**JESUS BEYOND THE GRAVE**

Getting Away With God

Today is exactly four weeks since Easter. During that week we talked about studied and celebrated Jesus’s last supper, crucifixion and Resurrection. This all took place during the time of Passover.

The 50-day period between Passover and Pentecost is known in the Hebrew tradition as “Counting the Omer”. It’s based on a scripture in Leviticus that commands us to count 50 (or seven full weeks) after the Sabbath of Passover, leading up to the “Festival of Weeks” (Pentecost).

**Lev.23:15**“‘From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeks. **16**Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the Lord.

The “omer” is a measure of barley wheat that is counted for 50 days in synagogues leading up to Shavuot (Pentecost) which is the Feast of Weeks, based on this verse in Leviticus.

Note: Pentecost means 50 days based on the word Pente - 50 (*peninda*), Shavuot means 7 weeks (based on the Hebrew word Sheva - 7).

Jesus rose from the dead and ascended during the 50 days between Passover and Pentecost.

*We will take a look at what He, and the disciples did during their time of “counting the omer” leading up to the Day of Pentecost in the Acts chapter 2. Then we will continue studying Acts in our next series called “Acts & Us”*

**Jesus Beyond the Grave**

All four gospels speak in great detail of Jesus’s last days on earth. His Triumphal Entry, The Last Supper, His Crucifixion, His Resurrection, and much of what happened in between.

There is some, but not a lot of detail about what happened during those 40 days where Jesus was once again dwelling with them and appeared to over 500 people after he rose from the grave. But those days, and all His actions and teachings during those times are very significant and unique. These are things he said and did AFTER he said “it is finished”, and after his finished work on the Cross and resurrection.

Much can be learned from post-resurrection Jesus that is different than what we learned throughout most of the gospels.

What’s interesting is that in that 40-day period between the Resurrection and Ascension, it appears that He only met with the Apostles three times.

### Jesus Appears to His Disciples the first time

### On the day of His resurrection, after his walk to Emmaus, Jesus appears to those who were gathered.

**Luke 24:36-39“**Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, “Peace to you.” **37**But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. **38**And He said to them, “Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? **39**Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.”

### Jesus Appears a 2nd Time, a week later (this time with Thomas present)

**John 20:26-28“**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!” **27**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.”**28**Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

### Jesus appears to them a 3rd time, this time on the shores of Galilee:

### John 21:1-5 “After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and in this way He showed *Himself:* 2Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the *sons* of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. 3Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.”

They said to him, “We are going with you also.” They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing. 4But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. **5**Then Jesus said to them, “Children, have you any food?” They answered Him, “No.”

Back Story on Jesus and Peter - The beginning, when He first met Peter:

***Luke 5****:* ***4 “****When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch.”*

***5****Simon answered, “Master, we’ve worked hard all night and haven’t caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets.”*

***6****When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break.****7****So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.*

***8****When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus’ knees and said, “Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!”****9****For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken,****10****and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon’s partners.*

*Then Jesus said to Simon, “Don’t be afraid; from now on you will fish for people.”****11****So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.”*

Peter walked with Jesus for three and a half years faithfully serving him, supporting him and defending him. Yet in the most crucial moment on the night Jesus was arrested, Peter was scared and bewildered, and denied ever knowing Jesus, three times before the rooster crowed just as Jesus predicted.

***Luke 22:61****“And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, “Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times.”****62****And he went out and wept bitterly.”*

So here after the crucifixion and resurrection we find Peter back home in Galilee, bewildered and heavy-hearted, knowing that he had failed Jesus and doing the only thing he knew how to do – fish.

That’s when he heard a voice from the shore telling him *how to fish*. He must have remembered that this had happened years before when he first met Jesus, and it seemed to work then. Perhaps it would work with this stranger on the shore as well…

### John 21:6-13 “And He said to them, “Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find *some.*”

So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish.

**7**Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on *his* outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea. **8**But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish. **9**Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. **10**Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish which you have just caught.”

**11**Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken. **12**Jesus said to them, “Come *and* eat breakfast.” Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, “Who are You?”—knowing that it was the Lord. **13**Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish.”

### Jesus Restores Peter

### John 21:15-19 “So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?”

He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.”

He said to him, “Feed My lambs.”

**16**He said to him again a second time, “Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me?”

He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.”

He said to him, “Tend My sheep.”

**17**He said to him the third time, “Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me?” Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, “Do you love Me?”

And he said to Him, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.”

Jesus said to him, “Feed My sheep. **18**Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry *you* where you do not wish.” **19**This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, “*Follow Me.”*

### *(Peter was restored to not only his position among the Apostles, but back to deep fellowship with Jesus)*

### (But this was only the THIRD TIME he met with the apostles)

### John 21:14 *“This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead.”*

John does tell us that Jesus did a lot more than just what was written in the gospels.

**John 20:30 “**Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book.”

But as far as we know, other than; those he spoke to the morning at the tomb, and that same day on the road to Emmaus, and His ascension on Day 40 of the Omer, Jesus only visited his disciples *3 times in the 40-day period.*

Now it’s possible that there were other times he visited them that are not written, but it’s clear that He did not spend every day with them during the 40-day period after He rose again. He didn’t travel with them. He didn’t stay and live with them. If He wasn’t spending his limited last days on earth with them, why not?

Who was He with, and what was He doing?

Paul gives us a little more information about the post-resurrection Jesus;

**1st Cor 15:3-6** “For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, **4**that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, **5**and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. **6**After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.”

So we see that he made an appearance to a crowd of more than 500 on a single day, but where was He for the rest of the time when he was not with the apostles, not with the crowds and not with anyone else? What could have been so important that He would spend what limited time he had on earth before the ascension doing?

My guess is that he was doing exactly what he did *so often* even before the cross that he felt was so important to do;

***Spending time alone with God!***

You may wonder, why would He need to spend time alone with God. He was no longer teaching and doing miracles, or being tempted by the Devil in the wilderness, or being ridiculed by the Pharisees. He was no longer weeping over the rejection of Jerusalem and facing the pain and suffering of the cross. He had finished his mission on earth, He already said “It Is Finished”, He gained victory over the grave, He even had a glorified body. Why would He need to go off and spend more time alone with God?

It's not that He *needed* to, … He *wanted* to.

In fact the first thing He did after He rose from the dead was to go check in with His Father. He told Mary,

**John 20:17** “Do not cling to Me,” Jesus said, “for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go and tell My brothers, ‘I am ascending to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God.’ ”

Because He loved God so much, it’s what He wanted to do more than anything else.

It’s not that He didn’t love the apostles, he did…but He loved God more.

Even when He was with them, I don’t believe He separated from them to go out and spend time with God because He *had* to, I believe it was the opposite. He *had to* spend time with the Apostles, teach them, lead them, do miracles, fulfill prophesies, etc., but what He *really loved to do* was go somewhere away from others and spend time alone with God.

*“We work to live, not live to work.” (If we ever get that turned around, we are headed for problems)*

(from a recent article) *“Jesus modeled for us the very kind of habits and rhythms of life we all need in any age. Even as God in human flesh, he prioritized time alone with his Father. Imagine what “good” he might otherwise have done with all those hours. But he chose again and again, in perfect wisdom and love, to give his first and best moments to seeking his Father’s face.”*

**We see this all throughout the gospels. Jesus would very frequently go off by Himself to pray and be alone with God;**

* + **Mark 1:35“**Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.”
	+ **Matt 14:13 “**When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place.”
	+ **Luke 6:12** “One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.”
	+ **Luke 5:16** “Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.”

We have no reason to believe that if Jesus did this frequently before the resurrection, that He would not do it after as well.

In one of those times alone with God, we get to hear exactly what Jesus said to the Father. It is basically that He wants US to have the same love and relationship with the Father that He had.

**John 17:3 & 26**

**3**Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

 **26**I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”

## ***[ Sight and Sound “DAVID”]***

Amazing acting, music, multi-media, graphics, props, animals and even a gigantic animatronic Goliath. But the thing that made it most impressive, was the message that was brought forth so clearly is that David was “*a man after God’s own heart.”*

They presented so clearly that what David loved more than anything else was to just go out and spend time with God. Wandering through En Gedi or the Judean hillside, perhaps with his harp (or not), maybe some Torah scrolls, or a pen and paper to write Psalms, or just to observe God in creation and experience His love;

* *“Your love, Lord, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies. Your righteousness is like the highest mountains, your justice like the great deep.” (Psalm 36:5-6)*
* *“One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple.” (Psalm 27:4)*
* *“*Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your waves and breakers have swept over me.  By the day the Lord directs his love, at night his song is with me” (Psalm 42)

David experienced something out there that was fascinating and exhilarating. “The presence of the Lord”.

It was the same thing Moses experienced when he also would go away for long periods of time to be with the Lord; and the Lord would “Show him His glory”. I’m sure that every man and woman of God in the Bible understood this.

Jesus modeled this for us because He wants us to experience the same thing he did, Moses did, David did. **The reason he died on the cross, and rose from the dead is so that *we CAN do this*.** *(The veil of the temple is gone.)*

You may have a wonderful devotional routine that works for you. Perhaps you read and pray for an hour each day, maybe more. If you do, that is fantastic, and you should faithfully continue it.

But I encourage each of us to enjoy time with the Lord each day, away from distractions like your phones, the radio, screens, even books and other people. Have fun with it. Go experience intimacy in the presence of God on a beach, a trail an empty room or some other nice place. It is the very reason you were created.

Our hope with these church services is that you experience His presence in worship, and that you learn more and more how to do this in the sermons, and that you have fellowship with other God-seekers in the church body, but ultimately the goal is that you have a wonderful one-on-one relationship with the Father through spending time with Him, loving Him and experiencing His love.

It's what Jesus did, it’s what David and others did, and it’s the very thing God wants us to do..

One more Psalm of David;

**Psalm 16:**

**2 “**I say to the Lord, “You are my Lord;
    apart from you I have no good thing.”

**5**Lord, you alone are my portion and my cup;
    **8**I keep my eyes always on the Lord.
    With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

**9**Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;

**11**You will show me the path of life;
In Your presence *is* fullness of joy;
At Your right hand *are* pleasures forevermore.”