

## **The Results of the Resurrection by Dr. Terry Tramel**

**PRINTED TEXT:** John 20:11-16; Luke 24:28-32; John 21:15-17

**NIV: John 20:11** Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb <sup>12</sup> and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

<sup>13</sup> They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"

"They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." <sup>14</sup> At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

<sup>15</sup> "Woman," he said, "why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?"

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."

<sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher).

**Luke 24:28** As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther. <sup>29</sup> But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. <sup>30</sup> When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. <sup>31</sup> Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. <sup>32</sup> They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

**John 21:15** When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?"

"Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." <sup>16</sup> Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." <sup>17</sup> The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?"

He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."

**ANCHOR TEXT:** *"That I may know [Christ], and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." – Philippians 3:10*

### **Message Objective**

To examine the effects of Christ's resurrection on those who witnessed it and experience its impact.

### **Central Truth**

Because Christ is alive, we can experience a personal relationship with the Living Lord.

### Message Outline

1. Recognizing the Risen Christ. John 20:1, 11-18
2. Relationship with the Risen Christ. Luke 24:13-17, 26-35
3. Restored by the Risen Christ. John 21:1, 2, 15-19

## Study Helps for the Lesson

### Historical Background

The tomb of Jesus was empty on the Sunday morning following His crucifixion. There is no dispute about that assertion; something happened to His body. It was gone when visitors arrived at His grave site. Throughout history skeptics, agnostics, atheists, and sincere inquirers have speculated about the possibilities. The most frequently asserted theories are those that surmise the body of Jesus was stolen. The chief priests and Pharisees actually introduced this idea the day after Christ's death. If the body of Jesus had been removed, this would raise the question, *Who took it, and why?* What would have been the motive for the Romans or Jews to steal the lifeless body of the Lord? Additionally, if they had taken the body, all either group had to do at any point was simply to produce it and they could have derailed the Christian movement.

The corpse of Christ was never found. Some have thought that Jesus' own disciples may have stolen His body. This is more preposterous than the other ideas. At the time of His arrest, all the Lord's disciples "forsook him and fled" (Matthew 26:56). On the evening of His Resurrection, they remained locked in a room, filled with fear, guilt, and shame (John 20:19). It is beyond belief to imagine a scenario in which they would all commit to stealing the crucified body of Jesus and disposing of it and then commit themselves to proclaiming a lie for the rest of their lives. History records that all but one of these disciples experienced their own brutal executions. Would all of them be willing to die for something that they knew was false? Why? The best explanation for the empty tomb and the origin of the Church is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. After looking at the evidence, it requires more faith to believe the stolen body theories than it does to trust in the coming-back-to-life accounts of the Gospels.

### Literary Background

All four of the Gospel writers seem to have their finger on the "fast-forward" button to get their readers to the final week of Jesus' life as quickly as they can. For example, each of them records the triumphal entry of Christ on Palm Sunday. Their texts then proceed to detail the major events of Passion Week, climaxing with His death on the cross. However, the crucifixion is not found in the last chapter of any of the Gospels. Jesus dies in Matthew 27, but there is a chapter 28. He is put to death in Mark 15, but there is a Mark 16. The cross at Calvary is in Luke 23, but there is a Luke 24. Jesus is slain in John 19, but there is a John 20 and 21. The three episodes found in the Printed Text are unique examples of the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus. No other Gospel writer mentions these dialogues. The Apostle Paul himself later listed several post-resurrection appearances of the Lord, but did not include these episodes (1 Corinthians 15:4-8).

Historically, opponents of the belief in Christ's resurrection have tried to use the variations in the Gospel accounts of the event to disprove its accuracy. For example, they point out that some of the writers differ on the number of women or the number of the angels present at the tomb. However, the differences are only in the minor details, and can be explained when examined

closely with the other texts. Additionally, if all four writers had told the story exactly the same way, critics would have claimed they had collaborated. Additionally, if the biblical writers were fabricating the resurrection story, they would not have made a woman the first to encounter the risen Christ. Women's testimonies were inadmissible in the first century of the Roman Empire. Thus, the best explanation for the accounts being written this way is that they are historically accurate.

### Plan Ahead

☐ **READING:** Read Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, and John 20 and 21 to grasp fully all that the Gospel writers had to say about the greatest event in human history and the people to whom Jesus appeared after His resurrection.

### Introducing the Lesson

☐ **QUESTION:** Begin the sermon by asking how many witnesses there were to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The answer, of course, is zero. Nobody saw Jesus come out of the grave. However, many people beheld the Risen Christ. The Christian faith is built on the fact that Jesus died, was buried, rose again, and *was seen* (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Share with the audience that this lesson examines some of those individuals who did see Christ after His resurrection.

☐ **GOLDEN TEXT:** Read the **Bible Focus** from Philippians 3:10. Share that the Apostle Paul penned the words “that I may know him...” some 25 years after he first encountered the Savior on the road to Damascus. Encourage the listeners to ask the Lord for that same passion to know Him in a real and intimate way.

## The Power of the Word

### 1. Recognizing the Risen Christ (John 20:1, 11-18)

#### COMMENTARY

**a. Sorrowful Seeker – John 20:1, 11.** *“Mary stood without at the sepulcher weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulcher”* (v. 11).

A whirlwind of activity had already transpired early on the first day of the week. Mary Magdalene had come to the tomb while it was dark, only to see the stone rolled away from the entrance to the sepulcher (20:1). She ran with haste to tell Peter and John that the body of their Lord had been moved (v. 2). The two disciples ran to the place where Mary had been. John arrived first, and as he knelt and looked in, he saw the linen clothes. Peter got there next and boldly walked into the tomb. He saw not only the linen clothes, but also the napkin that had been wrapped around the head of Christ, now folded in a separate place. John entered, and in some sense “believed” (vv. 8, 9). Afterward, the two men returned to their homes (v. 10). Following this activity, Mary returned to the site. She stood crying where John had stood, then knelt down to look in just as he had done. But when she did, she saw something the men had not seen.

**b. Shining Sitters – John 20:12.** *“And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.”*

In biblical times, angels appeared to people on several occasions. Invariably, they did not have wings or halos but rather took on the form or likeness of men. This must have been the case with the ones Mary saw. Even though the angels were wearing white, their appearance did not fill her with fear or alarm. They initiated the conversation by asking why she was weeping. She responded, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.” The phrase “my Lord” reveals the depth of her love and passion for Christ. She had previously been possessed by seven devils (Luke 8:2). Yet that was before the transformation Jesus worked in her. She was also one of four women standing at the foot of the cross (John 19:25) after the Lord’s disciples had betrayed Him and fled. Her expression “my Lord” would be repeated by Thomas about a week later when he saw for himself the Risen Jesus.

**c. Standing Savior – John 20:13-18.** *“And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus”* (v. 14).

After uttering her answer to the angels, Mary turned toward the outside of the tomb. There she saw Jesus, but did not recognize Him. This should not be surprising, for she was not looking for a living man, but rather the whereabouts of a crucified body. Jesus then spoke, asking her the same question the angelic beings had proposed: “Woman, why weepest thou?” He then added, “Whom seekest thou?” The initial sound of His voice did not stir recognition within her. Mary presumed he was the gardener or caretaker of the area. She then asked if he had moved the body. She was willing to go herself to assure it was brought back to the burial place provided by Joseph of Arimathea. These words reveal Mary’s devotion to Jesus.

The other Gospel writers tell that Mary was on the way to the tomb that morning in the dark to anoint Jesus’ body for burial. She and the other women were so zealous in their love for the Lord that they did not consider how they would move the stone. Neither does her offer to the presumed gardener include a plan for carrying the corpse of a full-grown man, nor for explaining her possession of it.<sup>1</sup> This time Jesus addressed her not as a stranger (“Woman”), but as a friend (“Mary”). When she heard Him speak her name, she instantly recognized Him and cried, “Rabboni,” which means “Master” (v. 16).

## TEACHING HINTS AND APPLICATION

☐ **WONDER:** Psalm 147:4 declares, “He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names.” Scientists tell us there are billions of galaxies, with each containing billions of stars. How amazing that our Creator knows not only the number of them, but the names of each as well. If that is so, does He not know the name of every person on earth as well?

☐ **ILLUSTRATION:** Jesus said that as the Good Shepherd, He calls His sheep by name (John 10:3). Likewise, His sheep know His voice (John 10:4). Few sounds are as penetrating as one’s name being called out by a loved one. No one else can speak a person’s name like someone who loves the person. A gardener would not have known Mary’s name, nor could anyone else have spoken it like Jesus.

☐ **CLARIFICATION:** In John 20:17 (not in the **Printed Text**), Jesus said to Mary, “Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father...” This rendering in the KJV has led some to conclude that Jesus ascended to Heaven that day, or at least before the final Ascension. The NIV brings more clarity: “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father...” It is likely that Mary fell at Jesus’ feet and embraced Him just as other women would later do

(Matthew 28:9). She did not want to lose him again. Jesus told her that He would ascend, but not until He spent time on earth preparing His disciples for their ministry.

## **2. Relationship With the Risen Christ (Luke 24:13-17, 26-35)**

### **COMMENTARY**

**a. Beginning of the Journey – Luke 24:13-17** (not in Printed Text). *“Behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs”* (v. 13).

This event occurs on the afternoon of the day of Christ’s resurrection. Emmaus was a village located about seven miles northwest of Jerusalem. A follower of Jesus named Cleopas and his unidentified companion were on the way there. They had been discussing the happenings of the week, including reports of the Lord’s resurrection earlier that day (vv. 19-24). In the middle of their discussion, verse 15 says, “Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.” Once again, the identity of the Risen Lord was hidden (v. 16).

Jesus asked what they were talking about and why they were so sad. Cleopas rehearsed what they knew about Christ’s ministry, crucifixion, and the reported news that He was alive and far removed from the tomb. Jesus, the stranger now traveling with them, answered back, “O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?” (vv. 25, 26) Jesus chided the men because they were sad even after hearing the report of the resurrection. His words indicate that they should have known what would happen, based on their knowledge of the Old Testament scriptures. The Lord declared that both His sufferings and His glory are recorded in there. Jesus then began with the writings of Moses and expounded numerous passages “concerning himself” (v. 27). By presenting God’s story this way, He also highlighted the importance of the Old Testament. How priceless that experience must have been for these two bewildered travelers!

**b. End of the Journey – Luke 24:26-31.** *“And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further”* (v. 28).

The miles surely passed more quickly as the stranger expounded on the thrilling revelation. When they reached their destination, Jesus indicated that He was going to continue walking. This likely constituted a test to see if the sojourners had received His instruction and if they desired more. Verse 29 states that they “constrained him,” which means they followed the ancient custom of hospitality by insisting that a traveling stranger stay with them. The day was ending, nightfall was coming, and Jesus accepted their offer.

The next scene in the narrative portrays the three travelers sitting at the table and preparing to share an evening meal. Verse 30 says Jesus “took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them.” This act is noteworthy because Jesus assumed the role of the host by breaking bread and giving thanks. (Astute readers will recall Jesus had blessed and broken bread at the feeding of the 5,000 [Luke 9:10-17] and the Last Supper [Luke 22:19]). At this moment “their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight” (v. 31). The passive verb “were opened” shows that this was a divine action that allowed them to recognize the Christ. At that second the Lord vanished from their sight.

**c. Reflection of the Journey – Luke 24:32-35.** *“And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?”* (v. 32)

The words of these companions indicate the personal reflection they shared about all that had transpired. As they retraced the truths they had received on the journey, and the light uttered by the Lord Himself, they felt intense inner warmth at what they had seen and heard. Verse 33 says, “And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them.” The significance of that notation cannot be overemphasized. Consider that these two had just completed a long walk of about seven miles. It was dark at the end of the day. However, being eyewitnesses to the resurrected Christ was too extraordinary an event for them simply to eat and retire for the night. Instead, they abruptly left and walked the seven miles *back* to Jerusalem in the dark in order to share with the other disciples the events they had experienced. While they were sharing their testimony with these followers, their decision to return to Jerusalem was rewarded when Jesus appeared again in their midst (v. 36).

#### TEACHING HINTS AND APPLICATION

☐ **FORTY DAYS:** Acts 1:2, 3 indicates that Jesus spent the 40 days between His resurrection and ascension teaching His chosen apostles. This 40-day “school” with Jesus helped not only to assure them of His resurrection, but also to instill in them God’s agenda and strategy for His church. What Jesus did for Cleopas and his companion was the first instance of what He did for more of His apostles during those 40 days. One result of Jesus’ intense time with His disciples is the powerful preaching that emerged from Peter at Pentecost (Acts 2:14-40). Rather than his message being a new revelation from the Holy Spirit, it is more likely he was proclaiming from the Old Testament what his Master had been teaching him for the past six weeks.<sup>2</sup>

☐ **POWER POINT:** Share the words “Sufferings” and “Glory” on the screen. Explain that these twin truths provide the best subheadings for understanding Jesus Christ’s life and ministry (1 Peter 1:11). Refer to selected texts from the Old Testament and have the audience agree which should be placed under each heading. Possibilities include passages such as Genesis 49:10, Psalm 22; Isaiah 53, Daniel 2:44, Zechariah 9:9, 10; 13:7.

☐ **OBSERVATION:** Remind the congregation that the risen Lord never appeared to an unbeliever. The Sanhedrin, Annas, Caiaphas, Pilate, Herod, and the soldiers never saw Him after His death. Note the people He appeared to on that initial Resurrection Sunday. (1) Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-18); (2) other women (Matthew 28:8, 9); (3) Peter in Jerusalem (Luke 24:34, 1 Corinthians 15:5); (4) The two travelers to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-32); (5) 10 disciples in an upper room in Jerusalem (Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-25)

### 3. Restored by the Risen Christ (John 21:1, 2, 15-19)

#### COMMENTARY

**a. The First Question – John 21:2, 15.** *“When they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs”* (v. 15).

Another post-resurrection appearance of Jesus occurred at the Sea of Tiberias (another name for the Sea of Galilee), where the Lord was seen by seven of his disciples. The angel at the tomb had promised that Christ would meet some of His followers in Galilee, and this seems to be the occurrence to which he was referring (Matthew 28:7). On this day Peter had decided to go fishing; perhaps he felt a need to support his family. He likely still possessed a sense of failure over denying his Lord, yet his influence remained unquestioned, as evidenced by the half dozen other disciples who were with him (John 21:2, 3).

After their night of futile fishing, Jesus appeared on the shore. Once again, His followers did not recognize Him. Perhaps it was the distance, perhaps the darkness, or maybe a deliberate disguise by the Master. Whatever the reason, when their nets were full of fish, after Jesus' command to throw their nets over the right side of the boat, John cried, "It is the Lord" (vv. 5-7) At that exclamation, impetuous Peter jumped into the water and swam to his Savior on the shore. Jesus had prepared a breakfast for them, and they ate together. After the meal Jesus called the chief fisherman by name and asked if he loved Him "more than these." There is some debate about what Jesus meant by "these." Some speculate He was pointing to the other disciples. The question might be, "Do you love me more than these men do?" or "Do you love me more than you love these men?" Others think He was pointing to the boat and the fish and all that went along with that vocation.

**b. The Second Question – John 21:16.** *"He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep."*

In the previous verse Jesus had instructed Peter to "feed my lambs." Now a second time the Lord asked Peter whether he loved Him. Once again Peter responded that the Lord already knew this was so, and Jesus told him to "feed my sheep." Peter's consternation at being asked a second time invokes memories of his saying with pride that he would never fall away, even if the other disciples did (Matthew 26:33, 35; Luke 22:33; John 13:37). Thus, it is significant that the verb Jesus used for "love" both the first and second times is *agapao*, referring to divine love that includes one's will or purpose (such as in John 3:16).

**c. The Third Question – John 21:17-19.** *"He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep" (v. 17).*

The third time Jesus questioned Peter about his love, He used a different Greek verb. *Phileo* denotes a familial or friendship fondness; it was the word Peter had used both times he answered Jesus' question. Some contend these words are interchangeable; however, a case can be made for Jesus' change in emphasis. The probing moved deeper on this third question, causing Peter to become frustrated at the interrogation. This is evidenced by his repeated assertion that the Lord knew all things, including the answer to what He was asking.

The threefold directive to feed the flock should not be seen as the Lord's giving Peter sole responsibility for oversight of all the other apostles in the Church; later, Peter's own writings convey that all spiritually minded disciples of Jesus are to shepherd His flock with loving care (1 Peter 5:2).

### **TEACHING HINTS AND APPLICATION**

□ **OBSERVATION:** Earlier, beside a fire, Peter had publicly denied the Lord three times (John 18:18, 25). In John 21, beside another fire, he confessed his devotion to Jesus three times and was publicly restored.

### **Closing the Message**

□ **GOLDEN TEXT:** If you did not use the text of Philippians 3:10 to introduce the lesson, close by repeating Paul's great desire to know the Lord in "the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings." Even if you used the text at the beginning, for emphasis you may choose to reiterate it at the end.

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### Endnotes

1. Kenneth Barker and John Kohlenberger, eds., *NIV Bible Commentary: Volume 2: New Testament*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1994, p. 369.
2. Frank Tunstall, *Our Awesome Lord*, Lake Mary, Florida: Creation House, 2008, pp. 222, 223.