

Joyful Doubt

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[0 : 00] In St. Luke chapter 24, we read at verse 41, and while they yet believe not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, have ye here any meat?

While they yet believe not for joy. It's so much easier in many ways, particularly perhaps in the Christian life, to always take perhaps the dark view, the pessimistic view, and think, well, we better not get our hopes up.

We better not hope for too much. We better not expect too much. Always think the least and the worst, and then you won't be disappointed. And perhaps this is the situation for the disciples here. While they yet believe not for joy, they wanted to believe, they just didn't quite dare to believe. And yet, their excuses for not believing were getting less and less. It was five times the Lord showed himself that first day of his resurrection.

First of all, he appeared to Mary Magdalene. After the other women had gone, she remained in the garden. In chapter 20 of John's account of the gospel, remember how, when she turned away from the angels, she turned herself back and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

[1 : 26] Then he said unto her, Woman, why leapest thou? Whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, said unto him, Sir, if thou art born him, hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

Jesus said unto her, Mary. She turned herself and said unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master. And we might wonder, well, was that the very first appearance, or was there something else first? Well, Mark sort of corroborates that appearance, and he states categorically in Mark 16, and verse 9, he says, When Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

So that's one. First of all, Mary Magdalene. Secondly, there's the other women, who initially are with Mary Magdalene at the tomb. But we must assume that she stays, and they go back to go and tell his disciples what has happened.

Because we read, for example, in Matthew 28, verses 9 and 10, As they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail.

[2 : 34] And they came and held him by their feet and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid. Go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me. So there's the second appearance to the other women who had been at the tomb.

And, of course, this is corroborated in what we see in the chapter that we read from, Luke 24, verses 10 and 11, where we read, It was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary, the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles.

So Mary Magdalene obviously stays behind. She gets the appearance of Jesus first. The other women are also met by Jesus. They all go back, tell the disciples, and they still don't believe them. Their words seem to them as idle tales, and they believe them not. Thirdly, we've got the appearance to Peter alone. Now, the only reference we have to this, we did read from it this evening, verse 34, where there are two disciples on the road to a mace.

They come back. They say the Lord, the other disciples say to them, The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon. That is Peter. That's the only reference we have to that individual meeting. So that's the third one.

[3 : 43] There's Mary Magdalene. There's the women. There's Peter. There's the two disciples on the road to a mace that we read part of that from, and we know of that one, obviously. And then the fifth occasion is Jesus now appearing, this nighttime visit to the eleven and to others gathered with them here in Jerusalem.

And this also, we might say, is what we read of in John chapter 20, when he appears to them the first time when Thomas is not with them. So five times Jesus has shown himself on that day to the various disciples and the women.

And so we have five appearances. And now for the other disciples gathered, they've got the testimony of Peter. They've got the testimony of the disciples on the road to a mace.

They've got the testimony of Mary Magdalene. The testimony of the other women. And they're still not really believing. And then Jesus himself appears in their midst. And it still says, while they yet believed not more joy.

Here we have this sort of unwillingness to finally give in to the good news. They know what they saw on the previous Friday.

[4 : 51] They know what they witnessed in the crucifixion. And they know that people didn't come back from that ordinarily. And yet he had constantly been telling them that he would be delivered into the hands of the Gentiles, which they knew meant the Romans.

That he would be put to death. And if he was being put to death by the Romans, that would mean crucifixion. That he would rise again the third day. And that he would appear to them. And, you know, they didn't get it.

They just didn't swallow it. He had promised them also. He said it to the women as well. That he would go before them into Galilee. He would go ahead of them. Into Galilee.

But here he is seeing them first in Jerusalem on the same day of his resurrection. Now, we know that the Galilee meeting happened. Matthew 28.

Again, we read verse 16. Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him. But some doubted.

[5 : 50] We also have the witness of John chapter 21. Where the disciples are fishing. And Jesus appears to them then in Galilee. So, we know that he does show himself to the disciples in Galilee.

It's not that he doesn't do that. It's not that he doesn't keep that word. He keeps that. But he keeps it and then some. Because he's making this additional appearance.

And then another appearance the following week. Remember? When Thomas is there with them. Always on the first day of the week. The Lord's Day. The day of resurrection. He makes his initial appearances.

So, here we have them. These meetings are going ahead. These appearances are going ahead.

That it's almost as though. If we can say this with reverence and with love. It's almost as though.

Such was his love for these disciples. And for the women as well who come to his tomb. Such was his love for them. His delight in them. And in his own victory over death.

[6 : 47] His joy in his own resurrection. That he just couldn't wait. It's almost like. And again, one wants to use reverent language here. Speaking of the Lord Jesus.

But it's only almost as if he was bursting to tell them. And to show himself. And say, look, look, I'm here. I'm back from the dead. I have risen. Just as I said, look. It's really me.

As though he couldn't wait. He just couldn't wait to see them. Couldn't wait to show himself to them. And to let them share in the joy.

And likewise, if you think in terms of going beyond what he had said before. He says in Mark's account of the Gospel, of course. He says, you know, to go ahead and tell the disciples and Peter. It's specific that Peter is to be told. And the angel appears to them and says, go away. Tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you to Galilee.

[7 : 47] There shall ye see him as he said unto you. And yet Jesus doesn't just say, tell Peter. He makes a special appearance to Peter. He appears to him individually. Nobody else is there.

And that would also imply these two, both the fact of tell the disciples and Peter. And making this separate appearance that nobody else sees except Peter. Now this would imply that after his denial of Jesus, Peter had sort of secluded himself away from the other disciples.

As though he just couldn't bring himself to mix with them. We know that Peter and John run to the tomb first thing on the Lord's Day morning. So perhaps John has come seeking him out.

Perhaps John has gone to find him before that. But at any rate, Peter is clearly apart from them.

Perhaps he can't bring himself to face everybody because of his shame.

You know, it's bad enough. He's denied him. The others all ran away. Just like Peter did. They all forsook him and fled. So nobody's a hero here following the time of the crucifixion.

[8 : 54] And yet these fallen men, these heroes who are tainted by their infidelity, by their weakness, by their former cowardice.

These are the men Jesus comes and appears to. And the brave women who followed him to the tomb, these ones also he appears to. Especially he makes his first appearances to them. Now much is made of the fact sometimes, ah yes, it was women Jesus appeared to first.

And that is true. I don't think it's because of their gender that he appeared to them. I think it's because these are the ones that came faithfully following to the tomb to see where he was laid. And these are the ones that were there first thing in the morning while it's still dark. He shows himself. And if that had been a mixed group of men and women. Or if it had been all men. Or it was indeed all women. Jesus shows himself to those who love him.

And comes seeking him. And all that he's doing is he's showing, well, these are the people who have come seeking me. It doesn't matter whether they're women, whether they're men, whether it's a mixed group at all.

[9 : 55] They're all equal in my sight. And Jesus makes himself known to those who have loved him. He goes above and beyond what he has promised.

And this is a point I'd like us to recognize here. Christ is often better than his promises. But he is never worse.

At the very, very least, he is as good as he has promised. But he is frequently better. An example of, you know, being minimalist of what he has promised.

He might say the parable that he tells about the laborers in the vineyard in Matthew chapter 20.

Where those who are hired at the beginning of the day. He agrees with them for a penny.

That was a day's wage for a laborer. And he gives them their wage at the end of the day. They get exactly what they have contracted for. A day's work for a day's wage. But it's because they see the others coming in later.

[10 : 56] Those hired at the 6th hour, the 9th hour, the 11th hour. Them likewise getting a day's wage. You say, oh, that's not fair. They're getting a full day's wage. And they only work for a couple of hours. And we labor the whole day.

We should be getting more. But he gives them exactly the same. But they're not being shortchanged. They are getting exactly what Jesus, or if we say Jesus, what the master in the parable promised them.

They are getting exactly what was agreed. And in terms of what the Lord promises us, the Lord is always faithful to his promises.

He is never worse or less than what he promises. But he is often better. Now, the whole problem with the laborers in that vineyard wasn't that they were being shortchanged.

It's that he was excessively generous to those who hadn't really earned the day's wage. But he wanted to be generous to them. He went above and beyond any requirement of an employer for them.

[11 : 57] And so some felt a little bit aggrieved. But they had no reason to feel aggrieved. They had got exactly what the master had promised them. They had kept their end of the contract, and he had kept his.

But of course, the grace of God is not about contracts and employments and legal documents. It is about God's grace to us. We can never pay him anything or make up to him anything of what he has given to us.

But this is the first point of this aspect of it I'd like us to grasp. That God and the Lord Jesus Christ is never worse than he has promised.

He is no man's debtor. But he is frequently better. It would have been perfectly within what Christ had promised. Just to hold off. Let them stew for a few weeks.

And then appear to them in Galilee. Just as he had said. That exactly as he promised. But no. He goes above and beyond. And he keeps making all these appearances. He makes all these appearances. To Mary Magdalene.

[12 : 58] To the women. To Peter. To the disciples on the road. To Emmaus. To the eleven gathered. And then when Thomas isn't with them. He comes back specially the next week. Just for Thomas. So that he too can be likewise convinced.

Christ is no man's debtor. He never shortchanges us. But he often gets abundantly over and above what was originally promised.

And he delights to do so. Again if you think of the parable of the pounds in Luke 19. Where you've got the master that goes away into the far country. And he gives them each sort of ten pounds. The ten servants is occupied till I come. And one of them says. Oh your pound has gained ten pounds. He says. Oh well done. Good and faithful servant. Be over ten cities. Now you think of that for a minute.

Having rule over ten cities. And all the people that live in it. And all their day to day lives. And you are the governor. Not over one city. But over ten cities.

[13:59] Why? Because you made ten pounds for your master. That is the kind of reward. Over and above. Excessively over and above. Whatever might have been deserved.

Because that servant has showed faithfulness. And diligence and love to his Lord. The Lord shows abundant generosity. Over and above anything that was earned.

To his servant. So here we have Jesus comes amongst them. And as they thus speak. Jesus himself stood in the midst of verse 36. And said unto peace be unto thee.

Now he didn't say this by way of compliment. Oh blessings all you boys. You are such good disciples. You are so faithful. It is not a compliment. Rather it is a consolation. It is a word of comfort.

And encouragement. Because he knows that they are afraid. He knows that they are meeting. As it were behind closed doors. Because they are afraid.

[14:54] In John's account of the gospel. It tells us in chapter 20. The same day of evening. Being the first day of the week. When the doors were shut. Where the disciples were assembled. For fear of the Jews.

They had locked the doors. Because they feared the Jews were coming for them. Now having crucified Jesus. And suddenly he appears in the midst of them. And they are terrified. And because he knows they are afraid.

He says peace be unto you. But they were terrified. And affrighted. And supposed that they had seen a spirit. Now. This isn't the first time. The disciples supposed they had seen a spirit.

But it is a different term. In different occasions. If you think in terms of when Jesus was walking on the sea of Galilee. And the disciples were in the boat at night. And they saw him walking on the sea. Matthew 14 verse 26 tells us. When the disciples saw him walking on the sea. They were troubled. Saying it is a spirit. And they cried out for fear. But the word that is used in the original Greek.

[15:49] For spirit there. Is the word that signifies a phantom. A ghost. A phantasm is the word. They thought they had seen a ghost.

Just in general. But the word used here. When they said they supposedly had seen a spirit. Is the word pneuma. From which we get the word pneumatic.

As in you know. A pie filled with air. And air. A bleak spirit. A bleak you know. Power. That sort of thing. So this is the Greek word for spirit. It is the same as the word for wind.

Hence you get that play on words. In John 3. Where Jesus speaks to Nicodemus. The wind bloweth where it listeth. Thou hearest the sound thereof. But canst not tell whence it cometh. Or whither it goeth.

So is every one that is born of the spirit. He is playing on the words. The same word. That means different things. In the different context. So they supposed they had seen a spirit. And the word that is used here.

[16:44] Is the word pneuma. Spirit. Or power. Wind. In that sense. And that suggests the spirit of a real person. But without a body. Although taking on bodily shape.

You know. When the disciples. On the Mount of Transfiguration. Saw Moses and Elijah. Speaking to Jesus. That would be. This kind of spirit. A spirit with a physical appearance.

But not an actual physical body. That they are seeing. It is the spirits of just men made perfect. That they are seeing a physical appearance. That's what they think they're seeing.

They think it is the spirit of Jesus. Perhaps come back from the dead. But they're afraid. Because. They're not expecting it. They're not prepared for it.

And so they are terrified. And he said. Why are you troubled? Why do thoughts arise in your hearts? You know. If we think of Psalm 43. And the making of. Why art thou then cast down my soul?

[17:41] What should discourage thee? Still trust in God. For him to praise. Good cause I yet shall have. Ye of my countenances to help. My God that doth me say. This is their God.

Appealing to them. Why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet. That it is I myself. Handle me and see.

For a spirit hath not flesh and bones. As ye see me have. Now this is highly significant. Because it means that Jesus hasn't just. Seemed to come back from the dead. As some later heresies would suggest.

There are some heresies that later on. Oh well. He wasn't physically coming back from the dead. It was just his spirit. It was just the appearance. The disciples thought they saw Jesus. But they didn't really.

This is hugely significant here. That he says. Handle me and see. Touch my body. Look at my hands and my feet. As spirit hath not flesh.

[18:39] And bones as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken. He showed them his hands and his feet. In other words. Not only do I have a body. But you can see.

By the marks of the nails. The marks of the crucifixion. In my hands and in my feet. That it is my body. That it is the same body. In which I lived amongst you.

And in which I died on the cross. Clearly it now has different qualities. If he is able to pass through rock doors. If he is able to pass through walls.

And vanish out of their sight. Then this resurrection body. Now has different qualities. But it is manifestly the same body. And that is what he wants them to understand.

That's why they say. Look at me. But don't touch. As he said previously. To the women. Don't touch me yet. I haven't yet ascended to my father. And your father. But now whatever took place.

[19:36] Between the father and the son. Has happened. And he says. Do handle me and see. Touch my body. See my hands and feet. A spirit hath not flesh and bones.

As ye see me have. This resurrection body. Has different qualities. But it is a real physical body. And it is really.

Actually his body. With the same marks. And wounds. That he had incurred. Only a couple of days earlier. Upon the cross.

It's a real body. And it's his body. And it is the same body. In which he had lived. And died. But it has changed.

A real body. His body. Same body. But it has changed. Its qualities. And when he had thus spoken. He showed them his hands. And he was speaking. While they yet believed.

[20:35] Not for joy. Thought they were dreaming. This isn't uncommon. With the Lord's people. Think of Psalm 1 through 6. When Zion's bondage. God turned back. As men that dreamed. Were we.

Then filled with laughter. Was our love. Our tongue. With melody. Such joy. We thought we were dreaming. We were laughing with joy. We thought we were dreaming.

We must surely be dreaming. While they yet believed. Not for joy. And wondered. He said unto them. Have you here any meat? That doesn't mean. Come on guys. I'm starving. Let's have something to eat.

No. He's not eating for hunger. That's an important thing. To recognize. Because. In the. In the resurrection. In heaven.

We have our. Resurrection bodies. After the resurrection. At the last day. But. It says in Revelation 7. Verse 16. They shall hunger no more. Neither thirst anymore.

[21:29] Neither shall the sun lighten them. Nor any heat. They won't be excessively hot. They won't be excessively cold. Everything will just be perfect. They won't have the light of the sun.

Because they won't need it. Because the Lord is the light. Of Emmanuel's land. And although they won't hunger or thirst. They will eat and drink. For joy. There will be the marriage supper of the land.

And there's the tree of life. That bears twelve manner of fruits. What's the fruit for? If not for eating. And so he says. Have you got anything here to eat? So they gave him a piece of royal fish.

And a honeycomb. He took it. And they eat before them. No doubt. They also ate. At the same time. Because this is part of Peter's testimony. When he meets with Cornelius.

And his friends. In Acts chapter 10. He says. Him. That is Jesus. God raised up the third day. Acts 10 verse 40. And showed him openly.

[22:26] Not to all the people. But unto witnesses. Chosen before of God. Even to us. Who did eat and drink with him. After he rose from the dead.

Now there is this occasion here. There's also the occasion. At the Sea of Galilee. Where Jesus prepares breakfast. For his disciples. And so on. And bread and fish. And they eat together. We not only saw him rise from the dead.

Even to us. But we did eat and drink with him. After he rose from the dead. So this is also highly significant. Jesus is demonstrating. This is a real body.

I'm eating. I'm drinking. In front of you. You can see. That I am actually here. It is really me. And he said of them these. These are the words which I speak unto you.

While I was yet with you. Now that you know it's me. Now that you know I've risen from the dead. Listen to what I'm saying. But the point is. Initially. They couldn't quite believe.

[23 : 26] For joy. They didn't want to let themselves. Believe. While they yet believe. Not for joy and wonder.

He said of them. Have you here any means. Now. Now. I would suggest to you. That. All too often. Perhaps. This is. The attitude.

That we have. It's not an attitude. Of determined. And deliberate. Unbelief. It's not. A wanting. To deny. God's goodness. But. Sometimes. Perhaps.

Perhaps. What the believer. May have. Been subjected to. Is. One. Knockback. After another. Or perhaps. One. Who is seeking. The Lord. And has not yet. Put their trust in him.

May have experienced. So many. Negatives. In their lives. So many. Blows. So many. Setbacks. That. The bad stuff. Is easier.

[24 : 20] To believe. The bad stuff. Is easier. To recognize. This is a. Fallen world. This is a dark. Sinful world. There is no. Shaft of light. In it. People who trust.

And believe. In this. Religious stuff. They're only. Fooling themselves. And if it was only. Outward form. If it was only. Going through. The motions. Of religion. Well.

They might. Have a point. But the fact. Is that. What believers. Do. When they meet. Together. And what they. Engage in. When they are. Gathered together.

When they. Worship. And families. And when they. Worship. Individually. Is not. Going through. Emotions. It's not. Simply. Speaking. Words. Into the air. They are. Meeting.

With Christ. Christ. Who is. Risen. Christ. Who. Meets. With them. Because he. Has promised. To do so. He has promised. To hear. Every prayer.

[25 : 13] He has said. That whenever. Two or three. Whether families. Or individuals. Gather together. I am there. In the midst of them. When congregations. Gather. Christ. Has promised. To be in the midst of them.

Remember what we said. Jesus. Is. Always. True. To his word. He is never. Less. Than what he has promised. But he is. Frequently.

And abundantly. More. Than he has promised. He will. Go above. And beyond. What he has. Undertaken. To do. And he will.

Fulfill. His word. And then. Son. So. What the believer. Knows. Of Christ. Is that they are. Dealing with a real. And risen.

Person. And this means. Not only. That this is what our faith is about. It's about a person. A living. Resurrected. Real. Live. Jesus. Who hears our prayers.

[26 : 08] Who meets with us. Who deals with us. In our daily lives. But. Even so. Sometimes. It is. Easier. To believe. The bad stuff.

Sometimes. It is easier. Not to let our hopes. Get up. For fear of having them. Dashed down. We don't want to believe. The good. Despite. All the testimony.

Of all those. That we encounter. Who say. He's really alive. He's met with me. I've seen him. Or. I've known him. In my life. This is what he's done. This is the change.

He's made. And we think. Aye. Right. Okay. Well. That may very well be true. And that may be true for you. But I haven't experienced it yet. I'm thinking. You know.

That's. That's. That's fine for you. If it works for you. But. You know. I've been going through life. This far. And I certainly haven't encountered. Anything like that. And.

[27 : 02] I'm not sure. That I believe it. Well. You wouldn't be alone. In thinking. When. All the disciples. Except Thomas. Were gathered there. We read.

Thomas. One of the twelve. Was not with them. When Jesus came. The other disciples. Therefore. Said unto them. We have seen the Lord. Now. You would think. With the other ten. And Peter.

Had had a personal appearance. And all the other ten. Had seen him. And the women were testifying. And the two from the road to a mace. Were all saying. Yes. He's alive. Yes. We've seen him. Up to a week later.

But Thomas is still saying. Except I shall see in his hands. The print of the nails. And put my finger into the print of the nails. And thrust my hand into his side. I will not believe.

He's not saying. You guys. Didn't see a thing. He's saying. Maybe acknowledging. You saw something. You thought was Jesus. Maybe you saw an apparition. Maybe you saw a spirit.

[27 : 55] Maybe you saw a person. Pretending to be Jesus. But you know. If it's the real Jesus. You still have wounds in his hands. And his feet. If it's the real Jesus. I'll know him. When I see him.

And I haven't seen him. So I don't believe. But then of course. Jesus makes that special appearance. After eight days again. The Lord's day once again. His disciples were within.

And Thomas with them. Then came Jesus. The doors being shut. And stood in the midst. And said. Peace be unto you. Then said he to Thomas. Reach hither thy finger. And behold my hands.

And reach hither thy hand. And thrust it into my side. And be not faithless. But believing. And Thomas answered. And said unto him. My Lord. And my God. And just in case.

We're all standing there. Or sitting there. Thinking. Well. That is fine. But you know. That is Thomas. And he physically saw Jesus. And we haven't physically seen Jesus. Jesus said unto Thomas.

[28 : 49] Because thou hast seen me. Thou hast believed. Blessed are they that have not seen. And yet have believed. Since the time of the apostles.

Every generation. Of Christians. Has been in that category. That has been the case. For Luke. The evangelist. Then the case. For Timothy. Titus.

All the people. Who are named. In the end of the letters. To the Romans. And the Corinthians. And so on. These are individuals. Who didn't actually. Physically. See Jesus.

For the most part. That might be the odd case. Like Mark. Or something like that. Who did probably see him. Physically. At a distance. But. For the most part. These are they. Who did not.

Physically set eyes on Jesus. And yet they believed. And yet they were converted. And changed. And saved. Because Christ. Met with them. By the power.

[29 : 43] Of his spirit. That changed their spirit. And their heart. And it became. Not just. The motions of religion. Not just. The old faith. Of their fathers. And the old testament.

Scriptures. It became a new. And living. Relationship. While they yet. Believed not. For joy. Jesus said to them.

Have ye any mate. They believed not. For joy. And wondered. Now this good news. It is good. And it is new. It is new.

Every day. In our lives. And it is new. In the effect. That it has. Upon people. But. We're so inclined. To think. Yeah. Well. That may have been the case. At one time.

And it may even. Have been the case. In the days. Of my youth. But now. I've gone. These many years. Trying to follow the Lord. And perhaps. The light has gone dim. And perhaps. The warmth.

[30 : 37] Has cooled down. And because. Iniquity has abounded. The love of many. Has waxed cold. And it's not the way. It once was. And we find it. Harder. To believe. The good stuff.

Because it's easier. To believe. The bad. Now. Although. Their lack. Of trust. The disciples. Lack of trust. Our lack of trust. Sometimes perhaps.

Is not. In itself. Commendable. It does. Make. Their subsequent. Transformation. And power. Of faith. More.

Compelling. In its testimony. You remember. How. After. The resurrection. When Peter. And the other apostles. Are testifying. And the. The Jewish leaders. The Sanhedrin.

They take note. Of these men. That they had been. With Jesus. And they would remember. But these are the ones. Who when we came to arrest. They all ran away. And this one. When he sat.

[31 : 31] Warming himself. By the fire. He denied him. Three times. You know. What's the change. That has taken place. In these days. Why aren't they afraid. Of us anymore. Why even. When we scourge them. And order them.

Not to speak anymore. In this name. Why do they defy us. Why is it. That not only. The officers in the temple. When they encounter Jesus. Say. Never mind. Speak like this man.

But also. That they. Having been banned. From the temple. They go back. Into the temple. And they speak. All the words. Of this life. And they're not afraid anymore. And people are being changed.

And they're being converted. And the number of believers. Is increasing. Three thousand. And then five thousand. What is causing this. Why is this happening. Now. As we say.

Although their lack of. Trust before. Is not commendable. It makes the subsequent. Transformation. And power. And faith. Of their testimony.

[32 : 26] More compelling. That whatever has happened. To these men. It is not just. Out of their own imagination. It is not something. They all collectively. Bonded together. And said.

Right now. Let's be brave. You can't. Make people. Change. That way. But rather. Instead of. Stealing away. The body. And saying. He's risen.

If he actually. Wasn't. You know. And remember. That's what the chief priests. Tried to spread. As the word. Said. Oh his disciples. Came in the night. And stole away his body. And they said. Oh he's risen. Well.

The actual disciples. They're doing the opposite. Everybody's telling them. He's risen. And they're saying. No. No. We don't actually believe that. We don't believe the testimony. Of the women. We don't even believe Peter. We think he's just maybe.

Too depressed. And maybe he's. He's flipped. Or whatever. And Thomas doesn't even believe. The other ten. So it's the opposite. Of what the chief priests are saying. The truth is not. That they.

[33 : 20] They stole the body. And said. Look everybody. He's risen from the dead. The fact of the matter. Is. They're locking themselves away. Terrified. And refusing to believe. Those who are telling them again.

And again. And again. Look he is risen. The body is gone. It is the opposite. Of what was actually the case. What they were being accused of. Is the opposite. Of what was actually the case.

Jesus actually was risen. But the disciples refused to believe. The accumulating testimony. Of those who had seen him. And now. When Jesus himself stood in their midst.

They yet believed not. For joy. Joy is such. A difficult thing. For us to allow in. We fear to be disappointed.

We fear to have our hearts. Bruised or broken. By being let down. So many people in the world. Let us down. So many fallen individuals.

[34 : 21] And we're all fallen creatures. Break their word. They don't do as they say. We'll do. We get our hearts broken. And we get our lives damaged. By so much that we encounter. In this world.

And it's just easier. To accept that. And to be prepared for the fact. And to be cynical about it. We don't want to let joy in. In case. We let go of our defenses.

And then. We really suffer. Jesus is not like. Other men. Jesus is not like. This world. This world. Which is fallen.

Jesus has risen above that. He has conquered that. In the world. He shall have tribulation. But be of good cheer. I have overcome the world. But we don't like to hope.

We would rather perhaps. Hold off that joy. But. God comes. Breaking down the doors. Of our resistance. And compels us.

[35 : 21] To believe. By the witness. And the testimony. Of those who see. And ultimately of himself. It's a bit like Joseph. And Jacob. In the Old Testament. If you remember. How at the end of Genesis 45.

They. That is the brothers. Went up out of Egypt. And came into the land of Canaan. Unto Jacob their father. And told him. Saying. Joseph is yet alive. And he is governor. Over all the land of Egypt.

And Jacob's heart fainted. Why? For he believed them not. And yet. Obviously. There was part of him. That wanted to believe. Because otherwise.

His heart wouldn't faint. Otherwise. He'd just say. What rubbish. You're talking. Joseph's been gone. For 22 years. You yourselves. Told me he was dead. You showed me. His coat of many colors.

You showed me the blood. And you showed me. How it was all torn. You told me. He was dead. He's been gone. For by now. 22 years. I accepted that. I mourned. I grieved.

[36 : 16] But now you're telling me. He's alive. He believed them not. His heart fainted. For he believed them not. And they told him. All the words of Joseph. Which he had said unto them.

And when he saw. The wagons. Which Joseph had sent. To Canaan. The spirit of Jacob. Their father revived. And Israel said. It is enough. Joseph. Joseph my son.

Is yet alive. I will go and see him. Before I die. And then in the next chapter. We read. Joseph made ready. His chariot. Went up to meet Israel. His father to Goshen.

And presented himself. Unto him. And he fell on his neck. And wept on his neck. A good while. And Israel said unto Joseph. Now let me die. Since I have seen thy face.

Because thou art yet alive. Now it's not that having encountered Christ. We want to say. Oh well. Let's all die now. But there is a sense in which.

[37 : 10] Once we know Christ. As our personal saviour. Once we have not just. Believed not for joy. But once we have accepted.

The joyful truth. And believed. And opened our heart. And received Christ. In one sense. Although there may yet be years of life. Left to us. It is now.

Safe to die. It is now. When we have encountered Christ. It's. It's okay to die. There is nothing left. That this world can give.

That is going to top this. The Lord has yet. Perhaps many blessings to give. And many joys. To shower upon his children. In this life. But once we know Christ.

For our saviour. Like Jacob of old. We can say. Now let me die. It's okay. If I die now. Because. I have beheld Christ. I have known.

[38 : 05] Christ. I have known the joy. That he is actually alive. He is alive. And I have encountered him. I have met him. Now. Let me die. Well the Lord. Might not let you die.

Just yet. But it's okay. To die. You don't have to be afraid. To die. Because Jesus is the resurrection. And the life.

And he that believeth in him. Know he were dead. Yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth. And believeth in him. Shall never die. Once we know Christ. The world has nothing greater to add.

Jesus may give many more blessings yet. But that in a sense was the purpose for which we were created. To encounter Christ. To glorify God and enjoy him forever.

How do we glorify God most? By acknowledging and believing in his son Jesus Christ. Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. And you glorify God.

[39 : 05] Know Christ. And you enjoy him. Forever. That is the purpose. The reason. For which you were made. For which you were designed. And once you have connected in with that original divine design.

There is nothing to add to that. There is nothing to increase. Or to improve upon it. As Jacob said. Now I have seen Joseph. He said. Now let me die. And once we have encountered Christ.

It is okay to die. It is okay to live. It does not matter whether like Paul. We are in a strait between each two. Have they desired to depart and be with Christ. Which is far better.

And while they yet believed not for joy. And wondered. He said to them. Have you here any mates? Wouldn't have mattered if they didn't. Because he is preparing for his children.

Such a banquet. Such a marriage supper. As they have never seen in their lives. He is preparing for them. Such a table. As he desires them to sit at.

[40 : 07] Where he himself. Will guard himself. And wait upon them. And we can say that with all reverence. Because that is what he himself says. In his word. It is that which is to look forward to.

Although the best that this world can give. Is what it has given. With the coming of Jesus Christ. Not only to earth. But to the heart.

And to encounter. Each individual soul. Whom he has set apart for salvation. Christ is come. Christ is risen. We can believe those who have encountered him.

Or we can deny it. But he desires to meet with sinners. That is why he has come. While they yet believe not for joy and wonder.

He spoke to them. If this be the stage you're at just now. Believing not yet. For joy. It can't be this good. It can't be as good as everybody makes out.

[41 : 05] But then think of what Jesus said. When his first disciples said to him. Rabbi. Where do you stay? And he said. Come and see.