

Living Jesus

[Announce Text] Please Open your Bibles to Luke 24:36-49. [Page 885](#)

[Scripture Introduction] Good morning, my name is Brett Sweet and I'm one of the pastors here at Grace Christian Fellowship where we exist to glorify God through gospel-centered worship, evangelism, discipleship, and community. We are continuing our series through the book of Luke.

[Prayer for illumination] Please pray with me...

[Illustration] In our previous home, which we rented, we had a problem. You would stand in the shower and there would be a strange smell with a hint of sweetness. You couldn't leave your dirty dishes on the counter, or they would turn black overnight. We had ants. So many ants. I tried small household poisons and ant traps, but still Ali's morning arrival to the kitchen would be signaled to the rest of the household with the sound of the vacuum. My efforts alone couldn't cut it. I couldn't kill enough of them or drive them away. Sucking up a couple hundred ants that would find their way out from under and around the dishwasher.

When we moved into our house here in Spokane, we were troubled to find lines of ants all around our garage and near our front door. And now I knew that I could get rid of them on my own. Shortly thereafter, someone knocked on our door. It was a young entrepreneur trying to get his pest control business off the ground. We signed up. We needed someone to drive the ants away. Now, every few months, someone knocks on our door, let's us know they're here, and walks around the house to drive ants and other pests away.

Doubts tend to be the pests of the Christian life. It's often not a sin to have some confusion and doubts. But they don't make the Christian life more joyful. Like other pests, we want someone to drive them away. And they can be painful. They can be a problem. If you've never had doubts, you'll almost certainly face them at some point in the future. The earliest Christians had doubts, and God **finish sentence** FCF what are we to do?

[Proposition] Let the Living Jesus drive away doubts.

Jesus is alive and He knows how to drive away doubts. In these wonderful verses we begin to see how Jesus drives away doubts. We'll look at three ways Jesus

drives away doubt. He drives away doubts with His presence. He drives away doubts with the Word. He drives away doubts through mission.

Let's look at the first way.

[Way #1] He drives away doubts with His presence.

The news of the empty tomb and some scattered sightings of the crucified, but now living, Jesus have been doubted. And when there is doubt, there is indecisiveness. There is disorder and confusion. But notice what Jesus' presence brings.

[Subpoint 1] His presence brings peace

Look at vv. 36-38

As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you!" But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?"

The news from Cleopas and his friend on the Emmaus Road has not yet driven away doubts. Jesus notices that they are troubled and there is doubt. His arrival is totally unexpected, but if Jesus is your Savior, we have no good reasons to fear or worry. But He's come to the disciples to bring peace, *shalom*, wholeness and order to their hearts, minds, and lives.

Jesus' appearance raises questions about the nature of His resurrection body. Luke, a doctor, would likely give us more details if he could. Jesus' resurrection body is different than others who've been raised because Jesus will never die again. Luke and we, just don't know exactly how His body remains the same one He had, but has been transformed. But we do know He can be present. And His presence brings peace.

Jesus drives away doubts with His presence. His presence brings peace. Notice something else.

[Subpoint 2] His presence drains doubts

Look at vv. 39-43

See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” And when he said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate before them.

Their doubts are still remaining. It’s probably here where Thomas is invited to touch the wounds of Jesus so that he believes (John 20:28). But now their doubts and disbelief have more to do with joy than sorrow. It almost seems to good to be true. If their doubts are a paper cup, Jesus’ presence is going to jab a hole in the bottom and drain them away.

[Illustration] When I was a kid, a movie about the friendly ghost, Casper, came out. Casper is always waiting on his three mean uncles and basically functions as their slave or servant. In one scene, he prepares a feast for them but when the ghosts, without bodies, grab the food and throw it in their mouths, it just ends up in a broken pile on the chairs and floor around the table. They don’t have bodies, so the food doesn’t disappear.

Here, they might think they are seeing a ghost, but they know that this cooked fish is real and physical. He picks it up. Takes bites. Chews. Swallows. And the fish is gone. Not on the floor, but in the living physical belly of the risen Jesus.

[Application] Do you still doubt? What more can Jesus do for you? Maybe a better question is this: What more can Jesus do for you without allowing you to believe you are the center of the universe? Who gets to make demands on everyone else and require them to measure up to you. Jesus defeated death. His physical body that can walk and be touched and consume food was researched and recorded with the most precise means available to people throughout the vast majority of world history. But maybe you want more. You want a video. You want a photo. But wait a minute. Now there are Deep Fakes created by AI, so do you really trust all that you see?

Luke’s gospel is about Jesus as King. Which means that we must bow before Him. Theologian and Philosopher John Frame has a phrase he uses for faith: “**Cognitive Rest.**” Imagine that you have your ankles tied together and you had to bounce your way from one place to the next. That would get tiring wouldn’t it? What if you had to do that to stay afloat? Say, jumping from one sinking boat to another

and back to avoid drowning. But mentally and spiritually, so many of us live that way. We're jumping from one philosophy to another. We're jumping from one distraction to another. Today it's our careers. Tomorrow it will be the latest dieting trend. The day after will we be a hobby. But it's not really bring us rest and peace.

Jesus' presence has come to bring you peace. Today, take note of Jesus' presence. Let the records we have here drive away your doubts. And have rest and peace. So when the news station says that you should be terrified about this political movement or that foreign country, experience the peace that Jesus has defeated death. When you are feeling lonely you preach the gospel to yourself. You have a Savior who cares for you. Who died as a substitute for your sins. Who was raised and appeared to people to bring them peace.

Let the Living Jesus drive away doubts. He drives away doubts with His presence. How else does He drive away doubts?

[Way #2] He drives away doubts with the Word.

The source of doubt that Christians usually face, is the same that Adam and Eve faced from Satan: Did God really say? Is the Bible really God's Word? Can we trust His Word? But the Word is the primary way He drives away doubts. What do we notice about the Word and the Living Jesus here?

[Subpoint 1] His Word is fulfilled by Jesus

Look at v. 44

Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

Jesus is saying that every part of Scripture, ultimately, is fulfilled by Jesus. Jesus' confusing arrest. His corrupt trials. His tragic death. His physical resurrection. He is fulfilling Scripture. All of these events have always been God's plan. And when we know that things have gone, and are going, according to plan. We don't doubt the direction things are headed. The Word has a lot of drama. The road to redemption has many twists and turns. But the destination has been toward fulfillment by Jesus.

This means that means that every sermon you ever hear, no matter what passage it's taken from, should be connected to Jesus somehow. This means that everything a Bible-believing church does- how we pray, the words to our songs, the books we recommend, the way we counsel, the reasons we greet and forgive one another, should lead back to Jesus. We must be gospel-centered.

Let the Living Jesus drive away doubts. He drives away doubts with the Word- which is fulfilled by Jesus. Notice also this about the Word

[Subpoint 2] The Word is illuminated by Jesus

Read vv. 45-47 with me

Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem."

We need supernatural help to understand the Scriptures. Jesus had to open the disciples' minds. The Spirit has been sent by Jesus to do this work for us. And when the Spirit illuminates the Word, He does not spend all of His time on random theories, looking for secret codes, emphasizing second or third order issues. When the Word is illuminated by God, we find that it's the gospel. That Jesus was always needed to come and live and die a death full of suffering. That He would defeat death. That through Jesus forgiveness comes.

[Application] Christians, we must be people of the Word. Our time in the Bible has a deep impact on the way we deal with doubts. The more you are in God's Word, the more Jesus is likely to reveal Himself to you and drive away your doubts. If the Risen Jesus was going to be at a place where you could meet Him, you would make the time to get there. Well the place we meet Him now is most commonly in the Word that is fulfilled in Him. And illuminated by Him. Spend some time alone reading- in your parked car if you need to. After everyone goes to bed. And pray that God would reveal Jesus to you in those pages. And if Jesus illuminates Scripture, ask yourself how these verses could be point you toward Him.

I also want you to notice something. Jesus' explanations about Scripture seem to be gospel-centered. There on who Jesus is and what He has done. He is focused on the main thing. Sometimes, doubts arise because we've been taught some

obscure interpretation of a given passage. Or something the Bible hasn't said anything explicit about. An exact age of the earth. Identifying a specific nation with a biblical prophecy. How many carbs you should eat. And when stuff like that is seen as vitally important and then it's proven wrong, fosters doubts. But when we hang close to the essentials here. Like Jesus does. Our faith solidifies. We can tolerate mystery and disagreement elsewhere and love people who disagree with us.

Let the Living Jesus drive away doubts. Let the expert push the pests away. He drives away doubts for these disciples with His presence. He drives away doubts with the Word. That's all well and good for people who are already inclined to believe and trust Jesus. But what about the masses of billions of people who doubt Jesus, His resurrection, and all the implications?

[Way #3] He drives away doubts through mission.

If you are a Christian, you become part of Christ's mission to drive away doubts and bring peace to the hearts and minds of an unbelieving self-destroying world. What can we learn about the mission?

[Subpoint 1] The mission is gospel proclamation

Let's read vv. 46-48

...and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witness of these things.

The mission is to proclaim Jesus' name to all nations. The people you love. And the people you might be tempted to hate. Who might have a different head covering. A different language or skin color. The mission is for every nation. So humble yourself. So the mission is not merely to feed the poor, though that's good. The mission is not to merely influence politics, though that's inevitable. The mission is not to make money. The mission is not to pack buildings on Sunday mornings. The mission is to proclaim the fact that Jesus has suffered on a Roman cross as a substitute for sinners. It's to proclaim that He has been raised from the dead three days later. It's to proclaim that every human is a sinner. That means me. That means you. And that those sins are against a God who hates our sin and

crimes against Him. And that such criminals and insurrectionists need to be forgiven. And this forgiveness comes by repenting- that is turning. That is changing. Changing our minds. And changing the way we relate to God and others.

[Proclaim] Do you want the bad news or the good news? The bad news is this. Your sins are serious. So serious, that All-Mighty God is aware of them and offended by them. Because all sins are ultimately against Him because we sin against people made in His image. And we violate the laws He made for us to that lead to universal flourishing. So our sins need forgiven. If they aren't forgiven we will justly be punished for them. Forever. That's the bad news. The good news that I am proclaiming to you now is that Jesus suffered in the place of sinners. He bore the wrath of God. And He carried it all the way into the grave. But He has been raised. He rose from the dead and this is how forgiveness comes. We repent, which means we turn away from trusting in ourselves or our way and we turn to Jesus and trust that His death was for our sins. And the Holy Spirit is in the message. So when people hear that they can be forgiven, something often happens. They believe! Doubts are driven away. Jesus becomes mysteriously present.

This is how He drives away doubts...by being confronted with Jesus. He becomes present by His Word. This is mysterious to us. We don't know all the whys God has chosen to relate to the world through the written and spoken word, but I can tell you, it happens.

He drives away doubts through mission. The mission is gospel proclamation. But you think about how many people persist in their doubts. You wonder if this mission will be successful. Is this a mission doomed to failure? No!

[Subpoint 2] The mission succeeds with the Spirit's power

Let's read v. 49

"And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

I am not known as an optimist. I can come up with a worst-case scenario for everything. But there is something I am exceedingly optimistic about: the mission of the Living Jesus as he drives away doubts. And the reason I'm optimistic is

because it will succeed. It will succeed because of the all-powerful Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-8). A living person like Jesus. Is all powerful and has been given by the resurrected and living Savior.

[Application] This is so incredibly exciting. All nations will be represented with Heaven. It is a guaranteed fact. We can be 100% certain in the success of God's mission. And we can be certain because the Holy Spirit clothes God's people.

The more our church latches onto this gospel. Missions.

[Conclusion] When you have doubts it is crippling. It causes anxiety. You aren't sure you are following the right directions so you start to get irritable with the person in the passenger seat. You doubt that you are doing the tasks for your new job well, and you don't want to look like a fool and ask for help. So you spend the whole day stressing that you may not be doing things right. You are nervous that people will find you and call you a fraud. Everyday, all over the world, people wake up doubting the very basis of reality. Do good and evil matter? Is there life after death? Is there meaning to it all? So we look around and see so many people in crisis.

What this means is that when the living Jesus comes and drives away doubt, it's not just about a rational argument. It's a sign of His great love for people. "I don't know what I'm doing but I'm doing it really well." By revealing Himself as the One that the Bible is about. As the One who has authority and power over death. He's showing us that He's the One who can ground us and save us and make life livable. What sort of person must this person be?