - **Matt 28:11-13** – guards given money and told to report the disciples took the body while they slept
 - So...the same disciples who fled in the Garden?
 - The same men who were hiding in a room behind a locked door gripped with fear? (**John 20:19**)
 - And then in their grief, anguish and timidity rolled the massive stone away; overpowered the trained, professional lethal soldiers, and then made away with Jesus' body undetected and unseen?
 - Those disciples?
- Well, Jesus addressed every untrue explanation by appearing to nearly 600 people, in a variety of settings, in a variety of locations, in a time period that lasted 40 days or nearly 6 weeks

Numbers are used a great deal in the Bible each with specific meaning and purpose

- Now, before you get nervous and think I'm going to launch into something that endorses numerology – let me be very clear
 - God created and used numbers first
 - Numerology, which is the occult significance of numbers, is a perversion of what God used in a right and holy way
 - Then, you might ask, what is the difference between numbers in the Bible and numerology?
 - Numerology is an attempt to divine wisdom or knowledge about an individual, their personality, or their future through demonic power

- God's use of numbers only occurs to confirm His majesty and to help us to understand them so that we can understand His will and His ways

The number 40 – the number of days from Jesus' resurrection to His ascension - is used 146 times in the Bible

- It is most often used in association with a period of testing, of transition or change, and a period of trial – for instance...
 - With Noah and his family in the ark, it rained for 40 days and 40 nights (**Gen 7:12**)
 - Moses lived for 120 years divided into 3 equal segments
 - 40 years in Egypt, 40 years in Midian, and then 40 years after Midian with the Hebrew people
 - During those periods of 40 years Moses underwent great change to become the man God was preparing to lead the nation of Israel out of bondage and through the desert to the Promised Land (**Acts 7:23;36**)
 - Moses was on the Mt Sinai for 40 days and nights receiving the law from God (**Ex 24:18**)
 - The 12 spies explored Canaan for 40 days (**Num 13:25**)
 - The Israelites wandered in the desert for 40 years as a consequence for their unbelief (**Num 32:13**)
 - Jonah prophesied to Nineveh for 40 days offering them the opportunity to repent for their sins (**Jonah 3:4**)
 - Jesus fasted 40 days and nights in the desert before being tempted by satan (**Matt 4:2**)
 - Jesus prophetically told His disciples that the temple would be destroyed and 40 years later the Romans did just that (**Mark 13:2**)
- But two of these 40-day periods were especially significant for Jesus that bracketed His earthly activities
 - The first was at the beginning of His ministry with 40 days in the desert and was a period of temptation (**Mark 1:13**)
 - The second was at the end of his ministry with 40 days of appearances following His resurrection and was a period of triumph (**Luke 1:3**)
- Let's look at one of those appearances

READ – Luke 24:13-35

- We read that this occurs on that Sunday of Jesus' resurrection later in the day
 - These two men – disciples; one named Cleopas and the other unnamed although unlikely one of the 11 remaining
 - A disciple was a follower
 - We too often associate that word only with the 12

- But there were many who called themselves disciples of Jesus even within the Sanhedrin – the ruling religious body of the Jews – who were the most insistent that Jesus be executed
 - But these are not men excited about what has happened
 - They are downcast, troubled, and perhaps confused
 - They are walking toward the town of Emmaus located about 7 miles from Jerusalem although we are not told why they are going there or why they left Jerusalem
 - Getting out of town for safety?
 - Did they have family there?
 - Luke tells us that they were kept from recognizing Jesus – WHY?
 - I believe Jesus wanted them not to talk
 - What would have been your response if you recognized Jesus?
 - Jesus wanted to talk to them, and He wanted them to listen
 - So that He could teach them about what His life’s meaning was
 - WHY? So that they could tell others!
- One other appearance however was, I believe, even more powerful than that and it was all for the sake of one man

READ – John 21:15-19

- Jesus has appeared to the disciples, they ate a meal together, and then suddenly He turns all of His attention to Peter
 - As Jesus begins to speak to Peter it slowly becomes apparent what this is all about
- It is not hard to imagine that Peter is living with tremendous anguish and guilt over what he had done
 - He not only denied Jesus, but he did it only a few hours after declaring to Jesus that he would follow Him even to death! (John 13:37)
 - He, along with the other disciples, did not stay with Jesus (only John and that was likely from a distance)
- Guilt is an exceptionally powerful emotion that impacts every area of our lives
 - Guilt is that blaring siren and flashing red light of our conscious that tells us when we have really messed up
 - It can enslave and trap us in a time and place that follows us the rest of our lives
 - Guilt caused Adam and Eve to hide from God in the garden (**Gen 3:10**)
 - David said the guilt of his sin of his adulterous affair with Bathsheba made his bones waste away in silence (**Psa 32:3**)
 - It caused Isaiah to cry out woe is me a man of unclean lips (**Isa 6:5**)
 - Guilt caused the men ready to stone the woman caught in adultery to drop their stones and turn away (**John 8:3-9**)
- Guilt will weigh on you and make you desperate to relieve it

- Gil Hodges managed the Washington Senators from 1963-1967, he discovered one day that four of his players had broken curfew the previous night. Immediately, he called a team meeting and said, "I know who you are, but I don't wish to embarrass you. You know the rules; if you break curfew it's a \$100 fine. Now, I have placed a cigar box on my desk. I expect the four of you who broke curfew to put your money in the box by 3:00 p.m." At the end of the day, Hodges found \$700 in his cigar box! What he discovered was that people will sometimes admit to anything to get rid of their guilt.
- Notice several things that take place during this time of interaction with Jesus all designed specifically for Peter
 - Jesus calls him Simon
 - Now Jesus Himself had renamed him Cephas or Peter ([John 1:42](#))
 - Jesus was saying you acted in your old nature so I will refer to you as that man
 - I'll call you by the name you had before you knew me because that is exactly what you told the people who confronted you – I don't know the man!
 - Then Jesus appears to ask Jesus the same question over and over ([John 21:15-17](#))
 - In reality Jesus and Peter are using two different words
 - In the original Greek Jesus is recording as using the word *agapo* which describes God's love – unconditional
 - Peter is using the word *phileo* which means friendship
 - The last time Jesus uses the word *phileo* as well
- This morning the very simple question is what kind of love do you show?
 - Is your love for God, for your family, those who mean the most to you like God's love, unconditional?
 - Or do you love with the side note of what have you done for me lately?
- The other reason Jesus wanted this time with Peter was to make sure he knew that he had been forgiven
 - Jesus could have taken him aside privately away from the other disciples
 - Instead, He did it with the others there with them just as Peter had denied Him – in full view of everyone there
 - Not only was that intended to teach Peter a lesson but to restore him fully to what God was going to call him to do
- Peter would be viewed as the leader of the disciples until they went their own ways to spread the Gospel
 - He would go on to perform great miracles
 - And he would preach the first sermon at Pentecost where 3000 people would come to believe in Jesus ([Acts 2:14-36](#))
 - He would also be required to give up his life as he too was crucified - but upside down

- Peter insisted on this as he did not believe he was worthy to die in the same way Jesus did
- Peter finally came to realize that his life, his thoughts, and his words were not what was most important

Close with an excerpt from a 2010 sermon given by Pastor Robert Stults – New Orleans

Giuseppe Garibaldi, was great Italian military hero from the 19th century. A general widely praised as being an integral part of Italy's unification, raised an incredibly committed volunteer army. His appeal for recruits, however, was rather unique as he offered only these terms: "I offer neither pay, nor quarters, nor provisions; I offer hunger, thirst, forced marches, battles and death. Let him who loves his country with his heart and not with his lips only, follow me!"

Garibaldi is NOT the first to make such an offer! The Son of God came to earth, to bring salvation and train up disciples to carry the good news (or Gospel) of salvation to the world. Jesus invites you to be His disciple, but His invitation is for YOU to join HIM! It is NOT a request by Him to join you where you are... Jesus lets us know up front that there is a disciplined commitment that is going to cost you everything. The road walking with Jesus IS not going to be easy. To paraphrase Garibaldi, "Let him who loves the Lord with his heart and not with his lips only, be Jesus' disciple!"