

44-01-06.wpd --What Jesus Did Afterward
 resurrection, reason, divine fellowship, remembering, kingdom of God
 Acts 1:3
 God always meets our needs for the journey ahead.

INTRODUCTION:

--Acts 1:3, *After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.*

--For 40 days before He ascended, Jesus continued a ministry about which we know very little. We know much about the Resurrection, but I want to address (**title**), because what He did relates to the next step in lives of the disciples. **HOM.idea**. This little verse gives us 3 areas of need that Jesus met and still is meeting today....

I. God Meets Our Need for Certain Faith

A. Can you envision how the disciples felt, having seen the bloody, broken body of Jesus die on a Cross, then seeing Him suddenly appear to them better looking than ever? It was unbelievable!

1. Everyone here knows what it's like to watch a friend or loved one go through the physical changes that accompany the dying process. Imagine seeing that loved one step into this room right now, looking even better than when he or she was well. What would you be thinking? A ghost? a dream?]
2. That's the problem when the supernatural world of the divine meets the natural world of humanity, we have a hard time accepting it as real. It's fine for fairy tales and dreams, but not for "down-to-earth" thinking-- John 20:24-25, Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it."

B. The Christian faith does *not* require us to stop using our brains--

1. Salvation itself is something that God wants to talk with us about logically-- Isa 1:18, "Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."
2. God created us with reasoning powers in a natural world where its logical to question the unnatural, SO He works with us to meet our need for certainty in faith-- "*After his suffering, he showed*

himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive"

3. Jesus laid the rational doubts of Thomas to rest with substantial proof-- John 20:26-27, A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."
4. Thomas was not alone in his doubting, and is still not alone-- Mat 28:16-17, Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but **some doubted**. (Today, believers sometimes still need "*convincing proofs*" to make their faith certain, and God works with us through *big and little miracles* (ie., **answered prayer**) to meet those needs.

TRANS: During His earthly ministry, Jesus' supernatural works proved His identity as the Messiah. After His resurrection, He seemed to have to prove Himself all over again-- John 20:30-31, Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. **God always meets our needs for the journey ahead**. He knows the kind of world we live in, and how reasoning plays such a big part. So, He meets our need for *convincing proofs* and certainty in our faith.

II. God Meets Our Need for Divine Communion

- A. What happened to the disciples when Jesus was taken out of the picture? (He predicted it)-- Mark 14:27, "You will all fall away," Jesus told them, "for it is written: 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.'" (This tendency to scatter without the presence of Christ is always real in the life of believers.)
- B. Jesus knew the disciples needed more than a one-time appearance before going off to Heaven, so "*He appeared to them over a period of forty days*" and did so multiple times. (His separation from them by the Cross was a shock, but the coming separation from them by His ascension was more like a weaning process.)
- C. Jesus knows our need for His presence in our lives and He promised to maintain it-- John 14:18, I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. (And the last phrase in the Great Commission-- Mat 28:20b, ...And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.")

TRANS: Christians are not repositories for rules and doctrines, but temples for the living Christ (specifically for the Holy Spirit, through Whom Christ comes individually to each and every believer's heart). **God always meets our needs for the journey ahead**, and He does this by His presence.

III. God Meets Our Need for Recalling Truth

- A. Humans are often forgetful of very important truths. Of everything Jesus taught, God's Kingdom was in the center. So it's not surprising that during His 40 days of appearing to the disciple, He "*spoke about the kingdom of God.*"
- B. Why did Jesus emphasize "the kingdom of God" in His ministry and again as He was ready to leave? [E. Stanley Jones in *The Word Became Flesh*, says, "The Christian conception of the Incarnation is unique in that the incarnation is not only to be in a person, but in an order, the kingdom of God. Jesus made Himself and the Kingdom of God synonymous.... One's relationship to Him determined one's relationship to the Kingdom. Not only was absolute love embodied in Him, but absolute authority. God was not only redeeming in Jesus, He was ruling in Jesus. The Kingdom is Jesus and Jesus is the Kingdom. The Kingdom is the Christlike spirit universalized."]
- C. One way we forget is by a narrowness of focus:
1. We see our individual *salvation*, our *church*, our *country*, our *pet cause*, and we miss the larger picture of God's rule.
 2. Before Jesus left, He proclaimed His identification with God's Rule (as E. Stanley Jones says)-- Mat 28:18, Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me...."

CONCLUSION:

-- Jesus knew what was ahead for the disciples, and He knows what's ahead for us. **God always meets our needs for the journey ahead**, by *assuring our faith*, by *making His presence known*, and by *reminding us Who is on the throne of the universe*. Those are the things that take us through the rest of our journeys.