

Many Infallible Proofs

by Chuck Smith

Chuck Smith's sermon emphasizes the resurrection of Jesus as the foundation of Christian hope and the empowerment of believers through the Holy Spirit to witness to the world.

Duration: 39:16

Scripture: Acts 1:1

Topics: "Resurrection Proof", "Salvation Assurance"

Description

This sermon delves into the events surrounding Jesus' resurrection, emphasizing the disciples' initial disbelief and subsequent encounters with the risen Christ. It highlights the significance of the eyewitness testimonies and the fulfillment of prophecies as irrefutable proof of Jesus' resurrection, inviting listeners to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior for salvation and a transformed life.

Transcript

I wish I could hit that note. Let's turn in our Bibles to the Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 1. Our scripture reading this morning will be the first eleven verses of Chapter 1 of the Acts of the Apostles. I'll read the first, the outnumbered verses, Pastor Brian will lead you in the reading of the even-numbered verses.

Shall we stand as we read the Word of God? The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began, both to do and to teach. Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he, through the Holy Ghost, had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen. To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them for forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, you have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit, in not many days from now. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power.

But you shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto me, both in Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they

looked steadfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said unto them, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye here gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come again in like manner as you have seen him go into heaven.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for that hope of this glorious coming again of Jesus Christ. Even as they watched as you went up into heaven, Lord, so as the promise, you will come again in like manner as they saw you go.

And so, Lord, we pray for that day. May your kingdom come. May your will be done here on earth, even as it is in heaven.

We thank you, Lord, that we have this trust, and this hope, and this promise in your word. Bless now, we pray, the study of your word today. Open our hearts to receive your truth, and we thank you for it.

In Jesus' name, amen. You may be seated. Luke opens his letter to the church titled, The Acts of the Apostles, in which he is going to be continuing his gospel according to Saint Luke.

Note how he begins that the former treatise, that is the gospel according to Luke, have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach. So, this is just a continuation of the gospel according to Luke. It is now, though, the things that Jesus did after he ascended into heaven.

And so, Jesus continued his works, he continued his ministry after his ascension, only now he was doing it through the apostles whom he had anointed and had chosen to do his work. And so, it's a continuation, really, of the gospel according to Luke. The disciples had been three days in the deepest gloom and doom.

The day that Jesus was crucified brought an end to their glorious dream and hope. The disciples had been convinced that he was the promised Messiah, the Son of the living God. As Jesus asked them, whom do men say that I am? And they told him the various things that people were saying.

He said, but who do you say that I am? And Peter said, well, you are the Messiah. You're the Son of the living God. And Jesus said, blessed art thou, Simon, son of Jonah.

Flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father, which is in heaven. And I say unto you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And so, they were all of them, the disciples, expecting Jesus to overthrow the Roman government and to reestablish Israel as the national leader in the world as far as the nations were concerned.

And they were expecting the Messiah to reign over the earth and looking forward to a glorious new world, one where peace existed, one where wars would be a thing of the past, and hatred and anger and all would be gone, and men would live together in harmony as God intended man to live with one another. This was the hope of the disciples, and this is what they were anticipating Jesus doing during their lifetime. But as they watched him as he was hanging on the cross, as they watched him as he submitted unto death, as he bowed his head and dismissed his spirit, and the body went limp, suddenly their hearts also just went limp within them.

Suddenly the realization he's not going to set up his kingdom immediately. He's not going to establish the reign of God over the earth. And it was a great, great disappointment for them, a time of great sorrow,

great disappointment, great gloom.

And so, he had been telling them from the time that he recognized that he was the Messiah, when Peter said, you are the Christ, the son of the living God, Jesus began to tell them at that time that he was going to be turned over to the Gentiles, and they would crucify him and slay him, but the third day he would rise again. When Jesus said that to the disciples, Peter began to rebuke him and said, be that far from the master, don't talk like that, you know, that's terrible. And Jesus rebuked Peter and said, get thee behind me, Satan, you offend me.

You don't understand the things that are of God and the things that come from men. So, Jesus had been letting them know that he was not going to set up the kingdom, that he was going to die, but that the third day he would rise again from the dead. But somehow, it just didn't register with them.

Their thoughts that they had concerning the Messiah just were greater than the words of Jesus saying that he was going to be crucified and rise again the third day from the dead. And so, they didn't really believe what Jesus was saying to them, and they thought he was, his speaking of his death was just an allegory, and that it was just some kind of an illustration that they didn't understand. From a distance, most of the disciples were watching Jesus as he was hanging on the cross, and as the spear went through his side, and as his body went limp, and they had watched the death of Jesus, and with them, the death of the hope and the excitement of the kingdom of God being established here on the earth.

At this point, in the minds of the disciples, it was all over. It was a beautiful dream that suddenly turned into a horrible nightmare. The world that was anticipated by them, the world of peace and joy and love, where the kingdom of God was ruling, was now just a fantasy.

It just, they realized, wasn't going to happen during their lifetime. And so, the two disciples were on the road to Emmaus a little later. We'll get this in the story.

And as Jesus joined with them and began to talk with them, they said, and we had hoped that in him would be the salvation of Israel, but they put it in the past tense. We had hoped. We don't hope in that anymore.

He died. This is the third day. And, you know, we had hoped, but no more.

That hope is dead. So, that was an interesting time in which there was what they called a double sabbath. And so, Jesus was there in the grave for the three days, but then the third day, Sunday, when they came early in the morning, they found that the grave was empty and that the body of Jesus was gone.

They wondered, you know, he seemed so genuine. He seemed so real. He did such powerful things.

How could he deceive us like that? And they were probably, most of them, planning their journey back up to Galilee. And so, we'll spend this one last day in Jerusalem. We'll take and see what we can do as far as the body of Jesus is concerned, putting spices on it and so forth, and then we'll take off for the Galilee.

But then, what will we do when we get back there? You know, life just doesn't seem worthwhile to go on. Going back to the fishing, going back to the nets just didn't seem to be an exciting thing for them. And so, these are three days that they are spending in great anguish and pain and sorrow, questions filling their minds that they don't have the answers for.

Tomorrow would be the first day of the week. The Sabbath would be over and they could again freely move around and carry things once more. And some of the women were talking about carrying some spices and anointing oils and so forth with them that they might give their final gesture of love to the body of Jesus there in the tomb.

And they were making their way very early in the morning before the sun was yet risen. And as they were making their way through the streets of Jerusalem to the place where the tomb was, they were discussing how in the world will we move that great stone that they moved over the door of the tomb. And wondering about this, Mary Magdalene, who was with the women, she probably was just a little impatient.

The women were moving a little too slowly for her. So, she went on ahead to the tomb and she arrived before the other ladies. And when she arrived at the tomb, she saw that it was empty and so she figured that they had moved the body of Jesus.

And so, she ran to tell Peter and John that someone moved the body of Jesus. And so, as she was gone to tell Peter and John that the body of Jesus was not in the tomb, someone had moved it. The other ladies arrived at the tomb and there were two angels who were there at the tomb who met the other ladies.

And they said to the ladies, why do you seek the living among the dead? He's not here, he is risen, just like he said. And so, then they remembered the words of Jesus that on the third day he would rise again. And so, they said, don't you remember when he was with you up in the Galilee? He said that the son of man was going to rise again.

And so, in the meantime, Peter and John came running to the tomb to find out if the story of Mary Magdalene was true, if the tomb was empty, and probably trying to find out what this mystery was all about, the body of Jesus not being there in the tomb. And so, having arrived at the tomb, John stood outside and Peter went running in to the tomb. And again, there they were at the empty tomb, except for the fact that the two angels were still there.

And so, again, they asked Peter and John, why do you seek the living among the dead? He's not here, he is risen. Now, it is interesting that Mary Magdalene came back to the tomb. Probably by this time, Peter and John had left the tomb, having encountered the two angels and heard their story.

And Mary Magdalene was weeping and just confused. The one that had done so much for her, the one who made life worth living for her, he is gone. And the one who had cast out the seven devils that once possessed her, and the one that she had owed so much to, who had done so much for her, he's not there any longer.

And she's weeping over the fact that her Lord is no longer there. And as she is weeping, Jesus was standing there in the garden and he said, woman, why are you crying? And she, of course, eyes filled with tears, sort of like mine this morning. You notice I had difficulty reading the scriptures.

I've got a crazy thing, you know. My eyes are watering like crazy. I don't know what's going on, but it's just tears constantly.

And I'm not a weepy kind of a guy and it really embarrasses me, you know, to have to wipe tears away. But it's crazy and it's hard to see because, you know, my eyes get blurry because of the tears. And so here is Jesus is there in the garden and she has tear-filled eyes and she just sees him as a man that is interesting.

She went in and she saw the angels and they said, woman, why are you weeping? And she said, tell me where you've taken him and I'll be glad to carry him away. Oh, come on, Mary. You're just a little gal.

You couldn't carry his big body away. But, you know, the strength of love, I'm sure that she could have, you know. But it's just an interesting sidelight here.

But the great thing is that she is thinking now that this is the gardener and she said to him, sir, if you'll just tell me where you've taken him, I'll be glad to take him away. And he said, Mary. And he said it in such a way that she recognized it.

You know, there were several Marys. There was Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Mary Magdalene that we're dealing with now, and other Marys. And so no doubt it was confusing when Jesus would say, Mary, you know, yep, yep.

So he probably had a personalized Mary for each of them. So when he called their name, they would recognize he's calling me because of the inflection or whatever in pronouncing their name. And so he no doubt used that.

And he said, Mary. And she said, Rabboni. And she grabbed hold of him with a death grip, like you got away from me once.

You're never going to get away again. And he said, Mary, don't cling to me. But go and tell the disciples that I have risen from the dead.

And so the other ladies were returning to the house. And as they were returning, Jesus then met with them and greeted them. And they held him and worshipped him.

But sometime that morning, Jesus also made a personal appearance to Peter. Now we're not given any details about what this was all about. But I believe that it was a very private matter between Jesus and Peter.

I believe that Jesus was talking to Peter about the denial. You remember the night that Jesus was betrayed. He told the disciples, all of you are going to be offended tonight because of me.

Peter said, Lord, though they may all be offended, I will never be offended. And Jesus said, Peter, before the rooster crows, you will have denied me three times. Peter said, Lord, they could kill me.

I would never deny you. But we do know the story, how that when the little maiden said, aren't you one of his disciples? And Peter denied saying, no, I don't know what you're talking about. And how that three times as there was those who were sort of pressing Peter about being one of the disciples.

And finally, he began to curse and swear and say, I don't know him. And so the rooster then began to crow. And Peter remembered the words of Jesus before the rooster crows, you will have denied me three times.

And the Bible said, he went out and he wept bitterly. And I believe that Jesus is saying, Peter, it's all right. I knew that you were going to deny me.

Your spirit, as I told you, was willing, but your flesh is weak. But then he was promising, you know, in a few days, I'm going to pray the Father, he's going to send you the Holy Spirit, and he's going to give you

power. And when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you'll have the power to be a witness of me, both in Jerusalem, Judea, all of Samaria, and under the uttermost parts of the earth.

And so Jesus' personal little time with Peter, no doubt comforting and assuring him concerning the failure of Peter under the pressure. But it's been an exciting time. For the disciples that morning, the story of the women and their various encounters with the angels and with Jesus, and many of the disciples did not believe their stories, and they thought they were just idle tales of these women.

But early in the afternoon, two disciples were on their way to Emmaus, walking to this little village about eight miles from Jerusalem. And as they were walking, Luke tells us that Jesus joined with them, but they didn't recognize him. And as he was walking along with the two disciples, that he said, what's the problem, guys? You look so sad.

Uh, what's going on? And they said, you must be a stranger. You don't know the things that have been happening in Jerusalem the last few days. Jesus said, what are you talking about? What things? And they said, well, there was this man, Jesus, he was from Nazareth, and we had hoped in him for the salvation of Israel.

But they crucified him, and this is the third day. Now some of the women, they said that they saw him, but you know, women get excited, and you can't really trust them on things like this. And so, now they said that, not me.

Don't want to get in trouble here. You guys all know what I'm talking about. And they said that, you know, they saw him, but uh, you know, uh, none of the fellows really have given any stories like that.

And so, uh, some of the women that were early at the tomb, uh, they told us how they saw angels, and later they saw Jesus. And Jesus then said to them, oh fools, so slow to recognize the work of God. How long, you know, uh, before you realize, uh, that the Messiah had to suffer in order to enter into his glory.

And then, beginning at Moses, and here's one sad thing, as far as I'm concerned, as far as the Bible is concerned, that was not recorded in the Bible. I would give anything to have an extra chapter of the Bible in which one of these guys would have written down what Jesus had told to them at that particular time. Because we read that Jesus, uh, then beginning at Moses and all of the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

And as they approached the village, Jesus appeared to be planning to just continue to go on, but they constrained him saying, no, it's getting late, uh, you know, eat with us. And so, he went in to eat with them, and as he broke the bread, they recognized that it was Jesus, and probably saw the nail-pierced hands as he broke the bread. And so, uh, he then disappeared, and, uh, they made a run back to Jerusalem.

I'm sure that, uh, they set a time record, uh, as far as getting back to Jerusalem, to the other disciples to let them know that they had met Jesus there on the road to Emmaus. And they were saying, did not our hearts burn in us as he talked with us on the way, as he was opening the scriptures, as he was giving them the prophecies of the Messiah, and showing how that he had fulfilled those prophecies concerning the Messiah. Their hearts were just burning within them.

So, when they came to the eleven and found them gathered together, and they said to them, the Lord is risen indeed, and he's appeared to Simon. And they shared the things that were done to them on the way to Emmaus, and how he broke the bread, and they recognized him. And as they were sharing, Jesus

himself stood in the midst of them, and said unto them, peace unto you, shalom.

And they were terrified, and they were frightened, and they thought they were seeing a ghost, the Bible said. And Jesus said to them, why are you troubled, and why do you think these thoughts in your heart? Behold my hands and my feet. As you see, and he showed him his hands and his feet, and while they could hardly believe for joy and wonderment, he said unto them, have you any meat? And they gave him a piece of broiled fish and a honeycomb, and he ate it before them.

And he said to them, I told you these words when I was with you, of all of the things must be fulfilled which were written in the law, and Moses and the prophets and the Psalms concerning me. And then he opened their understanding of the scriptures, and said, thus it was written, and thus it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day. Now Luke declares that he showed himself alive after his death, with many infallible proofs.

We have a judicial system that seeks to ascertain the truth of a matter, and what they do is they call witnesses in, people who supposedly were eyewitnesses to a particular event. They put them under oath, causing them to swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help them God. And having then been sworn with this oath to tell the truth, they put them on the stand, and then they question them about this particular incident.

And the person will give their testimony of what they saw, how they interpreted the situation, and then they are cross-examined, and if they can maintain their testimony, and if their testimony is confirmed by others who witnessed that they saw the same event, and if there is a close relationship between their stories, and no real digressions between the two, they will ascertain that this is a fact. We have two or three witnesses that are telling the very same thing under oath, sworn to tell the truth, the whole truth, and they are telling the very same story, then it is presumed to be a fact that it actually did happen. Well, many infallible proofs.

Look at all of the people that saw the risen Christ, testified to seeing the risen Christ. The Bible says there were over 500 at one time that saw Jesus after his resurrection, but here he is appearing to the disciples, to the women, and all, to many, and they're all corroborating the same story. You say, yes, but they weren't really cross-examined.

Well, think again. Most of them gave their lives because of what they witnessed, because they said they had seen the risen Christ, that he was alive, that they actually were with him, they saw him, and they talked to him, and all. They were put to death because of that testimony, because they were trying to quiet the testimony of these people, because many people were believing that Jesus was the Messiah as a result of their testimony.

So, the Bible says that they gazed intently at Jesus, they touched him, and they watched him as he ate the fish and the honeycomb to prove that he just wasn't a ghost, and then, of course, you have, the Bible says we have these witnesses, but then it says we have something more certain than that. We have the sure word of prophecy. In other words, it could be that there were, you know, excitement and things that maybe colored the picture and all within their minds, but you have something that is more certain than just that of eyewitnesses.

You have the actual prophecies of the Old Testament that were fulfilled by Jesus, and so we, it talks about the more sure prophecies that Jesus expounded to them, and so Peter wrote, we did not follow cunningly

devised fables when we made known unto you the power and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. We weren't just looking at cunningly devised, we didn't get together and say, fellas, we got to somehow salvage this whole thing. We got to make up a big story and relate it to everyone that Jesus rose from the dead, and we saw him on these particular occasions and all.

I know that is not the way it happened, Peter said. We have a more sure word of prophecy. He said, we were eyewitnesses.

I saw him, but I have something even more certain than that. We have the more sure word of prophecy, wherein to you do well if you will take heed as to a light that shines in a dark place. So, we have many infallible proofs that Jesus was risen from the dead and was seen by his disciples and by others after his resurrection from the dead.

So, the testimony, the eyewitness, and again, you might not want to believe that, but then take a look at the prophecies. You can't really deny those. They were written in advance and they were fulfilled by Jesus, and thus, if you don't believe, it's a position that you've taken in your mind.

You're prejudiced. You prejudged the situation and you just, you know, are stuck in your position, maybe now, and that's sort of tragic because it means you're stuck in a position that is going to ultimately destroy you, and so I would encourage you today. We've gathered together here.

This is Easter Sunday. We're celebrating the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, and the Bible said, if you will confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Salvation.

God has made it so simple. Just confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and just believe in your heart. Yes, God did raise him from the dead.

In other words, believe in Easter that Jesus did indeed rise from the dead. You see, many of you are much closer to salvation than you actually realize. You already believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

You already believe that he rose from the dead. You're here on an Easter Sunday in which we're celebrating that, and thus see how close you are, and how tragic that people can be so close and still yet miss what it is to know the joy of walking in fellowship with Jesus, and so that's what we'd like to just encourage you today. Just open your heart.

Invite Jesus Christ to come into your life. Let this be the greatest Easter you've ever celebrated in your whole life because of knowing the Lord who has risen from the dead, and you can go forth like the church and greet one another saying, he is risen, and the response, he is risen indeed. Yes, you got it.

Father, we thank you for that hope that we have in and through Jesus Christ, the hope of the resurrection from the dead, and because he lives, we too shall live, and so, Lord, we just pray today for those that are here, maybe some of them right on the border of accepting Jesus Christ. We pray, Lord, that this will be the day long remembered in their life, the day that they'll look back on and say, on that Easter Sunday, I surrendered my life to Jesus Christ. I invited him to come into my life, and he began to make the changes in me, and now what a joy and what a blessing to live for Jesus, and so, Lord, draw them in this day, we pray, and we thank you for it.

Amen. Shall we stand? The pastors are down here at the front to minister to you today, and if the Lord has spoken to your heart, and you really feel that this is the day you would like to really surrender your life and receive Jesus as Lord and Savior, we would encourage you to come forward, and they'll be glad to pray with you and to just really help you to come into a living relationship with Jesus Christ, knowing him as your Lord, knowing him as your Savior, and knowing him as the eternal King, the King of your life, and so, we would encourage you, as soon as we're dismissed, don't head for the exits, head for the front down here, and they're here to minister to you and to pray for you today. May the Lord be with you.

May you have a great rest of the day. May you just really experience his love, his power, the power of the resurrection in your life, and may he make you a new person in Christ Jesus through that power of his Holy Spirit. May the Lord watch over you and keep you in his love and fill you with his Spirit and cause you to just overflow with the love of Jesus Christ and experience the fullness of the blessings of salvation that he offers to each of us.

The Lord bless thee and keep thee. The Lord make his face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace.

Amen.

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