

A Hollow Rock, Broken Bread, A Piece of Fish

LESSONS ON THE RESURRECTION FROM LUKE 24

Cory Waddell
HIGHLAND HEIGHTS CHURCH OF CHRIST | LEBANON, TN

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I. Introduction

A. Have any of you ever played the smartphone game “Four Pics One Word”?

- 1) It’s a pretty challenging puzzle game in which 4 pictures appear in a quadrant along with a letter bank at the bottom.
- 2) Your task is to look at the four pictures and describe which SINGLE word describes every one of them.

B. For example...**SLIDE**

- 1) Record **SLIDE**
- 2) Address

C. But what about this one? **SLIDE**

- 1) If you look at these three images, what one word would describe something that they all have in common?
- 2) Answer: RESURRECTION **SLIDE**
- 3) More specifically, they all have to do with the RESURRECTION of JESUS CHRIST.

D. Today is the day that has become known as “Easter Sunday.”

- 1) All over the world believers in Jesus as the Son of God are recognizing & celebrating the anniversary of His resurrection from death some 2000+ years ago.
- 2) Now, we all understand that there is a good amount of debate that takes place when people start trying to celebrate some event in the life of Jesus with a holiday...Christmas for example.
- 3) But the truth is, the resurrection is the one event that we actually CAN pinpoint with a fair amount of certainty, because it is tied so closely to the Jewish Passover feast, which is still recognized to this day.

E. And if God was going to give us enough information to be able to pinpoint any moment in the life of Jesus, I’m glad that it was THIS one!

1) Even more so than the crucifixion.

F. Why do I say that?

1) I say that, because our ENTIRE faith hinges on the reality of the resurrection. **SLIDE**

2) The apostle Paul in **1 Corinthians 15:14, 17, 19...**

14 And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain...17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins...19 If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

3) IOW – If Jesus has not been resurrected from the dead, then your being here this morning is pointless.

G. Now, when you realize the overwhelming significance of the resurrection...when you understand that you are staking your claim on eternal life in that event...you want to be sure that it was a genuine event.

H. Throughout the centuries there have been numerous attempts to explain it away...from supposed “fake death” scenarios to a stolen body.

1) But because of the strength of evidence for the resurrection, ultimately only one proposed alternative stands as being even remotely plausible:

a) The theory that maybe those early Christians “made it all up”

b) Perhaps they wanted to believe in Jesus so desperately that they “imagined” he was somehow still alive

c) That someone started a rumor Jesus had survived the cross, and in their desperation to retain their faith the apostles eagerly latched onto that slim hope.

I. You see, there is a major flaw in this theory that the first disciples made the whole thing up.

- 1) The flaw is that the original skeptics were the Apostle themselves!
 - 2) They had to be convinced that Jesus was actually alive.
 - 3) They weren't making stories up...nor were they grasping at straws to try and salvage their faith.
 - 4) No, they were trying to cope with and come to grips with the fact that their Rabbi was dead!
 - 5) Which is where our three pictures come into play. **SLIDE**
- J. Turn to Luke 24 you'll find an entire chapter recording the process by which the Apostles came to believe that Jesus was alive again.
- 1) Within that process, there are three major pieces of evidence that are going to be laid out before them.
 - 2) With each new piece of evidence, the disciples have yet one more objection answered, bringing them closer and closer to a conclusion.
 - 3) And by the time it's all said and done, they will be unable to deny what is right before their eyes.
 - 4) They will logically and coherently recognize that HE IS ALIVE!
- K. And so I invite you to join me as we see the answers to their objections and examine the reality of the resurrection through A HOLLOW ROCK...BROKEN BREAD...and A PIECE OF FISH.

II. A Hollow Rock – Not a Desperate Wish (24:1-12)

- A. As the section opens, we find the group of women going to the tomb in order to complete the preparations of Jesus' corpse.
- 1) Upon arriving they are greeted, not by armored guards, but by two angels.
 - 2) "Why do you look for the living among the dead? Jesus is not here, but He is alive!"
 - 3) With such great news the group of women turn and run back to the group.
 - 4) They MUST tell the apostles this great news...Jesus is ALIVE!

- B. Grief at the loss of a loved one can produce some very strange thoughts and emotions...especially if they died long before their proper time.
- 1) And in those times we tend to lovingly dismiss those extreme thoughts, chalking them up to overwhelming grief on the part of those who are impacted the most by the death.
 - 2) It's part of the process and eventually they will come around to coping with and accepting reality.
- C. Notice the disciples' reaction when this group of women came with their great report. **SLIDE**
- 1) **v. 11 - but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.**
- D. These were reasonable fellas.
- 1) They knew better than to buy into this kind of rubbish.
 - 2) YES, their hearts were broken.
 - 3) NO, they didn't want to believe their teacher was gone.
- E. **But to speak of resurrection was nonsense** **SLIDE**
- 1) Death was tangible.
 - 2) Resurrection was a fantasy...a desperate wish.
 - 3) He was gone, and that was the reality.
 - 4) And when reality hits you between the eyes, you have to accept it. **SLIDE**
- F. And that is why all four gospel accounts will lead us, like Peter and John, straight up to the mouth of that hollowed out rock.
- 1) They beckon us to look...just take a peek and tell everyone what you see.
 - 2) NO...rather...tell everyone what you DON'T see.
- G. Facts are facts. When reality hits you between the eyes, you need to see it and accept it. **SLIDE**
- H. The tomb is empty.
- 1) This is not a desperate wish...it's a reality.

III. Broken Bread – Not an Accident (24:13-35) **SLIDE**

A. The Road to Emmaus

- 1) Later that day we find two men walking about 6-7 miles outside of Jerusalem.
- 2) Word of the women's report has started to spread among the disciples and these two men are discussing all that has happened in recent days when Jesus, Himself, comes up to join the conversation.
 - a) **v. 16** tells us that they were prevented from recognizing who He was.
- 3) And so when this "stranger" asks, they tell Him all about their crucified master. **SLIDE**

B. Take a good look at verse 21...notice the verb structure there.

21 But we HAD hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.

C. As one brother observed...

The tense of that verb makes it clear that more than Jesus died on the Cross – with him had died the hope of all his followers. Just a few days before they had been an enthusiastic, joyful multitude welcoming the Messiah into Jerusalem: now they were confused, discouraged, broken and scattered individuals, because they NEVER expected the Messiah to die! – Dan Williams

D. **Something had gone terribly wrong!**

- 1) This was an accident of catastrophic proportions.
- 2) Someone/Something had ruined their concept of Restored Israel.

E. Oh...but their Rabbi had so much more to teach them. **SLIDE**

1) **vv. 25-27**

25 And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he

interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

- F. Wouldn't you have LOVED to have sat in on that Bible Study?
- 1) What exactly did He say? I don't know.
 - a) God chose to keep that a secret from us.
 - 2) But the gist of what he expounded would have undoubtedly included an explanation of the OT sacrificial system, which was full of types and symbols that spoke of his sufferings and death.
 - 3) He also would have pointed them to the major prophetic passages that spoke of the crucifixion, and a host of other key messianic prophecies, particularly those that spoke of his death and resurrection.
- G. And yet, there was STILL something off about the whole thing.
- 1) I can imagine their excitement as they talked with this stranger who so capably opened their eyes to the truth of God's plan.
 - 2) But I also imagine that such an exciting exegesis gave way to more confusion.
 - a) The Messiah was dead!
 - b) Sure, there were reports & speculations of a resurrection, but nothing had been confirmed.
 - 3) What could it all mean?
- H. Now, maybe you're wondering what "Broken Bread" has to do with any of this.
- 1) Look at vv. 28-31 – **SLIDE**
28 So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, 29 but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them. 30 When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. 31 And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight.
 - 2) When Jesus "broke bread" they saw Him for who He was.

- I. Now, in my judgment, there is nothing really significant in the action of breaking bread.
 - 1) The Lord was simply sharing a meal with them.
- J. But I will suggest that the whole scenario illustrates something significant for all believers.
 - 1) When confronted with the story of Christ, there comes a time when we all have to have our very own “Breaking Bread” moment.
 - 2) That instant or occasion when our eyes are opened and we, like the two disciples, see Jesus for who He really is.
 - 3) That moment when you realize the Life/Death of Jesus was not merely a story of circumstance and speculation.
 - 4) It was a game plan... **SLIDE**
 - a) Designed from the foundation of the world
 - b) Revealed by God through His prophets
 - c) Fulfilled by His only begotten Son, Jesus.
 - 5) The resurrection was the culmination of that plan to redeem, not just Israel, but ALL mankind.**
- K. And by means of Broken Bread, we learn that the resurrection of Jesus was no Accident...but a calculated plan.

IV. Piece of Fish – Not a Metaphor (24:36-43) **SLIDE**

- A. In our third section, Jesus appears to the disciples themselves.
 - 1) This is the most straight-forward appearance of the chapter.
 - 2) It’s very sudden, with no miraculous masking of His identity.
- B. The disciples are standing around in the house listening to the men from the Emmaus road, when Jesus suddenly appears in the middle of the room.
- C. Now remember, these are rational men.
 - 1) We saw that from their reaction to the women’s account earlier in the morning.

- 2) And despite two separate accounts...the women and the men from Emmaus...what is the rational explanation they come up with when Jesus appears in the room? **SLIDE**
 - a) IT' A GHOST!!!
 - b) Doesn't that strike you as rather humorous?
 - 3) But Jesus seeks to convince them otherwise. **SLIDE**
 - a) 39 - 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."
- D. After this, Luke makes a rather puzzling statement.
- 1) In **verse 41** he remarks that "while filled with joy at what they saw, the disciples **STILL** disbelieved!"

- 1) Why is it that humans are so ready to believe the worst?
- 2) Why are we so reluctant to accept GOOD news?
- 3) Why do all the surprises in life have to be unpleasant ones?
- 4) Why can't the "good guys" win every now and then?

- Dan Williams -

- E. They are so convinced that the resurrection cannot happen that the **ONLY** other "rational" explanation is that they are seeing Jesus' ghost.
- 1) They "spiritualize" a tangible reality standing before their very eyes.
- F. You know what, though, there are those (even today) who do the same thing with the resurrection.
- 1) Unable to accept the accounts preserved for us, even some believers will turn the resurrection into a metaphor.
 - 2) Kind of like saying, "He'll always be with us in our thoughts."
 - 3) But Jesus will have none of that!
- G. So in order to dispel this idea, the risen Lord presents the most profound, mind-blowing evidence to date...an evening snack.

- 1) vv. 41-43 - he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?"
42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate before them. **SLIDE**

Now, let's settle something real quick...

You know the kind of respect I have for the Biblical text, but on this occasion I have to point out that Luke got it **WRONG**.

We all understand that there is only **ONE** way to cook fish...and it's not broiled.

That fish was **FRIED!**

H. Why was Jesus asking for a piece of fish?

- 1) Was He hungry? – **NO. SLIDE**
 - 2) He was making an emphatic statement of the reality of His resurrection.
 - 3) No allegorical nonsense.
 - 4) Jesus was saying, "I am **HERE...in the FLESH!**"
- I. And with a piece of fish, the apostles finally realized that Jesus' resurrection was **NOT** a Metaphor...but the **REAL DEAL**.

V. Conclusion **SLIDE**

A. The apostles took time to come around to the idea of the resurrected Lord.

- 1) And that fact may come as a surprise to some.
- 2) Particularly given the powerful nature with which they spoke of it in the years to come.

B. You know what, though, I'm kind of glad that it did take them a while to come around.

- 1) I'm glad they had to be convinced.
- 2) Because the truth is, we also take a while to come around to the idea of a Resurrected Lord.
- 3) **And as we battle through our own questions we find out that their doubts can actually become our assurance.**

C. They went through the battles of needing evidence piled up...and they walked away believing.

- 1) They dealt with certain things that we cannot deal with because they were there in the moment, but we are looking at it after the passing of time.
- 2) But because of their journey, we place our confidence in their reports.
- 3) And because of their reports, we can place our confidence in the fact that Jesus is ALIVE!

D. And because of His resurrection, we have the assurance...

- 1) That our faith is not in vain.
- 2) That our hope of eternal life is secure.
- 3) That our salvation is guaranteed.

E. The question this morning is, have you placed your hope and faith in that risen Lord?

- 1) Do you need to become a Christian by confessing and repenting of your sins, and submitting to Christ in the waters of baptism, where He will cleanse you of guilt and cover you with His grace?
- 2) Do you need to renew that trust in the risen Savior?
 - a) Come clean about sin in your life and commit yourself to Him once again?