

# Resurrection!

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] We're going to pray again together and we're praying very much as a church just now for Beth Fraser who is Andrew's sister, Andrew from our church here in St. Columbus who is suffering from cancer at the moment so we're praying for her and for her healing and for God's grace to be with her. Also as a church we are praying very much for the Mackay family.

A lot of you out here regular here at St. Columbus will know Norman Mackay and Tory and also Ailey, formerly Mackay, Ailey Pearson and Chris. Their father, Reverend Ronald Mackay passed away so we're praying for them. The funeral was last week. We're also praying as a church for the situation in Italy with the earthquakes there. Praying for God's grace and for God's help.

We're also praying today specifically in thanksgiving to God for the resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ. So let's pray. Lord God, our Father, the maker of heaven and earth, the one who rules over the whole universe, over all of history. How thankful we are this morning that we can come to you finding that you're not distant, that you're not capricious or uncaring, but instead that you call us to pray to you as Father. So Lord as we come to one who cares, as we come to you this morning, we pray specifically for Beth Fraser and for her family as she struggles with having cancer as she goes through the pain and the difficulty of her treatment.

Lord, we ask that your hands of healing will be upon her. We pray for her that she will know your grace as something that is sufficient and that helps her not just to cope but to flourish in every situation. We pray for your blessing on the doctors and the nurses who treat her and who are helping her and we pray that you will help them to do their job skillfully and in a caring way towards her. We also pray for Andrew and for the rest of their family, for their parents and pray also that they will know your grace as the thing that gives them strength as they cope together as a family. Lord, we also pray for your grace to be with the Mackay family, to be with Helen as she copes with her husband's passing, also for their children and children-in-law, that you will also give them a sense of your nearness and your love for them and we pray that that would be the thing that gives them a kind of comfort and a kind of hope that they cannot find anywhere else and with anyone else. So Lord, we pray for you to be near to them individually and also as a family.

We also remember the situation in Italy with the earthquakes there, with how many people have lost their lives, how many people have lost loved ones and have lost their homes and all of their worldly possessions. We ask for your help and for your blessing in that situation. We pray for you to bless every effort that's made with the humanitarian work to help those people. We also pray for you to bless your church in Italy that Christians would be a source of help through their self-sacrifice in that situation. Lord, we pray for you then to help those who mourn and who are grieving in Italy.

[ 4 : 04 ]

We also thank you today specifically as we do each Sunday and as we do with Christians all around the world today. We thank you for the resurrection of Jesus Christ, that we do not have a dead Savior, that we don't just have someone whose ideology we follow but who does not live anymore. We thank you that death could not contain him or defeat him and that he is alive and that we pray to you now in his name as the name of one who is alive at your right hand. So Lord, as we look this morning into your word, as we come to the end of Luke's Gospel and as we see the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we pray that He would challenge us, each of us, in His own unique living and powerful way and that He would draw each of us to worship Him as the Savior who has conquered death. So Lord, please bless us today and we ask for this in Christ because He is alive. Amen.

Over the last year and a bit here in St. Columba's, we have been going through Luke's Gospel, through the entirety of Luke's Gospel, which is a book about the life of Jesus written 2000 years ago by a doctor, a medical doctor called Luke. And he begins his book to go back to the very start of it by writing this. Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you. So what Luke has been doing is writing a collection of eyewitness accounts of the life of Jesus Christ. And it's really important for us to remember that as we read the last chapter in a moment, that this is not fiction, that this is not myth, this is not fantasy. He has been recording a historical story. This is a narrative. When he writes about the details of Jesus' life and death, including all of the miracles and all of the supernatural stuff, he isn't making it up. He is writing what the eyewitnesses say happened. And in writing a narrative story about a man who walked on water, a man who healed the sick, who raised the dead, maybe we think, well, come on, that didn't really happen. He's just writing realistic fiction. Jesus didn't actually do those things. But the problem with coming to Luke's Gospel like that is that realistic fiction, like the novels we read, where the circumstances look just like real life, but it's actually made up as a genre of writing and of literature, that did not exist in the world that Luke lived in 2000 years ago. In Luke's world, if you want to write fiction, if you want to make stuff up, you write something that looks like Aesop's fables, you know, the tortoise and the hare, something that is obviously not true. In Luke's world, if you want to write something that looks like it actually happened, the reason you would do that is because you were writing what actually happened. So in this book, and we've been looking at it as a church for the last year, and we're finishing it off today, Luke is consciously writing about Jesus as someone who lived in real history and whose miracles really happened. And as he writes about the life of

Jesus, what is consistently apparent as he goes through it is that Jesus is completely unique. There's no one else quite like Jesus, no one else who can do and say the things that he does. From the very beginning of his life, he stands out as unique. His birth is supernatural. His mother was a virgin until after he was born. Then throughout his lifetime, he's doing supernatural miracles, and he's preaching astounding sermons that blow everyone away, because he tells them a way to know God on the basis of grace. So for the first 23 chapters, we have this unique character presented in his life, the story of a man who said that he was the Messiah, the one sent by God to save his people. Jesus in history wasn't the only person who's ever claimed to be Messiah, to be the one that God sends as Savior. There were others who came along from time to time saying that they were the Messiah, but their tales invariably come to an end when these guys die. The normal story of a self-proclaimed Messiah, a Savior, is that he appears, he preaches his message, he gathers a wee band of followers around him, then he's seen as a threat for political and religious reasons, and he's executed. And for all that these men claim to be and to do, death was the one thing that stopped them all in their tracks. The one thing that said, not the Savior, not the Messiah, so the pseudo

Messiah would be dead, and his followers go back to their day jobs, defeated, bewildered, let down. Jesus' story, Luke records, is not like that. And the last chapter, Jesus dies, he was executed, he was humiliated on the cross, and then after that he's entombed, he's buried. And the norm is that once someone is dead, they stay that way. And this is what everyone expected of Jesus. But let's look at what happened though. This morning we're going to look at chapter 24 in three sections, and so that you don't have to listen to my dulcet tones all morning. We're going to do something slightly different, which is that Ross Graham is going to read each of the sections that we're looking at, and then after Ross comes up in a second to read, we'll then look at that section together. So just now Ross is going to read chapter 24. It's on page 1061, and he's going to read the first 12 verses.

Thanks Ross. The story of Jesus' resurrection takes place in three locations, and we're looking at the first one here, which is the tomb. As we were just saying, when someone dies, what we expect is that they will stay dead. It's one of the most awful things about death, is its finality, is how we can do nothing to undo this situation. But in Jesus' context, in his context, the Jewish custom was that when someone dies, people would go to the tomb with spices. It's a bit like how we go to gravestones with flowers to leave them there. So there were some women who were followers of Jesus who go with spices, and they want to use them to anoint his body. But Jesus' tomb had been closed over with a massive stone, and there were Roman soldiers who were appointed to guard the tomb because of Jesus' significance in his context that he was claiming to be the Messiah. So the

[ 12 : 48 ] Roman soldiers were appointed there to guard the tomb so that Jesus' followers wouldn't have any opportunity to come and take the body away. So the women arrive expecting to find Roman soldiers, to find Jesus' body, and to find a huge stone preventing them from getting to Jesus. But they go anyway. And to their astonishment, they arrive, and the stone has been rolled away, and Jesus' body is actually missing. What we have translated here in the NIV, in this English version, is that while they were wondering about this, maybe needs a little bit more force. They were completely perplexed. They were bewildered and astonished. Who rolled the stone away? Where did the body go?

Where are the soldiers? What's going on? And in the midst of their astonishment, something super natural happens. Two angels appear out of nothing. Luke describes them as men at the start of the chapter here because they were in human form, but we know that they were angels, as it tells us from further on in the chapter. The woman's emotional state then, because these angels appear, quickly shifts from bewilderment to terror. They're filled with fear, and they fall flat down on the ground. Then the angels speak to them and ask them a question. Why are you looking for the living among the dead? It's at this point that we start to see the complete uniqueness of Jesus in a new light. The reality of Jesus' death is beyond question. If there's anyone that you would trust to kill someone and do the job without making mistakes, it would be Roman soldiers. That was their profession. Jesus was dead, but now his body isn't in its tomb, and these angels start saying that he is alive, that he has risen. Jesus has defeated death. Now that's a unique claim.

He is alive again. With all those other men who claim to be Messiah, they die, and then the story ends because death is something that they can't control or conquer. Jesus dies, and the thing is, in that sense for him, the story really then begins because he comes back to life. The angels then start to explain what has happened using Jesus' own words. Remember what he told you before. He had to be handed over to sinful men. He had to be crucified on the cross, and then three days later he had to rise again. This was all part of his mission. He came to do this. He had to die in order to defeat death. He had to submit to it to prove that he was greater and bigger and more powerful than death. He had to die and defeat death to truly be the Savior, and this is the point when the penny really drops for these women in verse 8. Then they remembered his words and all came back to them. They remember what Jesus had said before, and then they realized that he is the

Messiah, that this all makes sense, why the stones rolled away, why there's no body there. So they go straight back and they tell the other followers, the 11 apostles and the rest of the Christians, what had happened. The other Christians respond firstly with disbelief. They actually dismiss the woman's report as nonsense. You are talking nonsense. This is rubbish. He hasn't risen from the dead. It's over. That doesn't make sense. Stop it. Jesus is dead. All apart from Peter, who gets up and who runs to the tomb, who goes there as quickly as he can to see what's there, and he finds the stones rolled away. He finds that the tomb is empty. Jesus' body isn't there. All he finds are the cloths that the body was wrapped in, the cloths associated with death, or have no place on Jesus now because he is alive. Then Peter goes home in amazement. Our

Inglis translation here again says he went home wandering to himself, which I think that sounds quite soft, wandering, pondering a little bit. He went home in absolute astonishment. He was stunned. He was blown away. The challenge of this chapter here for us is to do the same, to come and see for ourselves, to run to the tomb and look for Jesus and find that he is alive.

[ 17 : 28 ] These women were claiming that Jesus has defeated death. He definitely died, and now he's done the impossible. He has literally, physically been resurrected. How do we respond to that? Do we say, like most of the apostles did at the beginning, that's nonsense. When people die, they die. They don't come back to life. Or do we do what Peter did and say, I'm going to go and find out. I need to go and see for myself and find out and find myself marvelling at how even death cannot defeat Jesus. The next location that the story moves to, as it moves away from the empty tomb, is on a road to a place called Emmaus. And I'm going to ask Ross again to come up and read verses 13 down to 32.

You can come and do a care of that next number.

Now that same day, two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem.

They were talking with each other about everything that happened. As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them. But they were kept from recognizing him. He asked them, what are you discussing together as you walk along? They stood still, their faces downcast. One of them named Cleobas asked him, are you only a visitor to Jerusalem and do not know the things that have happened there in these days? What things he asked about Jesus of Nazareth, they replied, he was a prophet, powerful and word indeed before God and all the people. Chief priests and our rulers handed him over to his sentence to death and they crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb earlier this morning but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels who said he was alive. And some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said. But they, him they did not see. He said to them, how foolish you are and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said and all the scriptures concerning himself. As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he was going further. But they urged him strongly, stay with us for his nearly evening. The day is almost over. So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him. And he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, we're not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and open the scriptures to us. Thanks, Ross. The same day of them, that all of this is happening, that these women have gone to the tomb and found it empty. We then find two despondent

Christians walking away from Jerusalem to a place called Emmaus. Why were they doing that? Why were they leaving Jerusalem? Luke doesn't say explicitly, but I think that we can have a reasonable guess at the fact that they are going home. It's over. Jesus is dead. Three days have passed and they've given up. They are deserting. They're going back to their old homes. They're going back to their old lives. They're feeling devastated and deflated. As Jesus died, everything that they had been hoping for seemed lost. Then they have a seven mile walk ahead of them and they're talking with each other about how the whole world around them has collapsed. But then look at the detail that Luke includes next. While they were walking, Jesus appeared. He appeared with them on the road. To leave us in no doubt that it was Jesus and not anyone else, he gives the sympathetic detail,

[ 21 : 52 ] Jesus himself. Three days ago, Jesus was dead. Now he's walking beside them on the road. But there's something unusual going on here. These men are somehow prevented from recognizing him.

What Luke writes literally is that when he writes this in Greek originally, their eyes were held from recognizing him. So there's something, it's kind of like a supernatural blindness. Not of everything around them, but they just, they could not recognize that this man with them was Jesus.

So Jesus is incognito and he starts asking them, what were you talking about there? As you walked along the road, you can see from their faces, their emotion. He can tell from the way that they look, how despondent and how downcast they are. And the disciple, he's called Cleopas, assumes that he's talking to a non-local because everyone from Jerusalem knows what has just happened with Jesus and his execution. It was the talk of the town. So then Cleopas starts telling Jesus about Jesus.

Well, we followed Jesus of Nazareth and he said and did powerful things and he was crucified. And at this point, everything they've said about Jesus to Jesus is correct. But then look what they say next because it's really important. But we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. They have given up on Jesus.

They're no longer hoping that he is the Redeemer. Hence why they're on their way back to their old lives in Emmaus. And they're confused. Some of the women had said that the tomb was empty in that the angels had told them Jesus was alive, but no one's actually seen him alive. And they have a big issue with nobody having seen Jesus in verse 24. But him they did not see. So they're saying, well, yeah, they've said that he's alive. We don't have any proof. So we're off working home. And there's a moment of incredible irony here at the end of Luke's Gospel. What they're telling Jesus to his face, although they didn't recognize his face, what they're telling Jesus is basically this. We used to hope in Jesus, but then he died. And even though some people are saying he's alive, nobody's seen him. So we're not going to believe in him. Well, all the while, the one person in the entire world that they are saying this to is the living, walking, talking Jesus. And what's what I think is amazing here is the way that Jesus goes about correcting them. You'd think that the most obvious thing for Jesus to do would be just to make himself known to them to remove whatever the spiritual blindness was and say, look, here I am. I'm talking to you. I'm alive. Believe now. But he doesn't do that. Instead, what he does is he starts to explain the Bible to them. He says, look back to the prophets. Didn't they make it clear that Jesus had to suffer before entering his glory? And then he starts explaining the whole of the Old Testament to them, showing them how the entire thing is all about Jesus. He begins with Moses, which is like a shorthand for speaking about the first five books of the Bible, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. And then he starts saying, that's all about Jesus. Look at everything that it points to with Jesus. And then he moves into the

[ 25 : 37 ] Old Testament prophets and says they also spoke all about Jesus and make everything that has just happened clear. And then Luke says in all of the scriptures, literally all the writings. So this is about the whole of the Old Testament, which Jewish people speak about as Moses and the prophets and the writings. And he says that the entire Old Testament is about him. And they've got a seven mile walk. So it's taking a long time. So they have plenty of time to talk about the whole of the Old Testament. The point here is this, that these two are walking away from Jesus and from Christianity, because they have not got, they have not grasped the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. They are under the impression that death is greater than he is. That death means the end of Jesus. Even though he was pretty amazing in life, death is something that he cannot defeat, that ends his story just like it ends anyone else's. And Jesus wants to show them his uniqueness. He wants to show them that. And the way he does it is by explaining the gospel from the Bible to them. He shows them that the entire

Bible from Genesis and the very beginning onwards is all about him and all about his uniqueness. If you want to get Jesus, you need to get into the Old Testament and learn how to read the Old Testament as a book that's about Jesus, because Jesus understands the whole of the Old Testament to be about him. And it's the same true of us. Do we think that to really grasp Jesus, you don't need anything that comes before Matthew chapter 1 verse 1, because the Old Testament is boring or regressive, legalistic, has this angry God and all those other cliches that our culture spins out.

If we read the Old Testament with the basic assumption that it's got nothing really to do with Jesus, we will not enjoy reading it and we will not understand it properly. For example, and just one example, the Old Testament has a lot of violence. It does, full of violent stories.

And if we read the Old Testament without seeing it as culminating in Jesus, we're going to think this Old Testament is awful. It's so violent. It's terrible. But if we learn how to read the Bible like Jesus does with the Old Testament coming together in him, where he actually takes the totality of violence of God's war against sin, he takes the violence on himself and deals it a death blow, it's really different the way that you read the Old Testament, the effect it has on you, the way that you understand it. Learn to read the Bible in a Christ centred way. And like these two men on the road to Emmaus, your heart will burn within you as you read it. These two guys don't understand the gospel because they do not understand biblically what Jesus came to do.

Probably they saw Jesus as a political savior, as a political messiah for their nation here to liberate Israel from its Roman oppressors and do nothing more. Hence their complete disillusionment when the Romans killed Jesus. And that is why Jesus doesn't just show himself to them at the beginning and say, you don't believe because nobody's seen him. Well, look, I'm here before you. He doesn't do that because the problem wasn't really that they hadn't seen his resurrected body. They had seen him alive plenty of times before. But what they didn't realize was who this person was or what he had come to do. And Jesus knows that. But the real issue for them is that they just don't get the gospel. They think the only thing in the world that really needs redeemed and saved and purified and liberated as a nation. When in fact the whole universe needs redeemed and saved. If

[ 29 : 58 ] Jesus had simply shown himself to them without first challenging their most basic ideas and assumptions about him and his mission, they would have responded by saying, hallelujah, you've defeated death. Now just finish off the Romans and that's the end of it. So instead of doing that, Jesus first explains the gospel to them biblically and then their hearts burn within them. And they, I wonder if for the first time, begin to understand the gospel. I wonder if these two guys were actually converted. They became Christians there and then. So they get to Emmaus and a knight is approaching, which means that it's not a safe time to carry on walking. But in their culture it's inappropriate to invite yourself in to stay at someone's house. So Jesus acts like he's going to carry on past Emmaus. And the two men say, no, no, don't carry on. Come and stay with us. And he does. And at this point they still don't know that it's Jesus with them. They sit down and they have a meal, not a

Passover meal, not communion or anything like that. It's just a normal meal, which begins with bread, big communal loaf being broken and passed around. Jesus prays before they eat. And then he breaks the bread and he starts passing it to them. And then at that moment, things start to change.

It's almost like they have a second of *deja vu*. We've seen this guy somewhere before breaking bread and saying a prayer. This is too familiar. And the man that they're used to seeing do this was Jesus breaking bread and blessing it and saying, this is my body broken for you. And suddenly they're enabled to recognize him and they do. And once they recognize, oh my goodness, this is Jesus with us. He instantly disappears from the table. He vanishes. Okay, one minute he's there, the next he's not. And they realize what has happened. They start talking to each other saying, when he opened up the Bible to us, weren't we coming to life inside for the first time? The word that Luke uses here for opened is a really vivid, graphic word. Remember, these guys who are walking to Ames are Israelis, they're Jews, this local language called Aramaic. And Luke is a Greek speaking doctor who's writing a book in Greek for a Greek speaking audience. So he's translating their conversation from Aramaic into Greek. And he's picking the best Greek words that really carry over what they said. So the words that he chooses when he translates are intentional and deliberate.

And he uses a particular word for opened, a verb. The one place beforehand in Luke's Gospel that he uses this word is in chapter two, verse 23. And it's when he's translating an Old Testament quote, every firstborn child who opens the womb is to be dedicated to God. Every firstborn male child who opens the womb. It's a really graphic image. It's a medical word that Luke picks because Luke is a doctor. And he uses a medical image. Trying to think of the graphic image, but the least gory way to explain this that will be the least offensive to the largest number of people.

It's not simply when he picks this word opened that Jesus to them gently, lightly, nicely opened a book. It is almost a violent word. It's a word of motion and power, something being open for the first time and life bursts out. That's the kind of word that Luke uses here for open the Bible to them. Dr. Luke picks a medical word because it's to do with it's the word for a womb being opened for the first time as life comes out of it as it bursts out. It's a medical term inherently associated with with a new birth. And these guys are saying to each other, when that man on the road told us how to read the Bible in a Christ centered way, Jesus burst out of it out of every book, out of every chapter, every Old Testament theological idea. It's like the Old

[ 34 : 48 ] Testament is a womb and Jesus is just just stating inside it ready to be born ready to burst out. He's there. He's under the surface on every page. The Old Testament like that is like a pregnancy starting off with this really small one sentence promise about Jesus. Your seed will crush the devil's head and then it grows and grows and grows until with the literal birth of Jesus, the Old Testament gives birth to the new. That's the kind of image that Luke is using here. When we learn how to read the Old Testament, didn't we see that it was full of Jesus ready to burst out?

Then the location of the story changes again. It moves from the road to Emmaus back into the city of Jerusalem. So going to ask Ross again to come up and read the rest of the chapter to read from verse 33 down to the end. We got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the 11 and those with them assembled together and saying, it's true the Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon. Then the two told what had happened on the way and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread. While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, peace be with you. They were startled and frightened thinking that they saw a ghost. He said to them, why are you troubled and why did I try to rise in your mind?

Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself touch me and see the ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see I have. When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. While he still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, do you have anything here to eat?

They gave him a piece of broiled fish and he took it and ate it in their presence. He said to them, this is what I told you while I was still with you. Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets and the Psalms. Then he opened their minds so they could understand the scriptures. He told them, this is what is written. The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high. When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy and they stayed continually at the temple praising God.

Thanks for us. So we are now back in the city of Jerusalem. When both the women at the tomb, the beginning of the story and then the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, when they both realized that Jesus is alive, their natural response is to go and tell others. So there is a real challenge there to us if we believe today that Jesus is alive. The two men in Emmaus are so suddenly gripped by this that they don't even wait until morning. At night time when it's not that safe, they go straight back to Jerusalem. They want to go right back and tell the apostles.

[ 38 : 05 ] Imagine the scene. The apostles themselves are in a state of shock. They are wondering what has happened. Jesus is dead. Three days have passed. People are starting to desert and they've just had the particular disappointment of these two men deserting and going back to their old lives.

When all of a sudden in the middle of the night, they burst in the door saying it's true. We believe we saw him. Jesus is risen. And I love the detail that comes next. They're in the middle of telling their story. They haven't even finished it yet. And right in the middle of it, Jesus appears in the room and says, Shalom alechem, peace be with you. Everyone is terrified because they think that Jesus is a ghost. There's a really important point here about the resurrection. As long as they think that Jesus is just a ghost, that he's just a spirit without a body, they're not grasping the reality of his resurrection and the hope that comes with it for us. As long as it's just Jesus spirit visiting them, Jesus doesn't need to have conquered death at all. If his body hasn't risen from the grave, if his body is still dead and it's only his soul visiting them, he is bound by death. So you don't need the resurrection to have a visiting spirit with them. But Jesus moves right away to counter this. He gets them to touch his body. Why does he do that? He wants to demonstrate that he has been literally, physically raised from the dead to show that he has defeated death, to show that death does not have power over his body. He really pushes the point. He gets them to give him some fish and he eats it, just to show that his physicality, the reality of his body.



But then there's something unusual about Jesus and his physical body here. He's present physically. He can be touched. He eats food. He digests it. But he can also appear and disappear at will. So the kind of physical existence that he has after his resurrection, when he's raised into this glorious existence, is different to what we have here and now before our resurrection. And that is, this is exactly the point of the resurrection. It's Jesus showing us not only that death isn't the end, but that for Christians what we have to look forward to in the resurrection is better than what we have now. It's physical, but not physical as we know it. It's real. It's tangible, but it's glorious. The theological word that we used to speak about this is glorification. That

Jesus doesn't just take you back when He resurrects you to where you were before. He actually makes you better than you ever were. When Christians are resurrected, the bodies that we will have will be glorious. They will be new. The place that we will live in with our new bodies will be new. New heavens, new earth. Jesus is giving us a preview in what He has done in resurrection of what we will all receive in the gospel through His resurrection. It's like Luke's gospel, I heard a really good analogy of this the other day. It ends like a film ends, a film trailer ends with the words coming soon. This is what is coming soon for every Christian. Then He does the same thing to this group as He did to the men on the Emmaus Road. He takes them back to the Old Testament and He explains to them from Moses, the prophets and the Psalms this time why theologically the reasons that He had to suffer and that He had to die and that He had to be resurrected. Jesus lets them know as well that the Old Testament was written about Him. And then look at what He does in verse 45.

Then He opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. It's the same word again. It's this medical term for opening at the end of pregnancy and life bursting out. Only this time it's not the Scriptures that He opens but it's their minds. So it's this idea that in their minds Christ has been just stating and growing. And then at the end because He's completed His mission in the resurrection everything opens and their Christ likeness, their Christianity bursts out in newness. Their minds are stretched open and their understanding comes out fully formed because Jesus has done everything that He came to do. The thing their minds are now open to grasp because they've seen it happen is that Jesus had to die to pay the penalty for sin and then He had to be physically resurrected to show that He had paid the price in full, that there's no outstanding balance remaining in terms of God's justice against evil and wrong and sin. In His death and His resurrection we see that Jesus has completed His mission. He has accomplished redemption and salvation and now having done that He opens the minds of these Christians in order to set in motion a worldwide movement where the Gospel is taken to the ends of the earth. Which is where we find ourselves. We aren't there 2,000 years ago. We are not. Maybe some of us are ethnically Hebrews.

[ 44 : 33 ] We live 2,000 years on. We live in a completely different context and yet the movement that was set in place here when these minds were opened has carried on and been transmitted to the point that we people in Edinburgh 2,000 years on believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

And having made sure that He had set this process in motion, Jesus has done everything that He came to do and He ascends into heaven. I want to draw this together into a really brief conclusion on the sermon today and also on the whole of Luke's Gospel over the last year and a few months. In Luke's Gospel it's a complete presentation of Jesus, of His uniqueness, of how there is no one else like Him. You can do the things He does, you can say the things He does and His uniqueness at one level seems too good to be true. Too much to take in. Look at verse 41 here. And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, Jesus' uniqueness in every sense seems too good to be true. But it is true and that's the point of Luke's Gospel.

Hence why as the chapter ends in verses 52 and 33 as the book ends, then they worshiped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy and they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

We worship Him because while He seems too good to be true, He nonetheless is true and everything about Him here is true. We're going to pray briefly in response and then after that we're going to sing two of the Psalms which prophetically speak about Jesus' resurrection in response to God.

So let's pray briefly together. Our Father God, we thank You that Jesus is alive today. We thank You that He had to come and live among us, that He had to die for us and suffer to pay the price for our sin. And we thank You that He had to be resurrected to show that He had fully paid that price. And we praise You and worship You because He has been resurrected, because He is alive today. Lord, we worship You and as we sing these Psalms, I praise to You in a moment, Psalms which look forward to Jesus' resurrection. We sing them looking back and we sing them with thankful hearts. Amen.