

# Diagnosing on the Basis of Normality

by Major Ian Thomas

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*Major Ian Thomas explores the concept of normality in relation to understanding Jesus' identity and mission as the Christ, emphasizing the need for divine revelation and experiential knowledge.*

**Duration:** 1:06:56

**Scripture:** Matthew 16:13

**Topics:** "Understanding Christ", "The Power of Resurrection"

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## Description

Major Ian Thomas explores the concept of understanding Jesus' true identity and mission, emphasizing that while the disciples recognized Him as the Christ, they lacked comprehension of His purpose, particularly regarding His death and resurrection. He illustrates how their initial enthusiasm and dedication were misguided, as they did not want the cross or believe in the resurrection, leading to a prohibition against sharing the message of Christ. However, after the resurrection, the disciples experienced a transformation, gaining joy, understanding, and a new message to share with the world. Thomas highlights the importance of divine revelation in grasping the truth of Jesus and the necessity of the Holy Spirit for empowerment in their mission.

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## Transcript

basis of normality. I thought we might just take a little exploration this morning and begin that exploration in the 16th chapter of Matthew's gospel. It sort of won't be a lecture and it won't be a sermon, it'll just be a devotional lecture.

16th of Matthew and the 13th verse, when Jesus came into the coast of Caesarea Philippi he asked his disciples saying, whom do men say that I am? The son of man. And I imagine that on occasions the Lord Jesus himself having a tremendous sense of humor, otherwise of course as our creator he would never have given to you and to me a sense of humor. They had times when they enjoyed a bit of fun and I think this initially was just one such a time.

Said the Lord Jesus, what's the latest? Because then as now every quaint idea was going the rounds about the person, the origin, office and ministry of the Lord Jesus. So he said what's the latest? Well they said you'd hardly believe this but some say they're John the Baptist. Well you know what happened to John the Baptist, he had his head cut off.

So they said you'd never believe this but there are some folk who say that John the Baptist has had his head put on again, he's in business. And then somebody else said yes but what about this? Some say that you're Elias, Elijah, the one who was caught up in a chariot of fire. They say you've been in orbit all these centuries but you've landed and you're back in circulation.

And then somebody said and some say you're this prophet and some say you're that prophet. And then suddenly rather more seriously the Lord Jesus said but whom say ye that I the son of man am? And Simon Peter who was never really at a loss at any time to say anything or give any answer. If he didn't know the answer he made one up.

That was essentially Peter. Said Peter thou art the Christ, son of the living God. Right or wrong? Well that was right, that was right.

And said Jesus blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jonah for flesh and blood hath not revealed unto thee. My father which is in heaven this is by divine revelation, all truth is by divine revelation. No truth is ever experiential to you and to me except by divine revelation.

We can learn truth but it'll never be truth in our experience apart from the revelation of God the Holy Spirit, that's his ministry. He leads us into all truth and expands the truth to us. You can memorize whole chunks of the bible, you can master doctrines and never really know experientially the truth that you say you've mastered.

There's got to come a moment of truth where the Holy Spirit is able to lead us to the person of the one who is that truth, Jesus himself by divine revelation. Peter bears this testimony. It was a big thing to say because Israel all down the centuries had been waiting for the Messiah.

It would be just about as sensational if it could happen. It couldn't happen that way but if suddenly I could burst into this room and say he's come. You know you've been waiting for the Lord Jesus to return when he's arrived.

Well we know of course it won't happen that way but it would be just about as sensational as to say that what Peter then said thou art the Christ the one for whom all Israel has been waiting all down the centuries you've arrived. The promised seed of faithful Abraham in whom all the families of the earth would be blessed. Thou art the Christ God's prophet priest and king the anointed one son of the living God.

And you might well imagine that having come to this conclusion and having made that affirmation to which no doubt all the other disciples gladly added their consent the disciples now would be highly qualified to go out into the highways and the byways and publish the tremendous news that Jesus was the Christ that the Messiah had arrived. But you look at the 20th verse for just so soon as by divine revelation they'd borne testimony to the fact that Jesus was the Christ son of the living God. The Lord Jesus verse 20 charged his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

Doesn't that strike you as a little bit quaint? It's a little tame the way it's put there let me read it to the from the Amplified New Testament that gives it rather more strictly. In the 20th verse then he sternly and strictly charged and warned the disciples to tell no one that he was Jesus the Christ. He immediately placed them under a total absolute strict stern prohibition.

Why should he call men to be his disciples and designate them as apostles who by divine revelation recognized who he was and then immediately forbid them under any circumstances to tell anybody

anywhere that he was Jesus the Christ. Apostles with no apostolic office, preachers with no sermon, missionaries with no message, evangelists with no gospel to preach. What's wrong? Well of course Peter was absolutely right and the others too when they added their affirmation to the fact that Jesus was the Christ.

All that was wrong was this that having declared Jesus to be the Christ son of the living God quite frankly if the truth be told and if we look quite impartially impersonally and coldly at the fact they hadn't a clue what it was all about. Not a clue. It was one thing you see to say that Jesus was the Christ quite another thing to know that the purpose which as the Christ did come into the world.

It was one thing to say you are the Messiah but quite another thing to understand the messianic mission. What God was at. And at this stage of their knowledge of the Lord Jesus they hadn't a clue.

Not a clue. Not that the Lord Jesus hadn't taught them. He had constantly but nothing penetrated.

I think was it possibly on Sunday morning can't remember one time over this weekend I said to folks who might be pastors or Sunday school teachers or Bible class leaders that if they on occasions are tempted to be discouraged because of the slowness with which maybe those who have been entrusted to their charge begin to assimilate and actually grasp what they're talking about. We can be greatly encouraged by the fact that nobody in the whole wide world had a duller Bible class than Jesus Christ. They were thick absolutely solid nothing penetrated.

That's always a great encouragement to me. That's why I come to schools like this. Because nothing discourages me now.

Because nothing discouraged him then. For three solid years the Lord Jesus again and again and again and yet again spelled it out loud and clear nothing penetrated. Isn't that encouraging? That's why he forbade them.

And I don't mean by this that they didn't have a sentimental regard and love and attachment to the Lord Jesus. They had all of that. I don't mean by this that they didn't offer him their loyalty.

They did indeed. They'd left their homes and their jobs. They'd hit the road with Jesus Christ.

But they hadn't a clue. I don't mean they weren't enthusiastic. You couldn't have had a more enthusiastic bunch of men.

They were constantly looking forward to the day when the movement would get off the ground. They were the Jesus people of his day and generation. If they'd had stickers in those days they'd have been plastered with them.

On the tail of every donkey they rode you'd see little placards. Short if you love Jesus. They were Jesus people.

But unfortunately then as now they hadn't a clue what it was all about. How do we know? Is this a bit tough on the disciples? Well read the next verse 21. Jesus from that time forth began to show unto his disciples how that he must go to Jerusalem suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and be raised again the third day.

In other words he gave them a simple panoramic preview of the messianic purpose. Told them exactly what was going to happen. And Peter took him.

Literally it means he drew him on one side. So that he'd have a little counsel with the Lord Jesus and put him right. He drew him on one side saying literally pity yourself.

Be it far from thee Lord this shall not be unto thee. Said Peter to the Lord Jesus forget it. Whatever you might have in mind forget it.

That cannot that must not that will not happen to you and we're going to make quite sure it doesn't. That's why the Lord Jesus forbade him and the others to tell anybody anywhere that he Jesus was the Christ. Because quite frankly they didn't want the cross.

And they didn't believe in the resurrection. And what have you got to say to the world if you don't want the cross you don't believe in the resurrection. Absolutely nothing.

So had they gone out then and there to publish from the housetops that Jesus was the Christ with the best will in the world and with the utmost dedication enthusiasm and sentimental attachment to the person of Jesus Christ they could only have taught absolute unadulterated sentimental nonsense. And the Lord Jesus isn't particularly interested in people talking nonsense in his name. So he told them to keep their mouth shut.

Because if you can't talk sense you'll talk nonsense and the best thing if you can only talk nonsense is not talk. Then if you don't talk sense at least you won't talk nonsense. I wonder how many churches would be closed next Sunday if the Lord Jesus had his way.

I wonder how many pulpits would be vacant next Sunday if the Lord Jesus had his way. I wonder how many theological seminaries and bible schools would be bereft of their faculty if Jesus Christ had his way. Be it far from thee Lord said Peter this shall not be unto thee.

And the Lord Jesus turned and said to Peter looking through the man to the origin of what he had to say. Get thee behind me Satan. You see the devil himself was capitalizing upon a man's enthusiasm upon a man's sentimental attachment to Jesus.

The devil capitalize upon anything. He'll capitalize upon your dedication your enthusiasm your attachment to Christ all the good things. As those who love God enough and the Savior enough to come to bible school he probably won't try to get you out on the bottle or off with another man's wife.

He'll simply capitalize upon some of your noblest motivations in order to stab Jesus Christ in the back. Get thee behind me said the Here was a man who loved Christ dedicated to his cause believed him to be the Christ son of the living God yet says the Lord Jesus you're offensive. Thou Savior's not the things that be of God but those that be of men.

Your theology is of the earth. You see here was the son of man Christ talking with the mind of God. Here was Peter destined one day to become a son of God still talking with the mind of a man.

Well that's one picture a bunch of men the devotees the accredited disciples of Jesus Christ named to be apostles and yet placed by the Lord Jesus under a strict stern prohibition there to tell nobody that he Jesus is the Christ. Now here's another picture the same men you'll find in the fifth chapter of the book of

the Acts. Acts chapter five they've just been beaten by command of the Sanhedrin being now released at the behest of a certain gentleman by the doctor by the name of Dr. Gamaliel who was a very fine honorable gentleman who in about five minutes talked more sense than the Sanhedrin could have talked in 50 years.

You remember the argument for the apostles you see were in jail and brought for trial. Let's just briefly remind ourselves there stood up verse 34 in the council a pharisee named Gamaliel doctor of the law had in reputation among all the people and commanded to be to put the apostles forth a little space. Then Dr. Gamaliel said to the men of Israel you men of Israel take heed to yourselves what you intend to do is touching these men.

For before these days rose up Judas boasting himself to be someone to whom a number of men about 400 joined themselves who was slain. He's dead. All as many as obeyed him was scattered and brought to northern said Dr. Gamaliel Judas is dead and the 400 men who were his disciples have been scattered to the wind.

Then he went on to say verse 37 after this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing and drew away much people after him he also perished. Judas is dead and all even as many as obeyed him were so the 400 devotees of Judas are scattered because Judas is dead and all the devotees the disciples of Judas their scars Judas is dead. Judas said Dr. Gamaliel is dead Judas said Dr. Gamaliel is dead Jesus said Dr. Gamaliel is dead and if all the followers of Judas are scattered because Judas is dead, and all the followers of Judas are scattered because Judas is dead, what do you think is going to happen to the followers of Jesus? Jesus is dead! At least, you say he is.

So why don't you grow up, said Dr. Gamaliel. What's the panic? Why do you behave like a bunch of frightened kids? What's scaring you? Judas is dead. Judas is dead.

Jesus is dead. Now I say unto you, verse 38, refrain from these men, let them alone, they'll be as harmless as the followers of Judas, and they'll be as harmless as the followers of Judas. Let them alone, for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught.

But, said Dr. Gamaliel, if it be of God, you cannot overthrow it, lest haply you be found even to fight against God, said Dr. Gamaliel, do you want to take him on? You'll find that God's bigger than you are, said Dr. Gamaliel, with the best sense in the world, you'd better let God be God, and make his own decisions. Some good advice that you and I would do well to heed on occasions, in the 20th century, we're always so busy fighting God's battles for him, as though he were our poor relative. Man is never indispensable to God.

God is always indispensable to man. We have to learn that the hard way. To him, their greed, overwhelmed by the sheer logic of what he had to say, and when they had called the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, who placed the prohibition, the Sanhedrin.

And then they let them go, and, verse 41 tells us, they departed from the presence of the council rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name, hilariously excited at the fantastic privilege that was theirs to make up the sufferings of Christ as members of his body to suffer shame for his name. And what? Next verse? Daily, in the temple, a public place of worship, that's where people came who wanted to find God and worship God. You could hardly have described the temple then as a hotbed of

Bible-believing conservative fundamental evangelism.

But then they cut the temple dead simply because it didn't happen to be a conservatively evangelical centre. Of course not. They were intelligent enough to know that if that's where people go who wanted to find God and be instructed, and who for so long, instead of bread, had been given stones, that was the place to go, of course, most obvious.

I'm waiting for an invitation from the Pope to preach in St. Peter's Rome. I'm not sure whether I'm going to get that invitation, but nothing would delight me more than to go there and tell folk what they haven't heard for centuries. Daily, in the temple, and in every home, from house to house, face to face, man to man, eye to eye, they cease not to teach and to preach, what? Exactly what they were forbidden to do in Matthew 16, Jesus is the Christ.

Well, that's great, isn't it? Matthew 16, the Lord Jesus forbids, sternly, strictly warns his disciples, under no circumstances, are you to tell anybody, anywhere, that I, Jesus, am the Christ. We turn over a few pages, and at the end of Acts chapter 5, we find the same, very same men, in the temple, day by day, house to house, man to man, family to family, testifying, witnessing, unafraid, hilariously happy, that Jesus is the Christ. Well, then something must have happened between Matthew 16 and Acts chapter 5, that must completely have revolutionised the situation.

And it would, I believe, be a good investment to discover what it was that happened. They rediscovered Jesus, in the power of his resurrection. Tell you where it all began.

You'll find it in the last chapter of Matthew's Gospel. Matthew, last chapter. There's only one way, really, to get to know the Bible, and that's let the Bible explain the Bible.

The best commentary there is on the Bible, and it's the cheapest too, because when you buy the Bible, you buy the commentary. And you'll find that, by and large, the Bible throws a tremendous amount of light on most commentaries. Never imagine that the Bible is a textbook full of verses and chapters that you have to analyse, and that's all there is to it.

It's a total revelation. And why so many, who for years, tens, tens of years, ten, thirty, forty years, have studied their Bible, don't know what the Bible's all about. Because they've never allowed it to be a total panoramic proclamation of God's timeless purpose.

That's why so many people go to church week after week, month after month, all-age Sunday school, and what else. But speak to them years later, and they haven't a clue what it's all about. It's rather like somebody who attends a lecture once or twice a week on cars.

And every week, somebody brings out one tiny little bit of the car, and talks about it for twenty minutes. Then sticks it into the box, you see. And the next week, they bring out another little bit, and they say, this is a very fascinating shape, just look at that, isn't that beautiful? Well I'll tell you, you know, what it's supposed to do.

And they stick that in the box, and they come back a week later, and they do that month after month, year after year. What do they know about cars? Nobody's ever taken the pieces out of the box, stuck it together, made it a car, and they've never been for a ride. How boring do you think that would be after three years? How boring do you think that would be after thirty years? And the tragedy is there are countless true Christians who go to church week after week, Sunday school week after week, and

somebody describes a little bit and sticks it back in the box, and they've never, ever been for a ride.

Can't think of anything more boring than that. That's why so many quit. That's why so many just sweated out, hoping that one day get rewarded because they paid the price.

Let the Bible explain itself, until you see the whole panoramic purpose of God. How he made man, why he made man, how man was to function the way God made man. What went wrong? Because it's only against normality that you can ever discover true diagnosis.

Nobody will ever know what happened to them when they were redeemed. Nobody will ever happen to know what happened to them, or what is involved in being born again, unless they know how God made them and how they were intended to function. All they'll do is learn language.

Somebody will tell them, if you're converted, you're on the way to heaven. So they'll say, I'm on the way to heaven. You'll say, why? They'll say, well, I've been converted.

But they won't know what it means to be converted. Except that they've been through a procedure. You see, when a doctor sticks a thermometer in his mouth, he wants to know what your temperature is.

Why? Well, because he knows what your temperature ought to be. Normality. And against normality, he can make a diagnosis of abnormality.

That's why he takes your blood pressure sometimes. That's why he counts your pulse sometimes. Because against normality, he'll know abnormality.

And if you're not much of a mechanic and something goes wrong with your car, you take it round to the workshop, hoping there may be somebody there who knows how it ought to work. You're not very often successful. But you know perfectly well, if only you can find somebody who knows how it ought to work, it's possible they'll shoot the trouble.

And discover abnormality, malfunction, against normality and true function. And we'll never be able to explain to people what happens when they're born again. We'll never be able to explain to people what God intended when they're redeemed.

And unless we know how God made man, how he was intended to function, what went wrong? That was a little digression. Back to the last chapter of Matthew's Gospel, the 28th. It says, In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, on that first Sunday morning, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulcher.

There they were, in the half-light of a breaking dawn. Red-eyed, weary women. Trudging along, and the other records tell us that they were laden with spices and ointments.

Say, what were they going to do on that first Sunday morning, with their spices and ointments? What were they going to do? Embalm the dead body of their dear Jesus. On what morning? The third morning. So how much did they believe in the resurrection? They didn't believe in the resurrection? Not one of them.

The only people who believed in the resurrection were the enemies of the Lord Jesus. That's why they set a guard and had it sealed. They were the only folk who were scared.

The disciples weren't. They didn't believe in it. Nothing frightening about them about the resurrection, because it wasn't going to happen.

So if you'd been up early on that morning, as a neighbour, perhaps visiting just friends, perhaps from some distant village, and in the half-light you just discerned this little group of weary, red-eyed women coming down the road laden with spices and ointments, and you said to your friend, Who are they? Friends of Jesus. Where are they going? To the tomb. To the cemetery.

Why? He's dead. Oh, see. Well, I mean, supposing you had been there and watched them on their way to the cemetery, with spices and ointments, to embalm the dead body.

Wouldn't you have come to a reasonable supposition? He's dead. They obviously weren't going to a wedding. So, what was their message for the world in which they lived? These who washed his feet with their tears and wiped them with their hair, whose sentimental attachment for Jesus and their love for him was beyond dispute.

What was their message for the world? Jesus alive or Jesus dead? Jesus is dead. That's all they had to tell the world. Jesus dead.

I wonder what would happen if somebody who knew absolutely nothing about the Christian life, had never read a Bible, only read our hymn books. What idea do you think they get, by and large, from most of our hymns? That Jesus is dead. And they'd imagine that Christians are folk who just hang around an old rugged cross.

Gazing at it with love and wonder and saying, I love that old rugged cross. Do you? I don't. It was a Roman gallant.

It was the place where they did my Saviour to death. It was a place of execution. I don't love that old rugged cross.

I love the Saviour who died upon it. I love the God who sent him to accomplish what he did there. But I don't love that cross.

I might just as well pick up a dagger and say, you see that dagger? I love that old dagger. It's just the sweetest thing in the world to me. I gaze at it with admiration.

You know, that's what they used to stab my mother dead. I love that old dagger. But you see, we've been brought up with such a sentimental attachment to the cross that we've forgotten what happened there.

By and large, we've left the Christ hanging on it. Jesus isn't dead. He's alive.

That's the place where he died. And we shall never cease to be profoundly thankful to God for what he accomplished at that place. He bore our sins.

He paid the price of our redemption. His blood was shed that we might be reconciled to a holy God. True.

The cross is empty. And the tomb. But these women didn't know it.

They were on their way to find the dead body of their crucified Jesus. Rather an unusual morning, mind you. One thing, there was an earthquake.

That's a bit disturbing, first thing on a Sunday morning. And the ground began to shake. But there was another surprise for them.

They'd hardly got within sight, through the half gloom, of the tomb where they expected to find the dead body of their crucified Jesus. And they suddenly saw a lot of bodies lying around as though they were dead. So added to an earthquake and a lot of dead bodies.

They were a bit scared. And hardly they got over the shock of an earthquake plus dead bodies and they looked up into the face of an angel. Well, that's a little unusual too for a Sunday morning.

But I think even angels have a sense of humour. Hope they have. Otherwise, when they look at us, they'd be pretty miserable.

Hope that every now and again they can have a real good laugh at how stupid we are. Behold, there was a great earthquake, verse 2 tells us. For the angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone from the door and sat upon it.

His countenance was like lightning and his raiment white as snow. And for fear of him, the keepers did shake and became as dead men. He was very kind to the women.

He said, don't panic. He said, don't be frightened. Fear not, I know you seek Jesus.

I know why you've come, you're looking for Jesus. Well, weren't they? Weren't they seeking Jesus? Well, of course they were. Any insincerity? No.

But said the angel in so many words, I know that you're seeking Jesus, that's your motivation. Don't challenge the sincerity with which you've come. But you haven't found him and you won't.

Because you're making two mistakes. The first mistake you're making is this, you're looking for him in the wrong tent. And because of that mistake, you're looking for him in the wrong place.

What did he say? You seek Jesus, which was crucified. What tense is that? That's the past tense. Was it true? Well, of course it was true.

He was crucified. No question about that. He was crucified.

But because they were still looking for him in the past tense, the one who was crucified, they were looking for him in the wrong place. So, said the angel, he was crucified. You're absolutely right, he was crucified.

As a matter of fact, that's exactly why he came to this world. Incarnate, to live that sinless life to his father's total satisfaction, and there to be made sin for you upon the cross, lay down his life, a ransom for many, wounded for your transgressions and bruised for your iniquities, the cost of your peace with God laid upon him, the one who suffered the just for the unjust. You're absolutely right, he was crucified.

But he is not here. Because that was the past tense. You seek Jesus, which was crucified.

Verse 6, he is, present tense, not here. For he is, present tense, risen. As he said.

But you listened when he said it, and never heard a word. How easy it is to listen and listen and listen, never hear a word. Massive people go to church and listen, listen, listen, never hear a word.

That's what the Lord Jesus said to the scribes and the Pharisees. Do you remember? He said, you listen to everything I say. Never hear a thing.

He is not here, he is risen, as he said. Come, said the angel, come, see the place where the Lord lay. Said the angel to the women, come with me and I'll show you where he isn't.

Because he was crucified, but he is risen. Then he said, I'll tell you where he is. Go quickly, verse 7, tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead, and behold he goeth before you into Galilee.

There you shall see him, lo, I have told you. And all I'm telling you, said the angel, is exactly what he told you. Before ever he died.

He said the third day he would be risen again from the dead, and he warned you to meet him in Galilee. That was the rendezvous, and you've missed your appointment. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy, with awe.

And great joy, Jesus is alive. And they ran, they ran to bring his disciples word. You can imagine how excited they were.

They just couldn't run fast enough. They wanted to be the very, very, very first to break the news, the tremendous news. To that bunch of frightened men who were huddled together up in the upper room behind closed doors.

They wanted to penetrate the darkness and banish the gloom. They wanted to burst in and say he's alive. And on the way, verse 9, as they went to tell the disciples, behold Jesus met them saying all hail.

And they came and laid him, held him by the feet, and they worshipped. Because when you leave the place where he was, you'll discover that he is where he is. Well they arrived.

They arrived. Raced up the stairs. And when Peter, James and John and the other disciples heard their feet on the stairs, they nearly had a heart attack.

They came out with beads of perspiration, went as white as a sheet. And they added the kitchen dresser to the grand piano against the door. To make absolutely certain that nobody would get in.

They looked at each other in dismay and said they've come. Just exactly what we expected. Those cruel hands that have done him to death are going to do us to death.

Bye Peter. It's been nice to know you Thomas. Boys.

The women came hammering on the door. And then finally somebody said it's the women, it's the girls, quick get them in, they're after the girls. And so they moved the grand piano and the dresser and all the other things from the door.

And they pulled them in one after the other, slammed the door, ran back the bolt, put back the kitchen table and everything else. And they said they are for you and the girls. Boys, they just let loose.

They were just so excited. They all started talking at once. That's not unusual.

Generally speaking they say, ladies are generally speaking. But on this occasion they really had something to say. They were just so excited.

They said it's just tremendous. We went stupid as we were in spite of all the Lord Jesus told us. Which now the angel has reminded us.

We went with the ointment and with the spices to embalm his dead body. It was a bit scary because it was an earthquake and there were a lot of dead bodies around. But the angel was very kind.

He said don't be frightened. And he said we know what you are looking for. We know what you are looking for.

Jesus. But he is alive. He is risen.

And you know on the way back we met him. We have actually seen him. And then there was a cold sticky silence.

Not a smile on the apostles face. You might have imagined they would have thrown their hats in the air and said tremendous. What do you mean? He is really alive? Uh uh.

Look at Luke 24. End of verse 5. Why seek ye the living among the dead? Rebuked the angel. He isn't here.

He is risen. Remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee. But although you listened you didn't hear.

Saying the son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words. And they returned from the sepulcher and told all these things unto the eleven and to all the rest.

It was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women that were with them. Which told these things unto the apostles. And their words, verse 11, seemed to them as idle tales.

And they believed them not. If you are women you are hysterical. You are suffering from hallucinations.

We don't blame you. We are all under pressure. We have all had a very very tough time.

And if you have cracked under the strain that's ok. Go home take six aspirins. Have a good night.

You will be alright in the morning. Who is this? Oh Peter, James and John. How about having them in this condition for one of your Bible conferences? Are you ok? What about a special week of meetings here at this Bible school? With Peter, James and John.

As they then were. No wonder the Lord Jesus told them to keep their mouths shut. They didn't want the cross.

Didn't understand the cross. And they certainly didn't believe in the resurrection. Not on your life.

Jesus they said is dead. Come to us for that kind of a story. We saw him die.

We saw him carried away. We buried him ourselves. That was the apostolic creed in the first century.

Jesus is dead. And if Christianity is going to survive. It's got to survive without Christ.

He died in our generation. Ever heard that? Since? Yes some smart alecks came up with that. In some of the theological sentiments of North American content.

In the 20th century. And they thought they were smart. They thought that was you know mod.

Progressive. They were 2000 years too late. The apostles stole a march on them.

Beat them to the gun. That was the apostolic creed then. Incidentally may interest you know you probably read the article in Times.

The theological seminars that propagated that utter nonsense. Nearly going bankrupt. Which is fantastic.

We'll help them along any time. Jesus is dead. Then Peter did something typically stupid.

Having been told exactly where Jesus wasn't. Ran to the sepulcher. And stooping down beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves.

And departed wondering himself at that which was come to pass. Having been told where Jesus wasn't. Having been told exactly by the woman where Jesus was.

He went to where he wasn't. You'd hardly call that intelligent. Enthusiastic yes.

But there's nothing breeds ignorance more than enthusiasm. That's the sad thing about it. Because so much of our enthusiasm is not insincere.

But you see sincerity, enthusiasm, dedication, verve, promotion is never a substitute for truth. Ever. That's why experience is never a substitute for truth.

Truth never derives from experience. And we're living in an experiential age when everybody wants an experience. Be on your guard.

Truth never derives from experience. To be healthy, valid and safe. Experience must always derive from truth.

And there's only one source to which you can turn. Divinely authored, breathed of the Holy Ghost. This Word of God.

The truth about the Lord Jesus. Who is the truth of the truth. And makes the truth true.

Behold two of them, verse 13 tells us in Luke 24. Two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus. Which was from Jerusalem about three score furlongs.

And they talked together all these things which had happened. And it came to pass that while they communed together and reasoned. Jesus himself drew near and went with them.

But their eyes were holden. They should not know him. No they were on their way home.

Why? Well Jesus was dead. The curtain had fallen. All they could do now was to lick their wounds.

Go back home and cherish such melancholy memories as they might. Of the beautiful life that they misguidedly once had thought to be. The Christ.

The Son of the Living God. But who is now dead and buried. And if you think Jesus is dead.

And behave as though Jesus was dead. And live as though Jesus was dead. You probably won't recognize him when you bump into him.

And he said unto them. What manner of communication are these? Verse 17. That you have one to another as you walk in a sand.

Said the Lord Jesus. Why so miserable? What's plaguing you? And one of them whose name was Cleopas. Answering and said.

Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem? And hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And the Lord Jesus quite innocently. I think with just his tongue in his cheek maybe. He said.

What things? I think he probably knew quite a lot about what had happened. Don't you? In Jerusalem in those days? He was there when it happened. They said concerning Jesus of Nazareth.

And immediately began to tell their living Lord about their dead Jesus. Concerning Jesus of Nazareth. Which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people.

And how the chief priest and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death. And have crucified him. We trusted past tense that it had been he.

Past tense. Which should have redeemed Israel. Past tense.

That's all finished. We were mistaken. Beside all this today is the third day since these things were done.

Mind you certain women came hysterically into our company. And astonished us. Who were early at the sepulcher.

They had some fantastic idea. Not finding his body they came and said. That they had also seen a vision of angels which said that he was alive.

We treated it of course. With the respect that it deserved. We didn't despise the poor women.

They were just in a bad way. They were hysterical. Mind you certain of them which were with us went to the sepulcher.

The sepulcher found it even so as the women had said. But him they saw not. We are back.

And so we are going home. And said the Lord Jesus. Fool.

And slur of heart to believe all the prophets at first. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory. And beginning at Moses.

First book the Pentateuch. And all the prophets he expounded on them in all the scriptures. The Old Testament scriptures.

The only Bible he had. The things concerning himself. And we learn later that as he gave them this exposition.

On the road to Emmaus their hearts burned within them. They drew nigh to the village where they went. He made as though he would have gone further.

But they constrained him saying abide with us. Unwittingly they invited him to share their accommodation. And he went in a tarot with them.

Came to pass. As he sat at meat with them he took bread. And though he was their guest he played the role of host.

Broke it. Gave thanks. And passed it.

And two pairs of eyes watched. One pair of hands. What do you think they saw? The print of the nails.

And what does it say next? Their eyes were opened. And they knew him. And he suddenly disappeared out of their sight.

Identified as the risen Lord by the hallmarks of his saviourhood. The wounds of the cross. They didn't even unpack their bags.

They said one to another. Verse 32. Did not a heart burn within us while he talked with us by the way.

And while he opened to us the scriptures. They rose up the same hour. Returned to Jerusalem.

Found the eleven. Gathered together. Verse 35.

Burst into the room. Mind you. To the great consternation of the disciples once more.

They told what things, verse 35, were done in the way. And how he was known to them in the breaking of bread. They burst into the room.

When finally they persuaded them to open the door. And they said the women were right. They're not hysterical.

They're not suffering hallucinations. They haven't had a nervous breakdown. It's true.

We've seen him ourselves. He came into our house. We didn't recognize him when we first saw him on the road.

But we invite him to stay the night. He sat at our table. And he took bread and he broke it.

Just as he did at the last supper. And we saw the print of the nails. And my.

As he opened to us the scriptures on the way. Our hearts burned. Not a smile on the face of Peter, James and John.

Not a smile. Last chapter of Mark's gospel. We'll be back there in Luke 24.

So keep the place. Last chapter. Mark 16.

Verse 9. When Jesus was risen early the first day of the week. He appeared first to Mary Magdalene. Out of whom he had cast seven devils.

She went and told them that they had been with him. As they mourned and wept. And they when they had heard that he was alive.

And had been seen of her. Believe not. After that he appeared in another form.

And had two of them. As they walked and went into the country. The two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

And they went. And they told it to the residue. What does it say? Neither believed they then.

They said you're worse than the women. You ought to know better. You go back and take twelve aspirins.

And you better stay in bed for a week. Isn't that fantastic? Little wonder the Lord Jesus told them to keep his mouth shut. Afterward Mark goes on to say.

He appeared to the eleven as they sat at meat. And he upraided them with their unbelief and their hardness of heart. Because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

They didn't want the cross. They didn't believe in the resurrection. That's why the Lord Jesus forbade them to tell anybody that he Jesus was the Christ.

And back in Luke 24. As they told. What things were done in the way and how he was known to them.

In breaking of bread. Verse 36. As they thus spake.

Jesus himself stood in the midst of them and said. Peace be unto you. That would be pretty convincing.

Wouldn't you think? He came through a closed door. Stood in the midst. Spoke to them and said.

Peace. Were they convinced? Uh uh. Shrieked in terror and thought he was a ghost.

Amazing. They were terrified. Deprived.

Supposing they'd seen the spirit. Couldn't be Jesus. He's dead.

We saw him die. We buried him. Little one they told them to keep their mouth shut.

The Lord Jesus said. Why are you troubled and why do thoughts arise in your heart? Behold my hands and my feet that it is I myself. Handle me and see for a spirit of not flesh and bones you see me have.

I'm pretty substantial for a ghost. And it says. While they yet believed not for joy.

Which means they could hardly believe for joy. Yes this is where it happened. They rediscovered the Lord Jesus and the power of his resurrection.

What was the first consequence of their rediscovery of the Lord Jesus and the power of his resurrection? Joy. Joy. Joy.

How does Peter put it late in the first chapter of his first epistle? Joy unspeakable and full of glory. In their rediscovery of the Lord Jesus as the one who gave himself for them. Who rose again from the dead as they were yet to discover.

Who would give himself to them. Joy unspeakable and full of glory. I think it's to this incident of course that John in the first chapter of his first epistle bears reference.

Keep the place there. In Luke 24 because in the last few moments we're going to discover other consequences of his resurrection. But you look in the first chapter of John's first epistle.

And see what he writes. 1 John chapter 1 verse 1. That which was from the beginning. End of that verse.

Of the word of life. We know of whom here the apostle testifies. The one of whom he speaks in the first chapter of his gospel.

In the beginning was the word. The word was with God. Was God.

By him all things were made. Without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life.

Real life. And this life was the light of men. And says John that which was from the beginning.

Which we've heard. Which we've seen with our eyes. Which we've looked upon.

What do you mean by that? He says we touched him. In the upper room when we didn't want the cross. And didn't believe in the resurrection.

And were filled with confusion. Utterly downcast and depressed. Waiting only to be done to death.

He appeared in our midst. And showed us his hands and his feet. And says John we touched him.

The hands of handled of the word of life. The life was manifested he says. We've seen it.

We bear witness. We show unto you. That eternal life which was with the father.

And was manifested unto us. Eternal life. Manifested to them.

How was eternal life manifested? In the person of Jesus Christ. Who is that life? For this is the record he goes on to tell us in the fifth chapter. That God has given to us eternal life.

And that life which is eternal is in his son. He that has the son has what the son is. Life.

He that doesn't have the son. Doesn't have life. He was manifested unto us.

Verse three. That which we have seen and heard. Declare we unto you.

That you also may have fellowship with us. And truly our fellowship is with the father. And with his son Jesus Christ.

For both are alive. And these things. Verse four.

These things write we unto you says John. That your joy may be full. We want you to have the same full blooded.

Robust. Healthy. Adventuresome joy.

That became ours in the day. In the upper room. That Jesus stood in our midst.

And we touched him. New joy. What was the second consequence of their rediscovery of Jesus Christ.

And the power of his resurrection. You'll find it in Luke 24. There's 44.

He said to them. These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you. That all things must be fulfilled.

Which were written in the law of Moses. And in the prophets. And in the Psalms concerning me.

From the beginning to the last. Verse of the last chapter. Of the Old Testament scripture.

Said the Lord Jesus. These are the things which I spake unto you. While I was with you.

You listened. But you didn't hear. But then the next verse said.

He opened their understanding. That they might understand the scriptures. Anything wrong with the scriptures? No.

Never was then. Never will be. And there's nothing wrong with the scriptures now.

There is something wrong with people's understanding. But he opened their understanding. That they might understand the scriptures.

And suddenly. Added to their new joy. They had a new.

Bible. It takes. An encounter with the risen Lord.

To have a Bible that really makes sense. You see to the scribes and the Pharisees. The Lord Jesus said.

You search the scriptures. They were theological professionals. In them you think you have eternal life.

But they which testified me. You won't come to me. But you might have life.

So the mistake you see. The scribes and the Pharisees were making. Was to detach the written word from the living word.

And because the scribes and the Pharisees. Detached the written word from the living word. They had a written word.

A Bible that didn't make sense. And if you study your Bible long enough. Without relating it to the living Lord Jesus.

You'll do exactly what they did. You'll crucify him. What was the mistake that the disciples had made.

For all their enthusiasm. And sentimental attachment. And loyalty.

And fervor. And enthusiasm. What was the mistake they had been making.

Very simple. The scribes and the Pharisees. Had separated the written word from the living word.

So they had a Bible that didn't make sense. The disciples separated the living word from the written word. So they had a Jesus that didn't make sense.

He didn't make sense. He was always doing and saying the wrong thing. So far as they were concerned.

When finally they entered the city of Jerusalem. They strewed the streets with palm branches. And they shouted Hosanna to the highest.

Where the disciples were excited. Look at the crowd they said. Look at the crowd.

Look at the master movements off the ground. And John said to Peter. As long as he doesn't spoil it.

And Thomas probably turned to James and said. I hope he doesn't say the wrong thing. You know what he always does.

And he did. He did it again. He went straight into the temple.

Turned the tables upside down. Kicked the people out. And all the animals.

And said you've turned my father's house into a den of thieves. And you could see the disciples all saying. He's done it again.

Just at the moment of success. Just when we're right on the crest of the wave. He's done it again.

Hadn't a clue what it was all about. But now. In the upper room.

He opens their understanding. They might understand the scriptures. Thus it behold.

Continued the Lord Jesus. Thus it behold. For thus it is written.

Thus it behold Christ. To suffer and to rise from the dead. The third day.

That repentance and remission of sin should be preached in his name. And among all nations. Beginning at Jerusalem.

They've got a new joy. They've got a new Bible. But they've got more than that.

They've got a new message. What did the Lord Jesus say? That repentance and remission of sin should be preached in his name. Repentance and remission of sin.

New message. They've done some preaching mind you. Even though the Lord Jesus prohibited them.

To tell anybody that he Jesus was the Christ. He let them do a little preaching. It was good for their homiletics.

Keep the place there open in Luke 24. And you'll find it in Mark's gospel. Mark's gospel.

Chapter 6. Verse 7. The Lord Jesus called unto them the twelve and began to send them forth by two and two. And gave them power of an unclean spirit. He called the twelve.

Who did that include? Judas. Judas. He had a little homiletic exercise too.

He was trained to be a preacher. Don't have to be converted to train to be a preacher. You know that don't you? Otherwise we wouldn't have so many unconverted preachers.

The only thing is if you happen to be an unconverted preacher. You should be at least as sensible as Judas. Resigned from the ministry.

But I don't recommend you do it the way he did it. He committed suicide. He called the twelve including Judas.

And began to send them forth by two and two. And gave them power of unclean spirits. And verse 12 says this.

They went out and they preached. What did they preach? That men should repent. Anything else? No they didn't have anything else to say.

They could tell men to be sorry. But if you don't want the cross. And don't believe in the resurrection.

What else can you say? Nothing else to say. So they preached that men should repent. And pronounced the benediction.

They didn't even deserve to take the offering. Because they'd only spelled out the problem. They hadn't given the answer.

They preached that men should repent. Men should repent. Men should repent.

They could tell bad men to be sorry. But they couldn't tell sorry men how to be saved. Because they didn't want the cross.

And didn't believe in the resurrection. But in the upper room now. The Lord Jesus showing them his hands and his feet.

Says thus it behold Christ. To suffer and to rise again the third day. That repentance and remission of sins.

Repentance and remission of sins. Should be preached in his name. They got a new message.

Added to their new jaw. New Bible. Added to the new Bible.

That now makes sense. A new message. And added to their new message.

Verse 48 in Luke 24. You are his witnesses of these things. Now you've got a new responsibility.

I'm going to remove the ban. I'm going to lift the prohibition. Now I'm going to send you out to tell the story.

Because now the cross makes sense. I didn't drift to disaster. You tried to dissuade me.

But I allowed neither friend nor foe to dissuade me. I set my place like a flint. Because I was obedient.

Obedient. Obedient. Obedient for every step I took.

Obedient under the death of the cross. I was born to die that you might be redeemed. So you've got a new jaw.

You've got a new Bible. You've got a new message. And now you've got a new responsibility.

But just a moment said the Lord Jesus. You're not quite ready for the new responsibility. Because you haven't yet entered into the good of that for which I have given myself for you.

Why did he give himself for us? Only that he might give himself to us. And he said until I've given myself to you you're not fit for the job. Verse 49.

Behold I send the promise of my father upon you. Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until you be imbued with power from on high. You're going to receive power from on high.

You're going to have restored to you the life that was forfeited in Adam. There's going to take place on the grounds of my redemptive act. That spiritual regenerative purpose.

That by the indwelling Holy Spirit will credit you with my resurrection life. Because I live you will live also. You're going to share my resurrection.

And until I have come. Having ascended back to be with my father in the person of the other comfort of the Holy Ghost. To be to you now as God what my father for 33 years has been to me as God.

So long as you as men are prepared now to be to me what for 33 years I as man was prepared to be to my father. Until then you're not fit for the job. And so we're back in Acts again.

Chapter 1. Acts chapter 1. The promise of the father said the Lord Jesus. Power from on high. And after the Lord Jesus was risen from the dead.

You'll remember recorded for us in the first chapter of the book of the Acts. He conducted a short term non-vocational Bible school for 40 days. To whom also there's three he showed himself alive after his passion.

By many infallible proofs being seen in them 40 days. And speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. And being assembled together with them commanded them commanded them.

That they should not depart from Jerusalem. But wait for the promise of the father. Which you've heard of me.

And all through the record of the gospel. He tells them in advance of his death and resurrection. The promise of the father.

They didn't understand it never made sense it never penetrated. Not until the day of. But he said you're going to receive.

The promise of the father. What was the promise of the father. The Holy Spirit.

That redeemed sinners cleansed in the blood of Jesus. Being reconciled to a holy God. Could receive again by the gift of God the Holy Ghost.

That life that was lost in Adam. And by the presence of the Holy Spirit they would be raised from the dead. And by his presence in them through whom they would share the life of Christ.

Become members in particular of his new body corporate. That the father was to provide for the son on the day of Pentecost. So that he might continue to do and continue to teach the things that he began to do.

And began to teach in his own body. And how did the Lord Jesus describe the coming of God the Holy Spirit to credit the redeemed sinner with the life of their risen Lord. But he tells us in the next day.

And if there's any ever been any ambiguity in your mind about the significance of this expression. Allow the Lord Jesus to teach you John said the Lord Jesus truly baptized with water. But you will be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days.

It hasn't yet happened. But it's going to it's the promise of my father which said he you've heard of me that on the grounds of my redemptive act. I in the power of my resurrection I'm going to come by the Holy Spirit to indwell your humanity indwelling your spirit I'll gain access by your consent to your soul.

I'll teach your mind control your emotions direct your will. And if you will trust me in this way with all your heart lean not your understanding but acknowledge me in all your ways. I will govern your behavior because as the head of the body I will have the right to do so because you'll be members of my body in particular.

And said the Lord Jesus going to happen not many days hence. And on the day of Pentecost it happened. They had to wait those few days.

Why. Because John 7 Jesus was not yet glorified. You and I don't have to wait today for the Holy Spirit.

Because the Lord Jesus is already glorified. Simultaneously in time the moment any boy girl man or woman worldwide to dower in any nation kindred tribe or tongue or race or creed or class or color in repentance toward God claims cleansing through the shed blood of Jesus in that moment of time that redemptive transaction is sealed by the restoration of the Holy Spirit whose presence is the only valid stamp of validity. The earnest of our inheritance as the purchase possession.

What a marvelous thing. There's no Christian boy girl man or woman who has not been baptized with the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ. Says Paul we are baptized into his body by the Holy Spirit.

Not to be confused of course with the fullness of the Holy Spirit. That consent on your part and mine that allows the Holy Spirit by whose presence we are baptized into the body. He is able to invade the soul teach our minds control our emotions direct our wills and finally govern our behavior.

As those who have become bodies holy filled and flooded with God himself. And of course on the day of Pentecost it happened. And they began to share the life of Jesus Christ.

That's why of course you find in the record in the Acts they were excited about the resurrection. What was it that transformed their lives. The fact that they had discovered that Jesus was alive.

Jesus was alive. And alive in them. Which we could go on and you'll find in the 1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th chapters.

Let's if I may just take this one moment. Just to round this off look in the 5th chapter of the Acts again. And you'll find that beaten and let go they rejoiced that they were allowed to suffer shame.

Do you remember for Jesus sake in the last but one verse the 41st verse of that 5th chapter. Rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name daily in the temple to every house. They cease not to teach and to preach what before they have been forbidden to do.

Jesus is the Christ. Standing arraigned before the high priest. Peter says in verse 29 we ought to obey God rather than man.

It's the God of our fathers who raised up Jesus. The God who gave us Genesis. The God who gave us the prophecy of Isaiah.

The God who gave us by the lips of David. Moved by the Holy Ghost the Psalms. It's the God of our fathers.

We've got a Bible that makes sense now. Now nothing frightens us. Now nothing shocks us.

Now we see that our Lord Jesus didn't drift to disaster. We've got a new joy and we've got a new Bible. He raised up Jesus.

Whom you slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a prince and a saviour. For to give repentance to Israel and what? Forgiveness of sins.

A new joy, a new Bible and a new message. Repentance and forgiveness. And we verse 32 are his witnesses.

Not only a new joy, not only a new Bible, not only a new message. We've got a new responsibility. We are his witnesses of these things.

But not only that so is also he continues in the end of verse 32. So is also the Holy Ghost whom God has given to them that obey. And we've got a new enabling.

We've got a new joy, we've got a new Bible, we've got a new message, we've got a new responsibility. And by the indwelling presence of God the Holy Spirit we've got a new enabling. We share the life of Christ.

You couldn't kill him. And you can't kill us. That's why you can't frighten us.

Yes something happened didn't it? Between Matthew 16 and Luke. 24. They rediscovered the Lord Jesus in the power.

Of his resurrection. Through the indwelling of his Holy Spirit. And this handful of untutored men and women.

In their availability to their living Lord let all Godless in the world. Evangelize the then known world in one generation. Change the face of nations and turn the world upside down.

That's something. Do you and I have anything less than they had then? No. The same Lord Jesus.

The same yesterday. Today and forever. Reckon with his life as you once learned to reckon with his death.

Thank God for every step you take. He's always big enough for the job. Let him lose.

And God will take the consequences.

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