May 20/21, 2023

# The Resurrected Jesus Meets Us

*Here and Now Series*

**Acts 2:1-4**

Pastor Bryan Clark

I want to invite you today to identify whatever it is that's heavy on your heart, whatever it is that you're facing. Maybe it's some physical challenge, maybe some sort of stress or challenge, whatever is keeping you awake at night. What is it that you're facing? And then imagine, what if we could have what the first century disciples had? And that is, what if we could have Jesus seated right next to us this morning, with a promise that He would walk with us through whatever it is we're facing? How would that change how you face whatever it is? But what if I could offer you something even better? Well, that's what we want to talk about this morning.

This is the end of our *Here and Now Series,* and we've talked about how the resurrected Jesus meets us in our sorrow; He meets us in our confusion; He meets us in our doubt; He meets us in our failures. Last week, Jeff talked about how He meets us and sends us on a mission. But we're still left a little bit with the question, practically speaking, "What does that mean?"

Just by way of review, we remind ourselves that according to the Gospel of John, the Creator God of the universe, the eternal Son of God, at a point in human history, actually took on human flesh and walked on this earth. It's one of those things that perhaps we talk about so much, we fail to really think about what I just said. It's absolutely mind blowing that the Creator God of the universe actually walked on this earth as a human. In Matthew chapter three, he describes the baptism of Jesus. You have the voice of the Father saying, "***This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*** And you have the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, descend from heaven like a dove that lands on Jesus, and remains there. It's so vivid that John the Baptist actually says he saw it with his own eyes. And the Father had told him, that would identify the long-awaited Messiah. It's this mysterious doctrine we call the Trinity—that somehow God is one God, yet made up of three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Not three gods, one God—three persons—all of them equal in every way. If thinking about that gives you a charley horse in your brain, join the club. *(laughter)* It's mysterious; nobody can really figure it out.

The disciples literally walked with Jesus, talked with Jesus, ate with Jesus. Jesus talked to them. He taught them; He encouraged them; He challenged them. They spent three years with God in the flesh. Perhaps more than anything else, Jesus had been teaching them that you need to learn to trust Me. You need to learn to depend upon Me, to surrender to Me. And the disciples were learning that when they were with Jesus, everything was different. Then Jesus drops this bombshell on them when He tells them, "Oh, by the way, I'm leaving!" They had given up everything to follow Jesus. They had learned what it means to be dependent on Jesus, and about that time Jesus says to them, "I'm leaving!"

I want to pick up some of that conversation in the Gospel of John, Chapter 14. The opening verses of John chapter 14 are very familiar. Jesus tells them, "I'm leaving, but you know the way to find

Me," which is when Thomas asked the question that all of them were thinking. "Lord, we don't even know where You're going. How could we possibly know the way?" To which Jesus says:

> **"I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."** (*NASB, John 14:6)

I am absolutely certain these disciples in the Upper Room were both confused and absolutely terrified, trying to process what Jesus just said. "We gave up everything! Now what are we supposed to do?"

I would say, over the years, I've traveled internationally a fair amount. And I can also say with confidence, it's not my happy place. I just don't like all the airport stuff. I don't like that you have to, "Do this;" then you have to, "Do this," and all that goes with that. And then they herd you through like a bunch of cattle. I'm the guy that is seated at the gate; it's about 30 minutes before the plane is supposed to take off, and they put on the board, "Flight canceled." And all the experienced travelers whip out their laptops or their phones. They do something magical, and they go on with their trip. *(laughter)*And I'm the guy that's left saying, "What are we supposed to do now?" I just don't really like it.

But I have to say, you have never really traveled internationally until you've traveled with Jeff Petersen. *(laughter)* It is poetry in motion. It is absolute magic. It is like traveling with a travel guide. I think I've seen Jeff do just about everything except fly the plane. *(laughter)* Several years ago, Patti and I went with Jeff and Cynci to India. We were having a conference there and it was, by far, the most relaxed international traveling I have ever experienced. I didn't have to do anything. "Jeff will figure it out." Patti would ask me questions, and I'd be like, "Jeff will figure it out." Whatever it was, I don't know. I put my brain in neutral and just do what I'm told, cause Jeff will figure it out. It was beautiful. But what if we got in the middle of Mumbai—millions of people, utter chaos—and Jeff comes up and says, "You know, I'm a really busy guy. I just need to tell you I'm leaving. Have a nice trip. Good luck."

Perhaps that's the slightest taste of what these guys must have been feeling in that Upper Room. They had left everything to follow Jesus. They were just learning what it meant to surrender to Jesus, to follow Him, and Jesus drops this bombshell, "I'm leaving!" We pick up the conversation then in chapter 14, verse 16. So, all this is in the Upper Room. Jesus says:

> **"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever;"** (*John 14:16)

A **Helper**, the Greek word is *paraclete*. It means an *advocate*, a *helper*, someone who walks alongside. For three years Jesus had walked with them. He had been with them every step of the way. They had learned to depend upon Him. He's just told them that He's leaving, but what Jesus also said is, "**I'm going to ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper**." The Greek language has two different words for **another**. One means *another of a different kind*; the other means *another of the same kind*. This is the word that means *another of the same kind*. In just reading the English, it's clear Jesus didn't say, "I'm going to send you a helper." He said, "I'm going to send you **another Helper**, implying you've had one. What the disciples had learned is when

Jesus is with us, everything changes. So, what does He mean, "I am going to leave, but I'm going to send another One just like Me, and **He will be with you forever**!"

Now, I don't know if you realize this or not, but *forever* is a really long time. In other words, there will never be another moment like what they're experiencing in the Upper Room. Once this Helper comes, He would never leave them. He'll be with them forever. Jesus goes on in verse 17:

> ***"…that is* the Spirit of truth,** [meaning the Holy Spirit] **whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you** [present tense] **and will be in you,"** [future tense]**.**

The Spirit of God descended like a dove and remained on Jesus, so throughout Jesus' earthly ministry, the Holy Spirit of God was with Him. So, whether the disciples understood this or not, for three years to **abide** with Jesus was also to **abide** with the Spirit. That's what He said. "You have abided **with Him**, but pretty soon, He's going to be **in you**." As a matter of fact, in chapter 16, verse 7, Jesus says,

> **"But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you."**

I'm guessing in the Upper Room they're thinking, "We don't want anything different. We want Jesus. We want Jesus to be with us." That's what they had come to know. But what Jesus just said to them is, "This is going to be better. **It's to your advantage I go,** so I can send the Helper; I can send the Holy Spirit of God."

There is a reality that when Jesus was here in His incarnation, if Jesus was in Jerusalem, He wasn't in Galilee. When Jesus sent out the disciples, two by two, He couldn't go with all of them. He sent them out, and they went without Him. But when He sends the Helper, it's going to be different. He won't just be **with you**; He will be **in you**.

Now, I'm guessing they didn't understand much of this. They were pretty traumatized; I think they were probably pretty emotional. But, within a matter of hours, Jesus would be arrested and taken away from them, and they would scatter. So, Jesus was one place, and they were somewhere else. And they did not do well. It's hard to imagine the fear and the terror they experienced in those days as Jesus went through His trial, the crucifixion, was buried, and rose again. Having risen from the dead, Jesus met them in different ways, in different times. That's what we've been talking about over the last several weeks.

Last week, Jeff talked to us about the Great Commission—that Jesus meets us and calls us to a mission. It's very interesting how that conversation ends when Jesus says, *"Lo, I am with you always*." Three days before, they were in the Upper Room and absolutely terrified that Jesus was leaving. But now Jesus says, "I'm not only sending you on a mission, but ***I will be with you always, even to the end of the age***." But again that's rather confusing, because we get to Acts, chapter one, and Jesus is leaving again. He's ascending back to the Father. Acts 1:1:

> **The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when He was taken up to *heaven,* after he had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen. To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs…** (Acts 1:1-3a)

This is what we've been talking about over the last several weeks,

> **…appearing to them over a *period* of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which" *He said*, "you heard of from Me;" for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You're restoring the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."** (1:3b-8)

So this is how Jesus will be with them, always, even to the end of the age. He will ascend to the Father, and He will send His Spirit to be with them forever. Acts 2:1:

> **When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.** (2:1-4)

Now, there's a lot in those verses that I don't want to get into. We recently went through the book of Acts. You can access those messages and transcripts for the description of Acts chapter 2. For our purposes, to realize fifty days after the resurrection of Jesus—Pentecost—God fulfilled the promise Jesus made in sending His Holy Spirit to indwell all believers. Literally, from that moment on, there would never be another time when any of these disciples would ever experience what they experienced in that Upper Room, this absolute confusion and terror that Jesus is leaving. Because, from that moment on, for the rest of eternity, there will never be a moment where they will ever be alone again.

But it's not just for them. Acts chapter 2 ushers in what's called the New Covenant, brought about through the death, burial, and the resurrection of Jesus. One of the characteristics of the New Covenant is when a person trusts Jesus as Savior, at that moment of conversion, that person is in-dwelt with the very presence of the Creator God—the Holy Spirit of God. It is virtually impossible in the New Covenant to be a believer and not have the Holy Spirit. Another way of saying this is, "As of the moment you trusted Jesus as Savior, there will never be another moment for the rest of eternity where you will ever be alone!"

That's mind blowing! But it still seems kind of vague, kind of mysterious. It's like, “I still don't really understand what that means.” I think the best way to understand it is how Jesus explained it to them. It's living life as if Jesus were right there by your side. That changes everything! The disciples had come to learn when Jesus is with us, everything changes. “Oh, you're running out of wine for the marriage feast?” No problem. “Jesus will turn the water to wine!” “Oh, we’ve got 5000 people to be fed? What do you have? A few loaves and fishes?” No problem. “Jesus can feed 5000 people with a few loaves and fishes!” “Oh, we're out on the sea in the middle of a storm, and we think we're going to die?” No problem. “Jesus is sleeping in the boat. Just wake Him up.” The blind were made to see; the lame were made to walk; the dead were raised to life. When Jesus was with them, everything changed!

The most practical way to think of it is: What would it be like to go through whatever you're going through, with Jesus right there by your side every step of the way, in the most ordinary and the extraordinary moments of life?

I remember years ago when my oldest daughter, Ashley, was transitioning from Humann Elementary School to Pound Middle School. We had had a great experience at Humann. Everything we knew about Pound was positive—great administration and teachers. It didn’t have anything to do with that. It had to do with the fact that I'm a dad, and I have three girls, and dads want to protect their girls. So, I remember there was an open house. You could go through the school and find your locker and your classes, and all of this was so different from elementary school. And I remember saying to Patti as we walked the halls, “I don't like this at all!” Plan A was: “I’ll just go to school with her. *(laughter)* I'll go to class with her. I'll walk through the hall with her. I'll just go to school with her.” But apparently Plan A wasn't going to work. But I remember vividly thinking in that moment, that even though I can't go with her, the eternal Creator God dwells within her and does go with her. There will never be one moment in that school where she will ever be alone. What I, as her dad, so wanted to be able to do, the Spirit of God would do for her, and still does for her today.

Sometimes it's a little bit more dramatic. Years ago my middle daughter, Bobbi, who's a stylist, read a book about a mission organization that sent stylists into Muslim countries in order to train women how to cut hair. Literally, with just the price of a pair of scissors, a woman could make a reasonable living with just a pair of scissors. But it also created an outpost where they could begin to reach these women with the love of Jesus. So, she decided she wanted to do that. She contacted the mission organization; she made all the arrangements, and basically the arrangements were this. All she knew was that she was going into Afghanistan—and did I happen to mention, it was during the war? From that point, someone would meet her at the airport, and they would take her somewhere. That's all she knew, and that's all her parents knew. So after flying into Kabul, she disappeared. For two weeks—no communication! We just knew she was there somewhere. I have to say, “That's a pretty good way to increase a parent's prayer life!” Two weeks later, she came out, contacted us, and let us know she was out. But I remember, during that time, vividly reminding myself, “She does not go alone. The eternal Spirit of God dwells within her and there would not be one moment of time where she would ever be alone.” Even if I did go with her, what am I going to do? The Spirit of God could do for her what I could never do for her, just as if Jesus were right there beside her every step of the way!

Years ago, Patti and I were sent on a mission's trip to visit some of our missionaries. So we went to Guyana and spent time in Georgetown, and then on into Brazil. From Georgetown, we were to fly all the way to a little village in the jungle on the northern border called Lethem. These were our instructions: When you get to the airport, look for the international crossing. When you find the international crossing, there is a ferry there. The ferry will take you across the river to Brazil, and the missionaries will meet you there. Sounds fine. So, when we came in and landed, it wasn't an airport. It was a dirt path in the jungle, and there was a falling-down shack that was the airport, and no one was there. We looked around for someone to ask, "Where is the international crossing?" Now when you hear international crossing what comes to mind? I think of flags. I think of a coffee shop. I think of a gift shop, get a little snack, and get on this nice ferry and cruise across the river.

I asked someone, "Where's the international crossing?" to which he said, "Well, which one? There are several." I said, "I don't know." He said, "It's probably this one." So we walked down to the river, and literally there was just a little dirt spot at the river. That's the international crossing. And there's a barge that has a platform and four 50-gallon drums, and an outboard motor. That's the ferry. So he cranks up the motor; he crosses the river. On the other side of the river, there's a little worn spot in the bank. That's the other side of the crossing. He drops us off, and his last words to us were, "Oh, by the way, if someone comes and wants you to go with them, don't go with him!" *(laughter)* And he leaves. This is before cell phones. There's nothing around us but jungle and a little bit of bank. And we are all alone, and we're both thinking, "I'm not sure what to do now." I'm not even sure what country I'm in right now. But I remember two things: One is I remember Patti wasn't real enthused with the arrangements there, *(laughter)* but I also remember we talked about we're not alone here. The God of the universe dwells within us. It's as if Jesus is standing on the bank with us. And whatever comes, He's with us, and we're going to have to trust Him. About 45 minutes later, the missionaries come; they pick us up, and everything was fine.

The reality is: whatever it is you're facing, whatever it is that's keeping you awake at night, whatever it is that's heavy on your heart today, the Spirit of Jesus is with you every step of the way! And He will do for you what you could never do for yourself. When we say: *The* R*esurrected Jesus Meets Us Here and Now*, that's not just a clever title for a series. It's not just some sort of bumper-sticker slogan. We actually mean: That's true! That from the moment you trust Jesus as Savior, the Holy Spirit of God dwells within you. And from that moment on, there will never be another moment, forever, where you will ever go through anything all alone.

Sometimes people say, "I don't know; I just don't feel it." What does that have to do with it? I'm not asking you to *feel* it this morning. I'm asking you to *believe God tells the truth*, and to believe it because, once you believe that and understand it, that changes everything!

> *Our Father, we're so thankful this morning that, as Your children, we do not walk through anything alone. Lord, we're thankful that Your Holy Spirit dwells within each of us every step of the way. Lord, may we understand that and believe that, in the midst of whatever it is we're facing this morning. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

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SPRING 2023 // WEEK 6

Life Group Questions

Here and Now // May 20-21, 2023

The Resurrected Jesus Meets Us // Acts 2:1 – 4

## Introduction

Welcome to the final week of the Spring Life Group Session. After this week, we will take a break for the summer. Even though groups will not be officially meeting, your Life Group will probably gather several times over the summer socially.

One more thing for this final week:

The Life Groups Team has a very short survey that we'd love for you to fill out. Please take about 5 minutes **during** your group meeting to tell us how participating in a Life Group has influenced your walk with Jesus. Here is a link to the survey:

https://forms.office.com/r/v0jb2dHWyj OR use this QR Code




In the last week of the Here and Now series, we come to realize the truth expressed in the Great Commission that Jesus is *with us always, to the end of the age*. Through the indwelling Holy Spirit in the life of the believer, we can live with the practical reality that Jesus is right by our side every moment of every day. He is with us in sorrow, confusion, doubt, failure, and in our mission. It is how the Resurrected Jesus meets *us*, always and forever.

To think through the main ideas in the sermon and prepare for your discussion together, we invite you to look over all the questions on the following pages and write your thoughts down before you meet with your group. Due to preferences over a wide range of groups, we do not expect you will cover every question each week.

## Getting Started

There are questions related to the passage and sermon from this past weekend below. Prior to that discussion consider a few reflection questions as we finish out another year of journeying in Life Groups together.

**1) What drew you to joining this group?**

**2) Is there an aspect of your life that looks different than when you first joined this group?**

**3) What do you remember from one of the sermon series this past year that made an impact in your life?** (Colossians, 1st & 2nd Thessalonians, How the Resurrected Jesus meets us in the Here and Now)

**4) How has this group made a difference in your life this past year?**

## Study Questions *(Suggested time: 40 min)*

1) There are moments in the ministry of Jesus when He preludes to the coming of the Holy Spirit. In His baptism (Matthew 3:16-17, John 1:32-34) and in the upper room teachings (John 14:16-27, John 15:26-27, John 16:5-12). If necessary, read these passages as a group. What do you learn about the way of the Holy Spirit in these moments?

   How can these moments help you realize the way of the Holy Spirit in your own life?

2) Just ten days prior to Pentecost, the disciples begin to see the plan of what Jesus revealed in the upper room continue to unfold. In the unfolding, the disciples were also waiting on God for the fulfillment of the promise of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:1-11). What has been your experience with waiting on God?

   Share of a time when waiting was transformative for you in your relationship with God. **What questions did you have of God during that time? How was waiting an active experience? What were some spiritual disciplines that guided you as you waited?**

3) The miraculous event of Pentecost and the fulfillment of the Holy Spirit indicate that as the Church—those who place their hope and trust in Jesus Christ—we have this reality of living as if Jesus were right there by our side every moment of every day. Do you live in constant awareness of the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life? What enhances or detracts from your awareness of His presence?

   What is a practical step you can take to become more aware of the presence of the Holy Spirit as you go about each day? How can your life group community encourage you in this next step?

## Personal Spiritual Exercises

Just like physical exercises help strengthen and stretch our bodies for healthy living, these spiritual exercises are meant to move us spiritually in ways that may be new so we might experience inner growth. Since God longs for us to experience Him with our whole selves—mind, body, spirit—we invite you along each week to strengthen your souls with suggestions and prompts.

Prayer Focus: With this being the last life group meeting for a while, be intentional about praying for the people in your group. Each day, choose a friend in your life group to lift up in prayer. Pray for them to become more aware of the Holy Spirit, and to live as though He is with them in every moment. After praying for them, find a way to reach out to the individual to connect or offer encouragement.

Scripture Focus: Galatians 5:16-26 is a passage that helps us identify characteristics of people who are filled with the Holy Spirit. Engage with this passage throughout your week to help identify practical ways you can keep in step with the Spirit.

## Prayer *(Suggested time: 20 min)*

A significant part of "coming together" is being open and honest with our lives. Sitting in a group of people for prayer may be new or it may be familiar to you. If you would rather not pray aloud when it is your turn, feel free to pray silently and then say "Amen" aloud signaling the next person in the group to pray. Whether or not you choose to verbalize your prayer, everyone is a participant in sharing this time before God together.

Take a few moments to prepare a prayer request. What did the message, working through the above questions or the discussion cause you to notice about your own relationship with Jesus? Would you be willing to share your prayer request with the group?