



Shepherd's Path

A Shepherd's Personal Devotions

Signs on Believers' Highway, Lesson 49

Lesson Title: Jesus Shows Himself to His Followers

Take Home Point: You can believe with your heart even if you can't see with your eyes.

Warm-Up:

Imagine a man shipwrecked on an island. Desperate to find a way off, he decides to build a walkway to the mainland a fistful of sand at a time. The sea in the lagoon is calm and, after a many days, he can see progress and feels good about his efforts. A few days later a boat arrives; a rescuer jumps out and says, "This boat was sent for you! Hop in!" The man replies, "It's too good to be true. That may be a good boat for you, but I must trust my own efforts and keep working on my walkway." The sailor encourages him to come, but the man can't believe someone would rescue him. He dies lost, because he never accepted the offer of the one who knew he was there, knew he needed to be rescued, and crossed the ocean separating them to rescue him.

Read: John 19:38 to 20:31

Observation (What happened?):

What did Mary Magdalene tell the disciples?

How did Jesus greet his disciples each time he appeared in a room with them?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

When John was at the empty tomb, what does it mean that he "saw and believed"?

To whom was Jesus referring when he said, "blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed"?

Insight:

Much critical analysis of the past 200 years aimed to provide rational explanations for what otherwise must be supernatural as described in the written records. Most scholars attempting to do this started with a presupposition that miracles were outside their view of human experience, thus not to be believed. This has resulted in numerous theories explaining the empty tomb, some far more fantastic than God directly intervening in the natural world. But what is most interesting is that no one ever seriously questions the fact of the empty tomb! Nowhere in the gospels or other writings of the time do the Romans, Jewish leaders, or secular historians ever challenge that Jesus was not there on Sunday morning. None of the early church writings, whether in teaching or defending the faith, bother to substantiate the claim. So, as is usually the case with God, it comes down to choice. What do we do with the empty tomb? We either believe Jesus, who declared he rose from the dead and so conquered death, or we do not. And if we do not, then no amount of rational explanation will free the soul from slavery to self.

Application (What does it mean to me?):

Do you believe Jesus is alive? How do you know he is?

How do you live like he is alive and has given you life?