

Sunday, April 26, 2020

Bible Study **Luke 24:44-53**

The Text: READ Luke 24:44-53 (see also Mathew 28:16-20; Act 1:1-11)

For forty days since the Resurrection, Jesus had been popping in and out of places. Meeting with the disciples, sometimes one on one (like with Peter and with James) and sometimes with as many as 500 at one time. But the time for popping in and out had come to an end. Jesus needed to show himself exiting this world for our sake, not for his. The Ascension gave the disciples a commencement of sorts. An ending of one thing (Jesus constantly and physically with them) and the beginning of another (Jesus constantly and spiritually with them). Jesus' visible ascension into heaven helped the disciples understand that he would not be popping in and out anymore.

As I said, the Ascension was a commencement, so it was more than an ending, it was also a beginning. I hope you noticed that the disciples did not leave this scene heart-broken...they left with great joy. We know more now than they knew then, but listen, they knew something that we perhaps have forgotten.

They were able to leave with great joy, even though Jesus had left their sight, because they knew that nothing could now separate him from them. For three years of ministry the demands of crowds would frequently press in and separate them. Long days and weeks of teaching and healing would often lead Jesus to steal away to a secluded place for one-on-one communion with the Father. Eventually the Jewish and Roman authorities would take him away. And then the cross and the grave.

But now there was nothing that could come between them and Jesus, NOTHING. "I am persuaded" said Paul, "that nothing — nothing in life or in death, in this world or any other, — can separate me from the love of God in Christ Jesus my Lord (*Romans 8:38-39*).

And so as Jesus physically leaves this world he tells his disciples, who have passed on the charge to us... "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (*Matthew 28:19-20*).

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He gives them (and us) a commission and he assures them of his power (*ALL authority has been given to me*) to accomplish the task. He also assures them of his presence (*I am with you always*) to accomplish the task.

But how in the world will Jesus be present if he is not physically here? In Luke 24:49 Jesus tells the disciples that he will send what the Father has promised and that they are to wait in Jerusalem until they are ‘clothed with power.’ Acts 1:8 tells us that the Holy Spirit is the power and promise of which Jesus speaks. [*You can read about the Holy Spirit’s power in Acts 2. Read John 14:15-17, 25-26; 15:26-16:1; 16:7-15 for Jesus’ description of the Holy Spirit.*]

Though we can no longer see Jesus and behold him as they could during those 40 days after the resurrection, Jesus is still here with us. The word used to describe the Holy Spirit, and often translated as ‘Helper’, ‘Companion’, and ‘Advocate’. Is the Greek word “Paraclete.” This word literally means, “someone who is called in to come along side.”

The Holy Spirit “comes along-side” us to help and encourage and comfort; to enable us to cope with life; to give us his power to accomplish the mission that Jesus gave us. He is the Spirit of Jesus himself — living in us and working through us to accomplish the plans of God.

In us and through us the Holy Spirit brings the presence of Christ to those who need him. As one popular author has said, “He comes to the weary heart to give it rest. To the lonely heart to give it friendship. To the wounded heart to give it healing. To the sad heart to give it joy. And if not joy, at least the companionship of someone who has known what it’s like to be sad, and wounded, lonely and weary” (*Ken Gire, Moments With the Savior*).

But how can Jesus come to those in need if **WE** do not go. As Paul told us in Romans 10:13-15, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone telling them? And how are they to tell unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring the good news!”

You can’t spell GOSPEL without GO. To whom have you been sent? To whom will you “bring the good news”?

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Luke 24:36-53; Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 1:1-11
Questions for Further Reflection

Luke 24:36-53

Why are the disciples having such a difficult time believing that Jesus had risen from the dead (vv. 37-38, 41)? Why was it necessary for the disciples to see that Jesus was ‘flesh and bones’, and not a ghost? What does Jesus do to help them believe (vv. 40-45)? Does Jesus do similar things to help us believe? Why is it important that Jesus’ mission was anticipated long beforehand in the O.T. (v. 44)?

What task does he give the disciples (v. 48)? Is this task just for those few disciples with him at that moment, or for all of Jesus’ followers? What promise goes with the task (v. 49)? How do you think the disciples felt in this moment?

Compare Luke 24:50-53 to Mark 14:50-52. Why do the disciples react so differently when Jesus is taken away now? In what ways is Jesus’ departure from them now, different from when he was arrested?

How is ‘Peace be with you’ a good summary of the Gospel (v. 36)? In light of where you are, where is the mission field Jesus has sent you? Who are the people to whom he has sent you? How have you responded to his mission for you? Who are the disciples in your life who encourage your service to Christ?

Matthew 28:16-20

Upon seeing the resurrected Jesus, how do the disciples respond (v. 17)? Why is doubt mingled with their worship? Does that ever happen to you? How are they to go about making disciples? Of whom? With what resources? How much authority does Jesus have to give to his disciples so that they can fulfill the Great Commission? Toward what end?

Acts 1:1-11

At this point, what chance would have given the followers of Jesus to change the world? Why do you think Jesus insisted that they remain in Jerusalem (v. 4; *Luke 24:49*)? What do you think the disciples did during the ten days they waited for the Holy Spirit? Could we experience more power from the Holy Spirit if we did similar things? How does the disciples’ idea of the kingdom differ from Jesus’ (vv. 7-8)? Is our idea of the kingdom more like the disciples’ idea or Jesus’ idea? As a follower of Jesus, how do Jesus words in verse 8 impact you? Should we busy ourselves with “gazing into heaven” and “looking into the sky,” (v. 11) or with being Jesus’ witnesses (v. 8)?