

# Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church



## Weekly Sermon Series

### **Taking Root: Digging in the Dirt...Dirty Little Secrets Luke 24:36b-48; 1 Cor. 12:12-14, 27**

We read an interesting account in Luke 24 of Jesus' resurrection appearance. It is one of several accounts recorded in the Gospels of Jesus appearing following the crucifixion. While the story of Easter is the defining event in the Christian Gospel, it is also controversial. In fact, the controversy is found in the gospel story itself.

What was the first reaction of the disciples to seeing Jesus as recorded in Luke 24? You will discover that they are startled and terrified. There is no joy. Just terror! And what do they suppose when they see Jesus? They suppose that they are seeing a ghost. Seeing ghosts was familiar to the disciples. Ghosts were disembodied spirits seeking a body. Ghosts were unable to find peace because something bad had happened. This certainly fits the disciples. As far as they knew, the body of Jesus was missing from the tomb. He had died a terrible death. Most certainly they were haunted by the horror of the crucifixion and now they are confused and troubled about what may have happened to the body of Jesus. To the disciples, the empty tomb meant that someone had taken the body of Jesus. His enemies would have gladly desecrated his remains. So to think Jesus would come as a ghost in search of his body was their first thought when seeing the resurrected Jesus.

But this was not a ghost. Seeing ghosts was upsetting. It was not a good experience to see a haunting spirit. By contrast, Jesus came and brought them a word of peace (Luke 24:36). Then he showed them his body with the marks of the crucifixion clearly present. Jesus came to them with his body. The resurrection was not about seeing ghosts of dead relatives or religious teachers. The disciples experienced “the resurrection of the body” of Jesus. That is why in the Apostles’ Creed we confess, “I believe in.... the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.”

In 1 Corinthians chapter 12, St. Paul takes the meaning of the resurrection of the body a step further when he says to the Christians in Corinth, “You are the body of Christ and individually members of it” (1 Corinthians 12:27). This connects us to Christ’s resurrected body. We now are one with Christ, the resurrected Lord, right now, as we live on earth. We are Christ’s resurrected body.

The dirty little secret we may carry is that we don’t believe in the resurrection of the body. Instead we believe that Jesus one day will appear to us like a ghost, some sort of disembodied spirit who will come at the time of death to take us from our bodies to a spirit world called heaven where we can float among the clouds for eternity.

What are your thoughts about the resurrection appearances of Jesus, as recorded in Scripture?

Lord, I wish to believe in the resurrection of your body, help my unbelief. Amen.

-- Week of April 26, 2009