

“Faith Comes By Hearing”

All of the accounts of Jesus’s resurrection have in common the absence of Jesus. Isn’t that strange? The assumption is that it is easier to believe if you witnessed his resurrection. Yet, beginning with our senses is the wrong place to start.

Take Luke’s gospel account of the resurrection story. The women saw Jesus’s crucifixion and the curtain of the temple torn in two. They stood at a distance watching these things. Then, as Joseph of Arimathea took down his lifeless body and laid him in a tomb, they saw the tomb and how his body was laid. After the Jewish Sabbath, they came to the tomb to properly bury him.

But they encountered three things. First, they found the stone rolled away. Second, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. It didn’t occur to them to look for his body elsewhere. They saw where and how his body was laid. Understandably, they were perplexed (v. 4). The third thing they encounter are two men. Now, I don’t think it’s unreasonable to think these women didn’t see these two men at first. I can get so focused on a project that I don’t pay attention to my surroundings. Anyway, these two angels question, “Why do you seek the living among the dead?” (v. 5). But their question implies that these two women began with the wrong assumption: he’s dead. He’s not here because he isn’t dead.

Why should they trust them? The only thing they saw was that the tomb was empty. There could have been many reasons for the empty tomb. Perhaps his body was stolen. Perhaps the disciples secretly took it. But the men don’t try to convince the women. They don’t make a case for Christ by refuting arguments. They don’t try to reason based on physical evidence. Instead, they give a very simple reason: “Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.” The angels call them to remember the words of Jesus. The women trust the men because the words of Jesus are true. Their starting point is the Word of God, not what they see.

Faith in Christ does not depend upon touching his side or his hands. It depends upon hearing the Word of God. His written Word is sufficient to know about Jesus because God breathed it out. His Word is sufficient to teach others about God and salvation. His Word is sufficient to trust the Lord’s providence and kindness even in the valley of death, for He is His own interpreter.

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