

John 20:19-31, “Jesus’ Appearances”

8.13.23

Today is the Sunday we annually set aside to recognize our Rite of Passage participants. Since 2008, this being YEAR 16, we’ve now had **152 young adults** participate in Rite of Passage. ROP was established because of the absolute necessity of getting our faith, as parents, transferred to our children. Yes, it’s important that they our children get a good education...are smart...athletic...pursue their gifts...but, if they don’t know Jesus and aren’t following Him...what have we really accomplished?

The model for ROP comes from Luke chapter 2. Joseph and Mary found Jesus in the Temple at the age of 12 and what did He say when they found Him? “Didn’t you know I had to be about my Father’s business?” At the age of 12 a transition was made in the life of Jesus...and He is to be our example in all stages of life and that includes becoming a young adult. And so, the goal as Christian parents is to move our young people from childhood to adulthood embracing the Lord Jesus in that process.

So, the question becomes: “What’s the role of the church when it comes to this process? Well, scripturally speaking, (because Scripture is our guide in all things)...first and foremost, the role of raising children is placed squarely on the shoulders of the parents. It’s not the church’s responsibility to raise children...that’s the parent’s job. But the church can come alongside and help stir up this good work in our families. That’s ROP.

You see, this all came about because of what I had been seeing, working with young people in our church, and what I had been seeing over the last 40 years or so, in the western church, and what I’m going to describe has not necessarily been done intentionally by churches...but nonetheless there’s been a kind of understanding in America over the last 40 years: “Bring your children to us at the church and we’ll train them, while you do your thing.” Doing so has created a segregation of the families as soon as they drive on our church campuses...in many churches across America, families are seldom together...and yet; that’s something you never see in Scripture. Families always worship together.

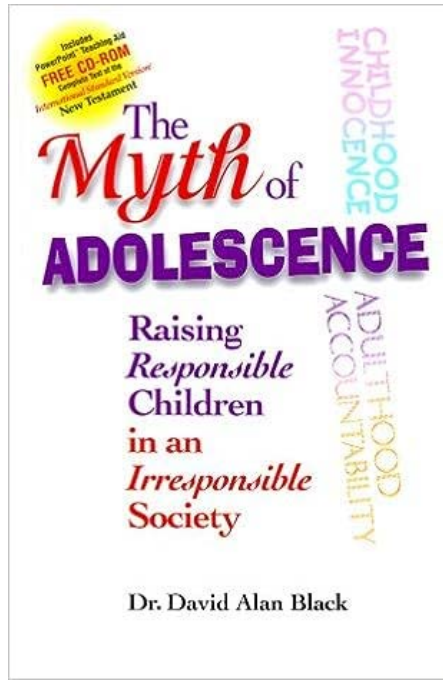
Now, if you’ve been here for any amount of time, you know we quote the various studies...you pick ‘em...showing **80+% of Christian young people who were raised in our Christians churches abandon their faith by their 20th birthday.** That’s a horrifying statistic if you consider all of the money that’s been spent on children and youth ministries across our country.

Now don’t get me wrong...there’s nothing wrong with kids being together and having fun...but, that’s not the purpose of the church and that model simply isn’t in Scripture. Truly, I witnessed for almost 14 years as I taught the middle school and high school SS class...that segregating of our young people and feeding them a diet of entertainment mixed with few devotions along the way, just wasn’t producing Christ-centered young adults. It bothered me immensely. I’m an old business guy...where’s the ROI? Well, it was abysmally low. You see, the Bible says:

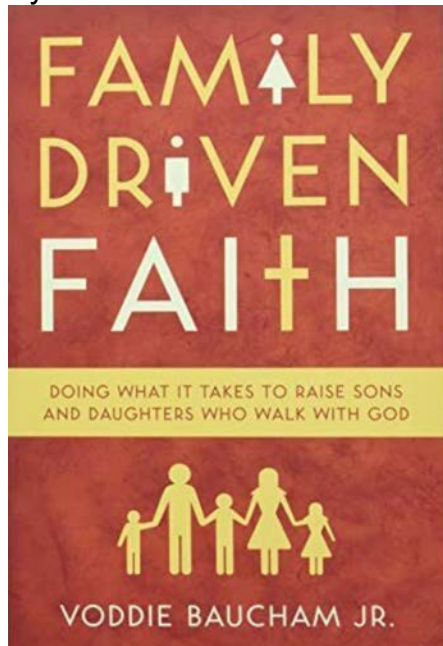
1 Corinthians 13:11

¹¹When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.

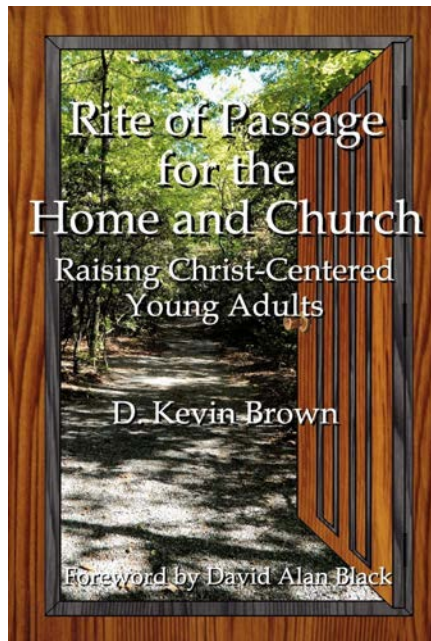
Note, there is no season of adolescence mentioned there. It so happens that as I grappling with becoming one your pastors almost 18 years ago, I was given Dr. David Black’s book:



“The Myth of Adolescence: Raising Responsible Children in an Irresponsible Society.” As you know, he’s one of the foremost professors of Greek in the world...he’s been here several times...still teaches at SEBTS. It opened my eyes to what Scripture teaches about stages of childhood and adulthood. Another book that greatly influenced me was Dr. Voddie Baucham’s book:



“Family Driven Faith, Doing What It Takes to Raise Sons and Daughters Who Walk with God.” Fabulous book. It, yet again showed the Scriptural model of parent’s responsibility to intentionally set out to raise sons and daughters who walk with God. These books, along with my own deep-dive study of Scripture, led me to develop the program we call: Rite of Passage and I wrote this book:



“Rite of Passage for the Home and Church, Raising Christ-Centered Young Adults” and you’ll notice at the bottom of the front cover, the foreword was written by Dr. David Black. Church family, the reason I’m sharing all of this and we put so much focus on this...is because we’ve got to place the **right emphasis on how we are to raise children. The emphasis is to be the home.** It’s the home where the teaching and training must take place. 2-3 hours per week in a church building is not going to get the job done. And it hasn’t been...the statistics don’t lie.

Mom and Dad, you can raise really smart kids...athletic kids...gifted kids. They can grow up...get a college scholarship and then get a really high paying job...buy an expensive house...have nice cars, but if they aren’t equipped with Christian faith and character, if they don’t know Jesus, and they aren’t living for Him, we’ve missed the boat. The goal in raising children should be:

3 John 4

I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.










Church family, I love our children. I totally love children! My goal with ROP, when I started thinking about it almost 18 years ago was to seek to help our families understand we want to **involve our children in the body life of the church, not just entertain them.**

You see, we’re a family of families and we worship together and we do the work of the Lord together. Thus, ROP is something that a young adult from the age of 12-18 can participate here at MPBC. And LET ME SAY THIS to MOM’S AND DAD’S: your natural inclination will be to say that your family doesn’t have time this year and we’ll do it another year, but I’m telling you...the sooner, the better. Because the longer you wait, and the older they get...the busier they’ll be with athletics, academic, friends and work.

You see, I have an ulterior motive...I want to push us as parents to not just do ROP...but to continue the training and devotions and Bible teaching in their homes. This is not just a one-time thing, it’s a family lifestyle. So, if someone asks you: “Well, what does MPBC have for children and youth?” You can tell them ROP and to make it easier...we now have on our APP and Website under the “New Here”...What to Expect...ROP. See it there, circled in red?



On Sunday mornings, we gather together as a community of believers to worship God through music, teaching, and fellowship. We are passionate about church and we strive for excellence in everything that we do. We hope you'll enjoy your time with us here at Mt Pleasant!

 Services Sundays at 8:20, 9:40 & 11am Wednesdays at 6:30pm Services typically last 65 mins	 Dress Code Wear whatever you're comfortable in. Most come casually dressed.	 Arriving You'll be casually greeted by our volunteer staff and they can answer any questions you may have.
 Welcome Center When you enter our worship center, enjoy a cup of coffee and a muffin! Our campus directions are clearly marked to get you where you're going as easily as possible.	 Teaching + Music Our services are contemporary in nature with times of exciting corporate worship and powerful teaching that can be applied to daily living.	 Meet the Pastors After each service, our Pastors make themselves available so you can say "hi" and introduce your family.
 Bible Study During our 9:40 service time, we offer small group Bible study classes for all ages and groups. We believe in a strong sense of community and Bible Study is a great way to meet new people	 Parents Room We do have a conveniently located and fully furnished "parents room" in case you may need to step out with your children. It is equipped with audio & video so you won't miss the	 Rite of Passage At MPBC, we believe in raising and training our children to become Christ-centered young adults. Learn more

So now, we would like to recognize this year's ROP participants and I'd like for them to come forward, along with their families, as I call their names.

2023 ROP Participants:

1. Grant Church
2. Peyton Cockerham
3. Hannah Goforth
4. Max Grayum
5. Kaidan Greene
6. Hendrix Palazzo
7. Annie Rogers
8. Eli Rogers
9. Luke Shropshire
10. Owen Shropshire
11. Howstan Stanley
12. Cambria Tedder
13. Camden Wayne
14. Emma Willens
15. Ayla York

Now, it's time for our **ceremonial "passing of the baton."** **The baton represents Jesus Christ and His Word,** and the parents will be passing the baton to their children. **So now, parents, you will pass the baton...**and as we've all seen track races and we know how critical the baton pass is. If the baton is dropped, that team is disqualified from the race. Young adults face forward and reach back, as the baton is passed...don't look back...keep looking forward and hold that baton high... **I hope this inspires the next group and they'll want to participate!**

As you're turning, I want to ask you to do double duty and ask you to look at and listen to 1 Corinthians 15. I believe this is one of the most critical passages in all of Scripture.

1 Corinthians 15:3-7

³For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

Now Paul said, “I delivered to you as of first importance...” **First importance**...of all that he could have said that has the greatest importance...what did he say? The death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. What I just read to you is the Mount Everest of Christianity. And we’ve been saying this for several weeks now. For you see, without the resurrection of Jesus...we’re crazy for being here, because He would have been a liar. But because Jesus indeed did rise from the dead, at our death...as His followers will too!

As we return to John chapter 20, we continue to see the evidence of the resurrection of Jesus. He is appearing to people, right and left...and that’s the title of our new series:



“Jesus’ Appearances.” Now church, as we look at more of His appearances today, I’d like to give a quick summary of these appearances by combining all four Gospels:

Timeline of Jesus’ Appearances after His Resurrection:

1. Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene, early morning, Sunday
2. Jesus appeared to other women, Sunday morning
3. Jesus appeared to Peter, Sunday afternoon
4. Jesus appeared to the two Emmaus travelers, Sunday afternoon
5. Jesus appeared to ten Apostles—Thomas is missing, Sunday (late evening)
6. Jesus appeared to all eleven Apostles—Thomas included, (one week later)
7. Jesus appeared to seven Apostles by the Sea of Galilee
8. Jesus appeared to more than 500 disciples in Galilee
9. Jesus appeared to His half-brother James
10. Jesus appeared to His Apostles and disciples and commissioned them, ascended to heaven

But, for today, I want us to look at the instance where Jesus appeared to the Ten Apostles (minus Thomas) on Sunday evening, the day of His resurrection. This is in Jerusalem and most likely in the upper room, where they had the Last Supper. Let me show you a picture...of a place that I’ve visited.



Many say this is the upper room they actually used...but, I won't be dogmatic about that. But what I found interesting is the fact, that when visiting...this room was not some tiny room, but much bigger...it could have accommodated many people. More than JUST the Apostles...the women as well. In fact, in just 50 more days...at Pentecost...they will be holed up in this house, (one like it), where in Acts 1:15 it says there were about 120 followers. Let's dig into this passage now...

John 20:19

¹⁹ On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews,^[c] Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."

Now church family, when it says the doors being locked...the Greek word actually means: barred. What does that mean? Church, they had the place padlocked and furniture pushed up to the door. They were scared to death of being arrested by the Temple Police as accomplices of Jesus. Look, they had no idea if Rome would make an example out of them or not...because we know eventually Rome would...for Nero's political troubles...he would blame Christians and feed them to the lions in the Roman Coliseum. But as we read, Jesus shows up...BANG...He's just there...doors locked...He's there. How?

He's in His glorified body! A body not limited by time or space. Remember He's going to fly off into heaven in 40 days, without jet pack. And when the Rapture happens, so will we, as Christians...we'll be caught up in the air to be with Jesus in glorified bodies...this was just a precursor to that.

Jesus said to them, "Peace be with you." No, He didn't say, "Shame on you for doubting." He said, "Peace." That's the "shalom" we talked about a few weeks ago...that's peace that rises above and isn't dependent upon our circumstances. Jesus offered them peace/shalom even though they had all denied Him. What amazing forgiveness. But are they seeing things? Is He an apparition?

John 20:20

²⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

“Glad”...what an understatement! The word actually means: “to rejoice exceedingly.” Yeah, that’s more like it! When they realized He wasn’t some sort of apparition...they high fiving and chest bumping all over the place...someone probably had to say, “Keep it down.” BTW...there’s something else. We learn something that’s very important to help explain something really cool about our glorified bodies.

Luke 24:38-43

³⁸ And he said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹ See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” ⁴⁰ And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. ⁴¹ And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” ⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ^[b]⁴³ and he took it and ate before them.

He's alive! He's real! Now, go back to John 20, verse 21...He says to them again: “Peace/Shalom.” You can still tell there is anxiety in the room.

John 20:21

²¹ Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”

Jesus calms them down so that He could tell them something very important. And what was that? In essence what Jesus does here is articulates what will eventually be the Great Commission. Jesus was saying, “My Father sent me on a mission and now I’m sending you. You’ve got a job to do, and I’m going to empower you to do it.”

John 20:22

²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.

Church, I want to show you something really quickly to help us understand this... Do you remember when God created Adam...what He did in that process? This goes all the way back in Genesis 2:

Genesis 2:7

⁷ then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

In much the same way, Jesus is breathing the Holy Spirit upon them. He blew His breath on them and the Holy Spirit came upon them. Now you say, “What happened at Pentecost, 50 days later?” The Holy Spirit came upon all the believers. This was a precursor of that. You say, “Why did they need the Holy Spirit?” Because it will take Him to accomplish the work...to empower them to go share the Gospel. And then, Jesus said this:

John 20:23

²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.”

Now, what does that mean? Well, we must remember, only Jesus can forgive sins. You and I don’t have the power to forgive sins...but, what we do have the power to do is: share the Gospel, the Good News...to share Jesus, the One who can forgive sins. Do you see? We have been called to proclaim the message of forgiveness, because as we proclaim the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit, for those who believe in Jesus, they WILL have their sins forgiven, and for those who don’t, they won’t have their sins forgiven.

Well, that’s it for that encounter...we don’t know how it broke up...I’m sure it was a great time of rejoicing. But, someone isn’t there: Thomas.

John 20:24-25

²⁴ Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin,^[d] was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.”

And these statements cause Thomas to be called: “Doubting Thomas.” But church, would we have been any different? Don’t we all lack faith at times? Don’t we all struggle to believe? I know I do and I have. I’m thick-headed...a “I’ll believe it when I see it,” “plan for the worst, hope for the best kind of guy.” So, I understand Thomas to a large degree. Well, a week later...he gets his shot...

John 20:26

²⁶ Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.”

A whole week passes and the Festival of Unleavened Bread is over and they’ll soon be heading to Galilee...why? So that the believers in Galilee can see Jesus, (including that 500 we talked about). I guess it’s fair to ask the question now: Why wasn’t Thomas with them a week earlier? Was he mad at Jesus for dying? Had he given up? Was he so disappointed and defeated that he just had to be alone? We simply don’t know. But I’ll tell you this...when we’re in pain...we need to be around people...self-pity can crush and we need one another.

For Thomas, when the others told him that Jesus was alive, he must have thought that they’d seen some sort of phantom or spirit. But yet again, BANG Jesus shows up in the room and says: Shalom.

John 20:27

²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.”

Isn’t Jesus so gracious with Thomas and his unbelief and his doubts? He just says, “Go ahead...do what you’ve got to do...but, Thomas, stop your disbelieve...BELIEVE!” And you know what, there’s no indication that Thomas ever stuck his hand in Jesus side or his fingers in his hands. Instead...there’s an explosion of reason from Thomas...

John 20:28

²⁸ Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!”

He didn’t call Him “Jesus,” He called Him God! Church, that is one of the strongest texts in the entire NT on the deity of Christ and it came from a doubter. He called Jesus: “GOD!” Because, that’s who He is. Never forget, Jesus said, “If you’ve seen me...you’ve seen my Father.” Their essence is the same...they’re one...but, their function is different...they have different roles. God, the Father...God, the Son, the God the Holy Spirit. Verse 29.

John 20:29

²⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

That’s us church! Jesus was talking about you and me. We’ve never seen Him, but we believe. We believe the Word of God and the fulfilled prophecies and we believe recorded history. And we continue to preach Jesus, because how does faith come...

Romans 10:7

¹⁷ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

John 20:30-31

³⁰ Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

So, what about you? Do you believe? Jesus said to Thomas, “Do not disbelieve, but believe.” Is that you? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. Believe.

I want to begin to close our time by pointing back to verse 21.

John 20:21

²¹ Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.”

This is the whole point of Jesus appearing to them. To reveal He’s alive and then to send them on mission. And you know what church, that’s our mission too. Why did the Father send Jesus into the world? Listen, He didn’t send Jesus into the world to bring about social justice. He didn’t send Jesus into the world to improve people’s economic condition. He didn’t send Jesus into the world to make people’s circumstances better. He sent Jesus into the world to seek and save that which is lost.

Luke 19:10

¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

Brothers and sisters, we exist for the purpose of fulfilling the very task that was originally given to Jesus, by God...seek and save that which is lost. That’s our calling...and the truth is...unfortunately, most Christians never share the Gospel outside of their family or their children.

So, I want you to watch this 4-minute video with Ray Comfort of “Way of the Master,” with a young lady named Natalie as a reminder of how we have a job to do. Watch Natalie change.