

FOLLOWING THE RISEN LORD

By Mark Beard

Text: John 20:19-21

For the disciples it seemed that all was lost. Life with Jesus had been great. There had been healings, conversions, miracles, and even people raised from the dead. But that was then and this is now. Now they found themselves, not only without a savior but also without the courage to stand up for His name. They were trying to put the pieces of their life together -- they were trying to get used to the idea of life without Jesus.

Then came the evening. The doors were shut and hope was gone -- that is until the unexpected happened. Without warning or announcement Jesus was there with them. There was no invitation. There was little if any faith at all that He would come. No expectation. No place set at the table. No chair left vacant just in case. But He was there! Why would He come to such a faithless crowd? Because they needed Him.

Why does He come to us today in all our failures and doubts? Because we need Him. What did He do for them? The same thing He wants to do for us today.

Let's take a look at the actions of Jesus.

I. JESUS CALMED THE FEAR THAT HAD OVERTAKEN THEM (v.19).

A. He came to be with them.

(He stood in the midst of them.)

B. He spoke to them.

He said, "Peace be with you."

II. JESUS RESTORED THE JOY THAT HAD BEEN LOST (v.20).

A. He reminded them of His love by what He showed them.

He showed them His hands and side.

B. They were "glad" when they saw the Lord.

III. JESUS GAVE THEM HOPE TO ANCHOR THEIR FAITH (v.21).

A. He gave them his peace for assurance.

C. He gave them the anointing for their task.

CONCLUSION

The bible holds out the great and glorious hope of a resurrection for us all. But what will the resurrected body be like. Theologian Harry Blamires offers the helpful illustration of the butterfly.

As the caterpillar is to the butterfly, so our present body is to the resurrected body. There is continuity but there is also difference. Just as the caterpillar's body is suited to the realm of the ground, and the butterfly's to flight through the air, so our present bodies may be suited to this world of sin, but our resurrected bodies will be suited to the life of the Spirit, in a world that is eternal and without limit. And just as it would be difficult for even an intelligent caterpillar to imagine what life would be like as a butterfly, so we struggle to imagine the resurrection life.

Finally, it may be helpful to remember that when we think of the caterpillar we think of its life in terms of its becoming a butterfly. We define its present existence by its future. So too, our present existence is defined by the future God has for us.

Source: based on Harry Balmires, "The Eternal Weight of Glory" *Christianity Today*, May 22, 1991