

After The Resurrection

We celebrate Jesus rising from the dead on Easter but what happens after the resurrection?

Introduction

Easter is the most important holiday on the Christian calendar. It celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ and his victory over Satan, Hell, and the grave. It is Jesus' death on the Roman cross that pays the price for our sins once and for all, but it is his resurrection that gives us life and eternal hope of life with him and God in Heaven for eternity. But, there is more. Jesus' ministry did not stop there.

Last week, on Easter, we talked about Jesus and the disciples on the road to Emmaus found in Luke 24. Today we want to look at scripture that records what Jesus did after the resurrection and before he ascended to Heaven to sit at God's right hand. We are going to share Jesus' departing instructions and apply them to life today. Let's talk about after the resurrection.

40 Days

Jesus spent forty days after he was raised from the dead continuing to minister to people, preaching his message of forgiveness and the opportunity of eternal life in Heaven. He also continued to mentor his disciples, now called apostles, teaching them and leading them by example. Let's read what Luke records in Acts 1:1-3.

Acts 1:1-3

(1) In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach (2) until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. (3) After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

Jesus spent 40 days with the apostles teaching them more and telling them about the kingdom of Heaven. This is the kingdom that they are now co-heirs of. It is where God the Father is and where they will spend eternity.

We need to understand that when we said yes to Jesus, we also became co-heirs with Jesus in the kingdom of Heaven. We became children of God. After the resurrection, Jesus told them all about it, and he has given us scripture to have a glimpse of what it is like.

We must remember, just like the apostles, as children of God and co-heirs with Christ, our citizenship is now primarily in Heaven. As such, we are ambassadors of the kingdom of Heaven. We represent Heaven and God's interests here on Earth. We have a purpose of being Jesus' hands and feet and sharing God's truths with everyone he points out to us.

Jesus leads by example, and after the resurrection, he continued to preach and teach the good news and continued to minister to people and meet their needs.



Too Much to Record

The apostle John recorded his account of Jesus' life and ministry and we read that account in the Gospel of John. It is important to understand that the Bible contains four gospel accounts of Jesus' life and ministry. They are four different viewpoints or perspectives of the same ministry and teachings of Jesus. There are no contradictions between them.

When we read chapter 21 of the Gospel of John we read about the apostles' interaction with Jesus after the resurrection. We read about Jesus restoring Peter to ministry after he denied Jesus on the night of his crucifixion and fled. John also records something very important in the final two verses of his gospel account. Let's read John 21:24-25.

John 21:24-25

(24) This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true. (25) Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.

Verse 25 starts, "Jesus did many other things as well." Jesus never stopped teaching and ministering. He continued to reach out to people and meet their needs. Jesus still healed people, forgave people, loved people, and led people. The apostles got even more training from Jesus and saw how they were to serve others.

John says, "If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written." Jesus never stopped. He continued to serve, forgive, love, show grace, and heal people. There was so much that he taught and performed that it couldn't all be recorded. Jesus led by example, including after the resurrection.

Final Instructions

After the forty days of ministry following his resurrection, Jesus gave the apostles and others assembled some final instructions. We refer to these final instructions as the Great Commission. We read in Matthew 28:18-20:

Matthew 28:18-20

(18) Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. (19) Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Jesus spent forty days reaffirming all he taught and showed his disciples and commissioned them to take on the ministry and go into all the world preaching his gospel and making disciples. These are his parting instructions before he ascends to Heaven.

The book of Acts picks up here in the story of the Church. We read about the apostles healing the sick and lame and feeding the hungry. We read how the Church came together during great oppression and took care of one another as each had needs. They met together in homes and broke bread together. The gospel was preached and learned openly in people's homes and the marketplace.



Time and again we read in Acts that people were saying yes to Jesus and becoming a part of the body of Christ by the thousands sometimes. The Church grew, not to boast, but to serve others and share the lifesaving free gift from God of salvation through Christ's forgiveness by grace.

Church, we are still in the days of *after the resurrection*. We remain steadfast to do the work of the Lord until he returns. That means we continue to serve one another in love. We must continue to be the hands and feet of Jesus serving others in all their needs. The Church needs to be a shining beacon of hope, love, and forgiveness in this lost and dying world.

Jesus didn't build buildings or have master strategic plans. He did what God the Father instructed him to do and he went village to village preaching the good news. He sent his disciples out to go door to door preparing the way for him. That is still our mission today.

Preach the good news of Jesus Christ! Pray for people as God leads you and expect Him to answer those prayers in a way that glorifies God and gives credit to Christ. Don't focus on power or prestige or worry about building big buildings. Go to where the people are and serve them where you find them.

Feed the hungry, house the homeless, give water to those who thirst, and free the captive from whatever holds them in bondage. That is our mission. Do all these and anything else God calls you to do in love sharing the forgiveness of Jesus Christ in grace with others.

Conclusion

Jesus did not build buildings, he built people. Jesus invested in others. He taught and trained his disciples and gave them understanding, and he still gives understanding to people so they can lead others. He gives us all the knowledge, love, and grace we need to share His gospel with others and point them to Him.

Jesus' resurrection proves we have access to eternal life. After the resurrection, Jesus continued to minister and teach. We must do the same, carrying on what He started until He returns for us and brings us home to Heaven.

