

Luke 24:36-43; I Thes. 5:1-11; The Appearance of Jesus I. His Surprise Appearance II. His Comforting Appearance III. His Glorified Appearance

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, have you ever been surprised by the arrival of a friend or family member? Maybe your grandparents stopped by without you knowing that they were coming. Maybe you have seen a video when a member of the military comes home from deployment overseas to surprise their child at school. We love stories like that don't we! Often, when the child is surprised at school, there is a moment of confusion. Seeing their parent- but not expecting to see them- fills them with confusion for moment- almost like they do not believe what they are seeing! And suddenly it hits them- and their face is changed! They are filled with joy and excitement as they run to hug their parent! We find a similar exchange in our passage for today- when Jesus appears there is a moment of confusion and disbelief- followed by joy and praise! We find ourselves on the first resurrection Sunday- late in the day on this first day of Jesus' resurrected life. In fact, Jesus revealed Himself at 5 different times and locations on this first day. So today we consider verses 36-42 with this theme: Jesus Christ appears to His unexpected disciples for their comfort.

I. His Surprise Appearance

In our first point, we find that this appearance of Jesus was not expected- but rather it was a surprise visit. None of the disciples were expecting Jesus to be present in this room. In fact, as John reveals, the disciples were in a room with the doors shut for fear of the Jews. They were not out in the open or in a public space, but rather they were hiding. Now some- 2 in disciples in particular- had already met with and spoke with Jesus as we saw last week. They had walked the 7 miles together and even received bread from His hand. But now, in this inner room, the remaining disciples are trying to figure out what is going on. Simon has met Jesus- and the women have heard from the angels and some have also grasped the feet of Jesus. But the main group- or the remaining disciples do not believe and cannot wrap their minds around these reports. It seems that sorrow, loss and pain has pushed out the possibility of any good news. The dark shroud of loss and death has covered their eyes so they simply cannot hope. And suddenly- while they are

talking about what has occurred- as they weight the evidence and wrestle with the impossibility of it all- Jesus comes and stands in their midst in v. 36. Right in the middle of them- Jesus show up! He appears without noise and without warning! They are not prepared nor are they expecting to see Jesus- and yet He comes with a word of comfort and peace as we will see in our next point. Now to prove that these disciples were not expecting- that this arrival was a surprise- in v. 37 it says they were shocked. They were startled and frightened- they were scared and afraid- filled with fear. This same word for frightened is the same for terrified- as we all memorized from Luke 2 when the angels appeared- the shepherds were terrified- greatly afraid! This is a common response of man when they see heavenly visitors! It would be like a young child walking down a dark street when suddenly a huge dog runs up! Filling them with fear- what kind of visitor is this! Or walking into a dark room when suddenly a crowd shouts- happy birthday! Their hearts must have been racing! They thought perhaps that this visitor was ghost or vision- a spirit v.37 says. This word is “pnuema”- the soul of a man without their body. The thought He was a phantom or apparition. Jesus was dead and buried in their mind- so what we are seeing cannot be Jesus since the dead remain dead- right! So much so that they are in v. 38 troubled and filled with doubt. Their hearts are like troubled water- agitated like a storm-tossed sea! They are stirred with anxiety and filled with uncertainty! They doubted what they saw! Like a weary traveller who sees an oasis in the desert- they thought their eyes were playing tricks on them. But in spite of the disciples’ lack of faith and expectation; even though they are filled with fear, terror, trouble and doubt- even so- Jesus comes and stands in their midst! Without warning and without invitation! Now this sudden appearing is not the last time that Jesus will suddenly come! His ability to suddenly come to His own- to show up without warning- is what we read of in our reading in I Thes. 5. On that last day, people will be eating and drinking- going on with normal life- and suddenly Jesus will appear! This is a warning for us all to be ready- let us now be found sleeping or unprepared for Jesus’ arrival! The delay in His return must not lull us to sleep- where we think that Jesus will never return! Notice that in I Thes. 5, the people of the earth were saying to each other- peace and security. They were saying peace- but when Jesus comes He will not say peace to them! No, those who are surprised and unprepared for Jesus’ 2nd

coming will be rightly terrified when sudden destruction comes upon them. Although Jesus pronounced peace to His disciples in our text - He will pronounce woe to His enemies when He returns again on the clouds of glory. So, fellow disciples, watch and pray! Do not sleep, but be ready! Be working so that when Jesus suddenly appears, you may be found faithful in your service! Living by faith- watching and waiting for His coming- because some day soon He will suddenly appear! Be awake and sober so that you are not surprised I Thes. 5:6 says- lets His coming be like a thief in the night and you be caught surprised and sleeping!

II. His Comforting Appearance

Now then, back to our text. Surprisingly, Jesus arrives. And surprising, He speaks a word of comfort and peace! Peace to you- My peace I give you! The word is "ereigna" in the Greek- meaning tranquility, harmony and calmness. That we have peace with God and thus we have no reason to fear! Although these disciples had all doubted and responded with fear- although they had all forsaken and even denied Jesus- Jesus arrives with words of comfort and peace! Peace- that OT idea of Shalom- that it will go well with you- because Jesus lives and your sins are forgiven! This is often the first words that are spoken by divine messengers- when the recipients are afraid and terrified- the angels says peace! What kind of visit is this? Is Jesus angry and will He rebuke them? So Jesus speaks words of peace and comfort- your warfare is over and your sins atoned for! In fact, John 20 says that Jesus breathed on them as well and imparted to them the Holy Spirit- the Divine comforter who is the dove of peace! So Jesus asks them- why are you troubled- why do doubts fill your mind? He came to prove to them- to calm their troubled minds and to alleviate their doubts and fears! His is a comforting appearance- a peaceful presence! For those who love His appearing- when He comes He comes to bring them peace! He came to prove beyond a shadow of a doubt- that He had risen indeed! And He will give them convincing proof as well! Since it was not enough to stand in their midst, to speak to them and to show them His hands and His feet- He continues to prove that He was very much alive- and very much present- by taking food in 43 and eating it! He gives still more convincing proof-

so that they might see, know and believe! You see, for these disciples the possibility of a resurrected and returned Savior seemed impossible- too good to be true! Sometimes we fall into this thinking as well- when we think of heaven and Jesus returning- we know it in our heads but fail to feel it in our hearts! So Jesus says- “ego eimi”- I am- it is I myself, and not another. The same Jesus who walked and talked with you- it is I! Come and touch me- He invites them to handle Him- to touch His hands and feet- v. 39. Let me eat something in your midst- now do you see- now do you believe? This disciple John would state it this way in I John 1:1- That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which our eyes have seen, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled- the Word of Life! Jesus graciously allowed Himself to be touched- to be held by the hands of these troubled disciples! Feel my skin, feel my bones, feel my muscle- look at the scars in my hands and feet! It is I and not another! I was dead- and now I am alive! Such a comforting appearing! To comfort us as well- so that we might know and believe that the same one who died for our sins rose again- and lives!

III. His Glorified Appearance

But His appearing was not only a moment for hope and comfort- for a present but passing peace. No, there is a future peace and enduring comfort as well. Not only did His appearing prove that He was alive- but we also find His presence proving something about the future state as well. We can learn something about the resurrected, glorified state as we consider the appearance of Jesus. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him as I John 3 says. So what do we learn about Jesus’ resurrected and glorified state? Well, the first thing that is evident- and the point that Jesus goes to great measure to prove- is that the raised body is still the same body. It is not another- it is I! I am here- present myself. Look, this the same person- this is my body. The body broken for you is now standing before you! The scars prove it. His healed wounds are put on display! Added to this point, Jesus makes it clear that it is physical body. I am not a ghost- or a bodiless spirit he says in v. 39. I have flesh and bones. You can see and touch my skin- I still have flesh and a skeleton beneath to hold my body up. I am and remain a man- a true human being- a person of flesh and

blood like you! Let's read from John 20:26-29. Even doubting Tomas is told to come and touch- take a hold of my hand. To which Tomas says, My Lord and My God! Now Thomas sees- now he knows the truth- and now he believes! He would even take piece of fish in his hands in v. 42- eating that meat in their presence to prove He had a mouth that could both speak and eat. He is really, physically present. And that is the hope of all believers- not only that we will one day meet our real, physical, in the flesh and body Savior; but we will go to this meeting in our own body and flesh! That this body too will not be forgotten in the grave but raised up and made like Christ! But although Jesus was and still is, very much a man. He has been changed. He could walk through closed doors, appearing and then disappearing suddenly as we saw in v. 36 and last week in v. 31. Although limited to being in one place at a time, He is not limited in His movements as we are! He could show up without traveling- suddenly appearing- as He will again one day! So everything that makes Jesus human He still retains- but He is also resurrected and glorified. He has been raised imperishable, glorious and with power and I Cor. 15 puts it. Sin and death have no claim on Him- as the body He takes up will live forever! So our raised bodies will never get sick, never get weak and weary- and surely will never die! The glorified state of our bodies is here revealed as Jesus appears to His disciples.

To conclude, Jesus shows Himself to His disciples to meet them in their time of need. He comes with words of comfort- and then actions that comfort them! He pronounces peace- and then proves He is alive and present for their peace! Although it takes a few minutes for this reality to sink in, eventually the disciples are convinced! They will, as this chapter closes, go out with great joy and continually worship Him! Like the child who sees their parent come home from overseas- there is a moment of confusion and unbelief! Oh, but when the truth sinks in- their joy cannot be contained! So we have in these words a recorded witness- a truthful account of Jesus appearing to His disciples. So when we read, let our hearts move beyond doubt and fear to joy and peace- because Jesus reveals Himself for the comfort of His disciples! He lives in the flesh- and one day He will return in the flesh! And those who believe in Him will live in the flesh with Him for all eternity! Do not doubt- only believe!