
Life through the risen Son

1. Resurrection mysteries

- In the film Sherlock Holmes (starring Robert Downey Jr), Holmes and his companion Watson, investigate a series of murders connected to an occult group led by the villainous Lord Blackwood
 - Part of the mystery that Holmes has to solve ... is the miraculous resurrection from the dead of Lord Blackwood after being hanged and then pronounced dead by non-other than Dr Watson himself
- The first evidence of Lord Blackwood's mysterious resurrection was the discovery of his open and his body missing from the grave
 - Fear and disbelief was initial response of those who first saw it
- Then he started appearing to his followers
 - Disbelief turned to skepticism and then as he appeared more and more ... skepticism turned to belief
 - He really was alive
 - And he had a plan was to take over the British Empire using an arsenal of dark arts and new technologies
- Without giving away the details ... Holmes proves that the mystery of Lord Blackwood's resurrection was all a hoax
 - It was merely a combination of trickery, illusion and deceit
 - And once Holmes had been able to discover that Blackwood's resurrection was a hoax ... then he knew he was dealing with a mere man with worldly powers ... and not a superhuman being who had supernatural powers at his disposal
- In no way am I making any comparisons between the villainous Lord Blackwood and the Lord Jesus!!
- However it strikes me that resurrections of Lord Blackwood and the Lord Jesus have many similarities
 - Both cause alarm and concern amongst the people
 - Both are met first with disbelief and then later belief that they were alive
 - For both ... the resurrection is crucial to their plans and purposes
- At Easter we celebrate the most important event in the history of the world which is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead
 - But if the mystery of Jesus resurrection is proven to be a hoax like that of Blackwood's in Sherlock Holmes ...
 - then Jesus would be exposed as a fraud

- Christianity would just be another man made religion
- You and I could go back to doing whatever want to do on Sundays
- Even the the Bible says that if Jesus did not rise ... then our faith is futile

- However friends ... this morning as we look at John 20 we'll see how John spells out
 - the facts about Jesus resurrection ...
 - and gives us the evidence for it
 - So that we can only be fully confident of its truth
- As we do, we'll see that Jesus resurrection wasn't a mystery or a hoax
 - But rather that is the tomb is empty
 - That Jesus is alive
 - That he's overcome death
 - He's done it for a reason ... so that you and I can have life!

2. Resurrection Truths

- **Empty tomb [1-9]**
- v1 ... early on first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb
 - This is Sunday morning ... the Sabbath has finished
 - Maybe she's going to mourn ... maybe to finish embalming Jesus body after hasty burial on the Friday afternoon

- Mary was one of those who had witnessed Jesus die [19:25]
 - Matt & Mark record she also saw where Jesus was buried¹
 - She went back to the tomb ... & sees it is empty
- Mary assumes Jesus body has been stolen probably by Jews ... so she runs to tell Peter and John

- Peter & John go to the tomb
 - Look in ... and see there's no body ...
 - But they see strips of linen lying there & head cloth folded

- The grave clothes show us
 - The body wasn't stolen ...
 - wouldn't waste time unwrapping 75 lbs of linen and spice
 - nor would they risk carry a bruised, bloodied & pierced body around for all to see

¹ Refer Matt 27:61 & Mark 15:47

- Already at this point John sees
 - the tomb is empty
 - but the grave clothes are still there
 - and v8 ... he believes Jesus had risen from the grave
- At this point we can see two miracles have occurred here –
 - Firstly ... Jesus has raised from the dead and
 - Secondly ... a single man folded his clothes ☺
- ***Witness of the Women (v1-9)***
- Interesting that the first witnesses of the resurrection are the women
- Modern scholars find this remarkable because the testimony of women in this period was not highly valued
- The 1st C Jewish historian Josephus wrote this
 - *From women let no evidence be accepted because of the levit²y and temerity³ of their sex.*
- And a statute from ancient Palestine declares
 - *"the law governing an oath of testimony applies to men and not to women; to those suitable to bear witness and not those unsuitable.*
- If you were writing up a story about a resurrection and you wanted 1st century ppl to believe it ...
 - you would not include women as the first witnesses ...
 - unless of course that really was what happened
- ***Jesus appears to Mary & disciples [10-23]***
- John's inclination is confirmed when Jesus appears to Mary in the garden ... where Mary not only recognises him but also touches Jesus
- Then in v19 ... we read
 - *'On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews,'*
 - Probably the same upper room where they shared final meal with Jesus on the Thursday night just a few days before
- While he was with them Jesus showed them his hands and side where the holes from the nails and spear had pierced his body
 - He shows he wasn't a spirit or ghost
 - This was the resurrected Jesus there in bodily form
- They realise it was Jesus

² lightness of mind, character, or behavior; lack of appropriate seriousness or earnestness.

³ reckless boldness; rashness.

- They're overjoyed ... to see their Lord alive again
- This was just one of many resurrection appearances by Jesus
 - 1 Cor 15 Apostle Paul explains Jesus appeared at many times and to many people
 - *"... he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. ⁶ After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸ and last of all he appeared to me*
- **Summary**
- So the evidence for the resurrection is there
 - The tomb was empty ... but the grave clothes are still there ... therefore the body wasn't stolen
 - Jesus appeared to Mary ... then later that evening to 10 of the disciples ... and to any others in the days that followed
 - Jesus showed them his hands and feet to prove
 - he had risen bodily from the grave
 - he's the same man John and the women saw crucified 3 days earlier
 - wasn't a spirit or ghost ... he the resurrected Jesus Christ

3. Resurrection Doubts

- At this point you may still be skeptical about the truth of the resurrection and you wouldn't be alone
- In fact one of Jesus disciples was a skeptic too
- v24 we see that Thomas had been absent during Jesus first appearance to his disciples
- When they tell him their amazing news ... Thomas doubts his friends claim about Jesus resurrection from the dead
- Jews believed in the resurrection ... but it was the universal resurrection on the last day⁴
 - So when the disciples claim Jesus has risen from the dead ... he's pretty skeptical
 - He wants to see the evidence

⁴ Refer Dan 12:1-2; also Martha speaking of the resurrection in John 11:24

- I don't know about you, but I have some empathy for Thomas
- If I were in his shoes I'd be saying the same thing
 - If we said there's a guy in our church who's risen from the dead and he's God ... I'd say ... "let me see"
 - I'd be a little skeptical too
- Thomas doesn't believe just because the other 10 guys voted for it
 - He wants to check it out himself
 - "You show me Jesus is alive – I'm a Christian ... but until then ... I don't believe you"
- 8 days later Jesus does the same thing ...and he appears even though the doors are locked
- Notice Jesus is not told what Thomas had said about seeing Jesus wounds
 - Because he's God ... Jesus knew exactly what Thomas wanted
 - v27 – *"Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."*
 - Exact same words Thomas had said the previous week
- Jesus appears to Thomas ... shows him his hands and feet and side and says
 - "Thomas ... time to get over your unbelief and start believing in me"

Application

- Many of us start off like Thomas when we first hear the claims about Jesus and his resurrection
- We have our doubts ... our questions ... our skepticism
 - We all do ... I did
 - But I had my doubts ... I had my questions and my skepticism about Christianity
 - Because I'm a rationalist ...
 - Trained as a CA!! ☺
 - Ask Liana I drive her nuts ... I always want to understand the logic of things > I like order > sequence > facts
 - So I get Thomas's skepticism
 - The truth of the resurrection was one of my big doubts
 - I know others ... the resurrection is a sticking point to putting their trust in Jesus

- So the skeptics ... amongst us can take heart and confidence from Thomas' encounter with Jesus
 - This is because for the person who doubts the truth of the resurrection
 - they can stand alongside Thomas ... and share his skepticism
 - And then see that skepticism emphatically overturned by Jesus
 - And as we do that ... it gives us the confidence to know our doubts and questions have been answered
- Jesus appearance to Thomas answers the skepticism that **everyone** ever since that day have shared with Thomas about Jesus resurrection
- Thomas was so overwhelmed by the evidence ...
 - He didn't even touch Jesus as he had initially said he needed to ...
 - When he saw Jesus before him ... he believed with all his heart and declared "My Lord and My God!"
- So if you're a person who wants proof to answer your doubts and skepticism ...
 - Look at Thomas ... stand in his shoes
 - He asked the same question as you ...
 - and he got more than enough evidence to convince him Jesus resurrection from the dead was true

4. Resurrection Responses

Seeing & Believing

- In John's gospel and particularly here in Ch 20 ... there's a lot of 'seeing' and 'believing'
 - John saw and believed
 - Mary saw & believed
 - Disciples saw Jesus and believed
 - Thomas doubted ... but then saw Jesus and believed
- In v29 Jesus goes on to say to Thomas that ... *"Because you have seen me, you have believed; Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed"*
 - Jesus is making the point that he's about the return to his Father in heaven
 - As a result ... the rest of humanity won't have the same opportunity to see the evidence for Jesus resurrection that Thomas did
 - From now on ... people will have to rely on the eye witness accounts of those like Thomas and Mary and the other disciples who did see it all

- **Application**

- The implication is that you and I should see the evidence before us today, and believe
- You might say ... but I wasn't there > it's not the same
 - How can I be expected to believe when I didn't see it myself
- This shouldn't worry us ... because we live our lives every day ... learning and discerning things based on the eye witness accounts of other people

- **Illustration – Witnesses and the News**

- You got up this morning and read the paper or watched the news
- Heard about
 - Swans beat GWS Giants > Gold Coast Suns beat St Kilda!
 - Kim Jong-Un said Nth Korea has entered a state of war with Sth Kores
 - Easter road fatality rose to 12
- All those reports are based on eye witness accounts ... people who were there and were able to verify it

- Even when it comes to people and events of the past ... we believe that
 - Napoleon, Captain Cook, Julius Caesar were real people in history who conquered nations and discovered the world
 - But we have no photos ... no video footage ...
 - But we have eye witness accounts that testify to who they were and what they did

- When it comes to God ... sometimes I hear people say ...
 - *"If I could just see God ... then I would believe"*
 - Actually ... if you saw God you'd be dead!
 - So don't pray for that!

- Because when it comes to believing ... seeing is not everything
 - Seeing is not essential to believing

- But friends the Christian faith is not a blind faith
 - Christians aren't called upon to just blindly put their trust in Jesus without any evidence or basis

- No! The Christian faith is rational and trustworthy ... because God has given us the truth about Jesus through reliable witnesses who saw Jesus killed, buried, **AND** raised back to life⁵

- And John ... the writer of this gospel is one of those witnesses
 - Look at John 19:35
 - *"He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe."*
 - This is not hearsay ... and his testimony can be checked out with others in the New Testament

- In fact the whole purpose of John's gospel is so that ppl like you and I would believe
 - John 20:30-31 – ³⁰ *Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book.* ³¹ *But these are written that you may believe⁶ that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.*

- Jesus did many miracles
 - 36 recorded in gospels ... John records 7
 - There were a million stories John could have told us ... but he tells us of
 - Water to wine ... healing couple of people ... feeds 5000 ... walks on water ... raises Lazarus back to life
 - Then he finishes with the greatest sign of all ... Jesus raising back to life

- Why? So you would believe that
 - Jesus is God and he's alive and well and reigning as king of the H&E
 - If you put your trust in him ...
 - Your sins are forgiven and
 - You will have eternal life

- So ... I pray from what you've seen this morning ... as we've
 - seen the evidence for the resurrection
 - seen Thomas' doubts erased
 - Seen that numerous witnesses saw and attested to Jesus resurrection
 - That you can believe Jesus is the Christ the Son of God and that by believing in him you can have life in his name

⁵ Also 1 Cor 15:6 'more than 500'

⁶ Some manuscripts 'may continue to believe'

- For those of you with doubts ... that you'll listen to Jesus who says to you "stop doubting and believe"
- Put your trust in him for the forgiveness of your sins and the promise of eternal life

My Lord and My God

- For others here today ... you have been convicted of the evidence ... you have believed in testimony of those who saw Jesus risen and alive and well
- Well ... Jesus resurrection has more implications than just us believing
 - Once Thomas realised Jesus had been resurrected
 - Once he believed that to be true ...
 - Thomas proclaimed Jesus to be Lord and God
 - "Jesus ... you are God and you are my Lord"
- **Illustration – Resurrection Beliefs**
- A survey done a couple of years ago of what Australians believe ... showed that
 - 54% of all Australians believe Jesus rose from the dead!
 - Even 45% of **non-Christians** believe Jesus was resurrected!
- It's incredible to think that so many people are willing to accept that Jesus rose from the dead
 - Because for most of those people ... it has little or no relevance to their lives
 - If it did ... they'd be Christian ... go to church ... and honour Jesus as Lord of their lives
- You see the truth of the resurrection should be more than an intellectual reality > it should affect your life
 - Because if Jesus has risen from the dead and is now ascended in heaven
 - That means ...
 - He's the king over the H&E
 - He's the Lord of history ... the future is in his hands
 - He's promised to come back as judge of all people you and me
- And because of this it means
 - We need to pay attention to and obey what Jesus says
 - Living life our own way is not an option
 - Taking a casual approach to being a Christian is not on
 - Jesus must truly be our Lord
- So if you're convicted of Jesus resurrection from the dead ... friends ...

- ask yourself if the reality of his resurrection is playing out in your life?
- is Jesus the Lord of your life?
 - Because the resurrection demands that he is

5. Resurrection Life

- Our response to the resurrection is not a trivial thing
 - Because as John tells us in v31
 - *'these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.'*
 - For those who believe in Jesus
 - Then they will have life!

- You see ...
 - when you trust in Jesus to deal with your sin as he did three days earlier at the cross
 - when you believe in him as the risen Lord and Saviour ...
 - then you have life!

- What is this life that John speaks about?
 - Jesus describes it as having passed from death to life
 - **John 5:24** *"whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."*
 - Life to the full
 - **John 10:10** *"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."*
 - Resurrection life > life beyond the grave
 - **John 11:25-26** *"He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die."*
 - Known by God
 - **John 17:3** *"Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."*

- **Illustration – Edmund: Lion, Witch & Wardrobe**
- CS Lewis famous for portraying Christian truths in his Narnia writings
- In L, W & W
 - Early in the story we see Edmund is bitter towards his older brother Peter, teases and ridicules his little sister Lucy when she tells them about her adventures in Narnia

- When he finally does enter Narnia, he is lured by the White Witch into betraying Peter, Susan and Lucy
- For his betrayal he is sentenced to die

- But after Aslan sacrifices himself in Edmunds place ... and then is raised back to life ... Edmund repents
 - He has a completely new lease on life
 - His transfer from death to life transforms him
 - The knowledge of being forgiven and knowing his has been spared from death means > he has peace and joy
 - Through Aslan ... he was given life

- In a similar way ... when Jesus talks about life he means
 - Life that is full and complete
 - Life that is full of the joy of being forgiven and reconciled to God
 - Life that will never end because death is not the end
 - Eternity in God's good and perfect heaven
 - Doesn't begin when you die ... begins the moment you put your trust in Jesus
 - Heard Pete share how what it means for him to have that life through Jesus

- This is the life that Jesus came to bring
 - If you're Christian here today ... this is the life you have that has been guaranteed by the resurrection
 - If you're here today and your trust is not yet in Jesus ... this is the life that is on offer to you today

6. Conclusion

- Along with Jesus death on the cross, the resurrection is crucial to what we believe as Christians
- We must believe it
- By the grace of God ... John shows us that there were many, including himself, who did see Jesus ... and they believed it
- We have their testimony ... we have their witness
- The question is ...
 - Will you believe based on what they have seen?

- And if you will believe ... then what are you going to do with that belief

- Will you do nothing ... like most Australians?
 - Or will let the truth of the resurrection shape your life?
 - Will you live your life as though the resurrected Jesus is in fact your Lord and your God
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- I pray you will ... for the glory of him who died for us and has been raised back to life as Lord and King over all

PRAY