



### **"SEE, MY HANDS AND MY FEET!"**

The theme this Resurrection Sunday is impossible things, and we're going to kick off with 1, highly unlikely, one.

Now I'm fairly certain you're all too sensible to play the National Lottery here, but if you were to, you'd need to know the odds of winning the jackpot are, well, pretty slim. How slim?

About 1 in 45 million.

But that's peanuts compared to the biggest state lottery in the world - the US State Lottery - where the likelihood of winning is around 1 in 292 million. One bright spark has calculated that you are more likely to have identical quadruplets than win the US Lottery; more likely to travel into space; more likely to get attacked by a shark; more likely to become American President; more likely to be nominated for an Oscar; more likely to win a Gold medal at the next Olympics; more likely to date a millionaire; and more likely to get a royal flush in a first hand of poker. You are even more likely to end up in hospital after an accident with a pogo-stick – without actually owning a pogo-stick – than you are to win the US State Lottery.

I.e. winning it is highly, highly unlikely.

On Resurrection Day, we celebrate 3 not just unlikely things, but downright impossible ones.

Let's look at:

## Luke 24:36-48

OK, so there's Jesus, standing in that upper room less than 3 days after being killed on a cross. And what does He say to His followers?

"Why so afraid? See, My hands and My feet!"

What's the point He's making? Actually, there are 3 of them:

- Jesus has beaten death itself.
- Jesus loves us in spite of everything.
- Jesus will one day rule this world – forever.

You can sum it up like this. In Jesus, we have:

**1) An unbeatable hope.** Jesus is saying, "Death is not the end – I'm alive!" He even asks them if they've got anything to eat (you can't get more alive than that!).

This is something the disciples needed to hear, because the men at least were terrified (the women not so). That's why they'd abandoned their Rabbi in the Garden of Gethsemane. But it's also something *we* need to hear, because the one thing we all have in common is: we're all going to die someday. And the thing that terrifies people more than anything is death – whether it's the process, the finality, or what comes after.

But what the risen Jesus is saying is, "Don't be afraid. Look! I'm alive! I'm the Lord of life, and I am greater than death itself. And if you trust in Me I'll lead you through death and out the other side."

Fear is a natural thing, especially when death is a part of the equation. But Jesus has given us something supernatural to counter it: "See, My hands and My feet!"

In a nutshell: if Jesus could raise Himself to life, then He can raise us to life, too.

**2) An unquenchable love.** Another point Jesus is making is, "Never forget how much I love you."

From my reading of the Bible, when we get resurrected we get new bodies, so the things we suffer in this life we say goodbye to in the next. But Jesus forever bears the scars of crucifixion. Why?

It's not to remind us of how amazing *He* is (though He is!). It's to remind us of how loved *we* are.

The disciples needed to hear this. Most of them had run away and abandoned Jesus, and my guess is, they were feeling pretty rubbish at that moment. But Jesus is saying, "I know you messed up, but understand: that's what I died for." And some of us need to hear that, too – because some of us can feel pretty rubbish, sometimes. We might be thinking, "If people really knew what I'm like, what I struggle with, what I've done in the past, what I'm doing now, they could never love me. How could anyone love me when I have trouble loving myself?"

To which Jesus is saying: "Never forget how loved you are." Or alternatively: "See, My hands and My feet!"

**3) An unstoppable peace.** Finally, Jesus is saying, "All power is in My hands; all things will be brought under My feet."

It can be easy to look at the way the world is and think, "It's all going to Hell in a handbasket! How are things ever going to change; ever going to get better?" And the early Christians could have related to that too, I think. "How is the Kingdom of God ever going to win? The religious leaders in Jerusalem, the power of the Roman Emperor ... how are we ever going to beat *that?*"

Jesus, in that upper room, was giving them a glimpse of the future: of *olam ha-ba* ('the world to come' in Hebrew). A place where all things will be made new. And in the process He was saying, "Don't be afraid – I'm more powerful than Jerusalem, than Rome, than anything. This world will not continue as it is. One day everything will be redeemed and renewed and restored." How do we know?

"See, My hands and My feet!" I.e. "If I can do this, I can do anything!"

And that promise gives us peace in our own hearts, too. No matter how tumultuous the world around us might be.

### **The Answer To Everything**

The resurrection of Jesus is forever imprinted on the pages of history. I was once asked this question by a group of young people: "How do you know Jesus rose from the dead?" I.e. isn't that impossible? To which I said, "We wouldn't be talking about Him now if He didn't!" After all, how many Jewish men were crucified by the Romans in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD? The answer is *thousands* – and yet, we know very little about any of them. Why do we remember this carpenter from Nazareth? Because 3 days after His death His tomb was empty and His followers were claiming He'd come back to life. And they *died* saying it!

And it's thanks to that impossible thing we have access to another 3: an unbeatable hope; an unquenchable love; an unstoppable peace. Which is what makes Jesus' words on that first Resurrection Sunday so important to us all.

"Nothing is impossible for Me. See, My hands and My feet!"

Let's pray.