Sermon: (based on Luke 24.36-49)

Ever been in a strange town, and unexpectedly met a neighbour or family member? Double take!

“Was this really Jesus? Was it a dream? Was I imagining it?” Was this why Jesus kept appearing after the Resurrection? Luke 24.33-36 gives three appearances alone.

As last week Jesus begins with “Peace be with you”, then goes on to help them with three problems.

[1] Was Jesus really there, or was he a ghost? (v37-43)  
Luke emphasises that Jesus is not a ghost – he has flesh & bones, hands & feet, and he ate ordinary food. He is not saying anything about ghosts. But he is dispelling the idea that the Resurrection was not real.   
In the early church there were those who believed God was so far above matter, and who could not by definition change; thus Jesus was either not God, or not properly human. This story disproves this.

Today some who explain Resurrection as mass hallucination, or as an idea made up after the Cross.   
Again this story speaks against this. Merely an apparition is being paternalistic towards gospel writers.

[2] What about the OT prophecies? (v44-46)

Another problem they faced was the general belief that the Messiah should be an all-conquering King.

Jews, expecting a ruler like David, were fed up with the Romans, and knew that an all-powerful God who was on their side would sort this out through his Messiah.

Jesus explains this is not the case. Jesus says the Old Testament pointed to Jesus, if properly read.

Early church gentiles read the OT and saw a bad-tempered jealous God who was only for the Jews, and so some believed there must be a better/higher God that Jesus came from. Often they discarded the Old Testament as irrelevant and unhelpful.

Today people find the idea of a God who does not sort out the evils and problems of this world is hard to understand. To them Jesus says – the Messiah must suffer (v46), sharing and rising above our pain, rather than removing it.

[3] What were they to do now? (v47-49)

A third problem was what were they to do now. After three years with Jesus, could their lives go back to normal? Jesus tells them that the message is to live on, in them! That they should share what they have witnessed. And that the power to do all this will be given.

Some in the early church wanted to keep the gospel for Jews alone, but “**preached to all nations**” (v47)

For us today, this is how God deals with evil and shares our pain – through his people - us!

What we share is the gospel of a real Christ, who truly died and rose again, who completes the grand plan of bringing all things into fellowship with God, who deals with evil and enables us to rise above our pain. What a task! What a Saviour! What a gospel!