

Luke 24:44-49

⁴⁴ Then He said to them, "These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me." ⁴⁵ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷ and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ And you are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."

Acts 1:1-8

¹ The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, ² until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, ³ to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. ⁴ And being assembled together with *them*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," *He said*, "you have heard from Me; ⁵ for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." ⁶ Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷ And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. ⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Well, we will have one more sermon next week covering the book of Mark, which has really been a study of all the gospels through the springboard of Mark. I admit that I did that largely for my benefit. Mike used to teach that all of the Bible should be understood through the interpretation of the teachings of Christ. Essentially, God means what Christ says He means. So in order to move to the next book and interpret it accurately, we must understand the Gospels clearly. This morning we are going to approach the passages we are looking at a little differently. We will skip back and forth some in order to follow an outline that makes it easier to follow.

Outline

- I The time frame of Christ's post resurrection ministry (Acts 1:3)
- II Content of His teaching during this time

- A Purpose of Christ's words and actions explained (Luke 24:44-48)
 - 1 Necessity of prophecy fulfilled regarding
 - a Christ's suffering
 - b Resurrection on the third day
 - c Gospel message of salvation spread to the world
- B Explaining the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3b)
- C The time of restoration of Israel (Acts 1:6-7)

III Promise and purpose of Pentecost (Luke 24:49 Acts 1:4-5 1:8)

Outline

I The time frame of Christ's post resurrection ministry (Acts 1:3)

³ **to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.**

Christ really didn't spend a whole lot of time with the disciples after He rose from the dead. Think about this. His whole ministry was going to ride on the shoulders of these people. From this point until the world as we know it ends, these guys have got to carry the mantle of their Master and launch a ministry to the ends of the earth before they are killed. Jesus spent much of three years with them. During much of this time they had a very limited understanding of what He was saying. Now, as they are learning very fast, they only have a few short days to learn what they need to know.

Jesus was only going to be present for 40 days. And we know that 7 of them passed without any contact. We learn in our passages today that there are a bunch of encounters that we aren't given the specifics about. Christ seems to be regularly showing up to teach the disciples.

He is also affirming their faith by infallible proofs. He has shown Himself to them in ways that they know He is telling the truth. That is why they were able to die rather than to change their story. You only do that if you know what you believe is true.

So, all of this is happening in 40 days. You can bet these guys are lapping up information as quick as they can. They are now getting the point about what this is all about.

Next point in the outline:

II Content of His teaching during this time

- A Purpose of Christ's words and actions explained (Luke 24:44-48)

⁴⁴ **Then He said to them, "These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me."** ⁴⁵ **And He opened**

their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷ and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ **And you are witnesses of these things.**

Christ appears to be giving the disciples a review at this point. He is telling them what He previously said and how they are to now think about it. When Christ says, when I was still with you, He clearly means that this was before the resurrection.

Look to at what it took for them to understand. This was the missing piece prior to this point. ⁴⁵ **And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures**

We talked a lot about the fact that the disciples were slow to get some obvious points. Sometimes what we don't get by concentration we can get by illumination. Sometimes God has to open our eyes to see things.

Have you ever been reading and suddenly you see something that has been obvious all along, but somehow you missed it? Have things like that also happened in your life, where something you are doing doesn't get your notice at all. And then one day you see it in a completely different light? Sometimes God simply has to open up our understanding. And He will. If what we want to do is **please Him**. If what we want to do is **obey Him**. If what we want to do is **serve Him**. He will open up our understanding to those things that will aid our walk in Him.

Now what was the message? What was He teaching them and what is He now teaching them?

1 Necessity of prophecy fulfilled regarding
that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me."

This is actually a very important passage for us. What should the Bible be made up of? What Old Testament scriptures should we rely upon as authority? The Sadducees only gave authority to the first five books of the Bible. Jesus here proves that they were wrong in their views. The Pharisees, who played an equal part in killing Christ as the Sadducees, were actually correct about this point. The law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms should be relied upon. Christ said what they prophesied **had to** come true.

I guess a point to get here is that a person can be looking at the right Bible and still not serve the right God. Jesus said that the Pharisees were sons of the devil. The right Bible only does you any good if you are willing to do what it says.

Now what points in the true scriptures does Christ mention need to be fulfilled? There are likely more than this. But we know that it is at least this.

- a Christ's suffering
- b Resurrection on the third day
- c Gospel message of salvation spread to the world

It would be a good study to look at all the passages that foretold these three points in the Old Testament. Time will not allow us to do it now. But we can rest with certainty that the Old Testament prophesies these three things.

Now look at the points that Christ singles out.

Christ's suffering. This is not anything that most Jewish people were prepared for. This is not something they expected in their Messiah. We see it very clearly portrayed in Isa 53, but they just didn't get it. They couldn't see how it fit into their boxes of what the Messiah would be. Christ taught the disciples how to use the Old Testament to validate the ministry of Christ. We may not have thought of it this way before, but Christ is doing a very intense Bible Study here. He is teaching these guys what they were going to need to do to bolster the faith of believers and to contend with the unbelievers they were called to minister to. They had to know how to make it very clear that from the beginning of time God intended to have His Son Crucified. This had to be.

The next point was the Resurrection on the third day.

It is difficult to find a scripture that clearly describes this event. But Hosea 6:1-2 says this.

Hosea 6:1-2

¹ Come, and let us return to the LORD; For He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. ² After two days He will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up, That we may live in His sight.

This was talking about Israel but maybe it also should be understood in regard to Christ.

We also have the example of Jonah who was in the fish's belly for 3 days and nights.

Other than that there is nothing explicit about raising on the third day. But there is much in the Old Testament that would say that Christ had to raise from the dead in order to accomplish all the other prophesies about what the Messiah would accomplish.

So the Resurrection would not be something that most Jews would have expected from the messiah. In the box they had it placed in, they probably would have seen no need for it. The Messiah would not die the way they figured it.

And next- c Gospel message of salvation spread to the world

and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ And you are witnesses of these things.

Notice what Christ said should be taught. Repentance and Remission of sins. Repentance is this- the change of mind of those who have begun to abhor their errors and misdeeds, and have determined to enter upon a better course of life, so that it embraces both a recognition of sin and sorrow for it and hearty amendment, the tokens and effects of which are good deeds

Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament.

Repentance is not a word you hear a lot any more in popular Christianity. It is a hard sell to people who primarily **want to feel better**, people who want to **improve their lives**, people who join the ranks of the church to **benefit their mental state**. Repentance isn't a happy process. In fact it can make a person absolutely miserable. Seeing ourselves as we truly are is one of the most harrowing experiences we can have. Admitting that we are the primary problem in our lives is not pleasant.

But Christ makes it exceedingly clear. If we are to represent Christ properly, this is the message we must be preaching. If our message does not include turning from our sins, we are not preaching the Gospel message.

I know there are a lot of popular preachers who don't want to talk about sin.

They don't want to emphasize it. They want to find synonyms for the word. They want to call it selfishness or irresponsibility. But that doesn't capture the heart of the problem. The word "sin" assumes a Sovereign God who has the right to expect perfection from His creation. And sin is coming up short. It isn't a problem because it makes our lives and the lives of others miserable. Some sins might not do that. The problem with sin is that it is **a violation of God's creation, God's design**. It is a strike against the Lordship of Christ. God hates it. He takes it personally. And no matter how we intend it, it is personal.

So if we are going to represent Christ well, we have got to discuss sin. In fact, most of the time that is the best place to begin the conversation about salvation. Sin is the bad news that brings attention to the good news. Without a proper understanding of **sin**, of one's **need** for salvation, a person cannot have a proper **understanding** of salvation.

So we start with calling a person to repentance. And that repentance is repentance from all sinful actions and attitudes and states of being. If we are not calling people away from sinful states, we are not preaching the gospel accurately.

Then next we must preach the remission of sins.

Remission is this- "**forgiveness, pardon, of sins (properly, the letting them go, as if they had not been committed** Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament.

This is the good news that counters the bad news. This is what the death of Christ was for. You know, sometimes we reduce this in our thinking to **theology**. But that is a mistake. This is an **earth shaking reality**. This is an amazing thing. Christ

wanted this rag tag group of guys to spread this message across the whole world. Sin is a big deal because it is an offense against God. It deserves His wrath. We all fell under the condemnation of God because of our sin. But God sent Jesus Christ, who was born, lived and taught, then was crucified, buried and rose again **to take care of the sin problem.**

Sometimes I think we forget what it was to know that we were **unforgiven.** That is how most of the world lives. Some have an ache to be forgiven but don't know where to get forgiveness. We have the answer. What are we doing with it? Are we looking to put out this message that Christ gave us to spread? Do we look for opportunities as we go into the world, or as we reach out into the world?

The disciples were to stay in Jerusalem at first, and their ministry was to begin there. They were to first saturate the Geographic area of Jerusalem. Christ was specific about this. The first world they were told to go into was their own world. They were to preach repentance and remission first at Jerusalem.

And it was they who were to be witnesses of all that they said. While they needed good theology, their stories started with their experience. They saw Christ. They saw what He did. They knew who He was. And they were to tell their story. They were to give first hand testimony to the truth they were telling. A witness is someone who has seen something. That is what these people were to be. And that is what we, too are to be. We are to tell our story. Do you have a story as to how Christ's grace first touched you? Tell it. Tell what Christ has done in your life. That is the hardest thing for anyone to argue against. How can they tell you that your story isn't true? How can they tell you that Christ did not do what He did.? Our story about our salvation is our most compelling ministry tool. It is our evidence that God can and will do miracles through Jesus Christ. And we all have one.

B Explaining the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3b)
days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

So while Jesus was teaching the disciples He was telling them how to understand the **Old Testament and the ministry of the Messiah.** He told them **what they were to do.** But He also added to their knowledge about **the kingdom of God.** That is what the Sermon on the Mount was all about. Christ is now giving them more information. Maybe He just repeated a lot of what He had already said. Whatever the case, he was teaching them what ministry on this earth is all about. He was explaining God's mission for this planet. He was explaining how God's people on this earth are to exist, how they are to prioritize, how they are to make decisions, how they are to think. That is all kingdom of God fuel.

Then Christ answered questions about the future.

C The time of restoration of Israel (**Acts 1:6-7**)

⁶ **Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"** ⁷ **And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.** Isn't this interesting? All this time this is what the disciples thought would happen. They thought that Christ would restore the kingdom to Israel. They thought Christ was going to politically make Israel the top dog, the world power. That was why they wanted the right hand seats. Now they ask Him again. And it was probably a good question. They at least understood that the Messiah truly would make Israel great again some day. We know from scripture that there will be a New Jerusalem planted on planet earth and it will be the center of everything important that goes on on this planet. So Christ is going to do this. He is going to punish all wickedness. He is going to reward all the faithful. So they are asking, OK Christ. Are you going to do it now? We know you are going to do it. Is it soon? Are we going to get to see it? Will we get to be a part in it?

It is interesting how Christ responds. He does not say that **He is not going to do** such a thing. In fact, given His answer it is implied that **He will do what they ask.** No, His answer has to do with **timing** and their **right to know.**

He essentially tells them that it is not their business. It is not for you to know when God has appointed this to happen. This is God's decision and He is keeping it to Himself for now.

Now, how would we have responded if we were there? Don't we hate to be told that it is none of our business? Don't we hate it when a person refuses to answer our questions when we think we have a right to know? Don't we want to hold it against God when we ask Him questions and He doesn't answer them? Don't we use that as evidence against Him? Don't we think that if He doesn't answer us we have a right to pout or rebel or disobey or whatever?

Well, these disciples were told straight out that this question would not be getting an answer. They were not going to know when Christ restores the kingdom of God on earth. And today, we still don't know. And continually there are people getting rich selling paper backs telling everyone when this is going to happen. Yeah, that is just like us. The one thing we are told **we won't know** is the one thing we feel like **we must know**, the one thing we think God will reveal to us. Yeah. That is pretty typical.

Now Christ moves on to what will be in the disciple's immediate future.

III Promise and purpose of Pentecost (Luke 24:49 Acts 1:4-5 1:8)

⁴⁹ **Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."**

⁴ And being assembled together with *them*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," *He said*, "you have heard from Me; ⁵ for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

From the time that Christ ascends to the time of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit will be 10 days. So they didn't have to wait very long.

Now, if you had been there, might you not think that it is vital we get this message out **as soon as possible**? Might you not think that there is no good reason to delay the gospel mission and message?

Isn't it interesting that at this critical time Christ told them to wait. We learn that, while **the mission** is important, **the empowering to do the mission** properly was even more important.

We don't know if the disciples understood that this mission was way more impossible than would be immediately obvious. Maybe they thought they had the talent to do this job. But God clearly knew that they did not. They needed heavenly power. And that power was so critical to the mission that Christ would not allow them to even try until they had received it.

I doubt they had any idea what this baptism in the Holy Spirit was going to look like. It looks like they were essentially told that they will know it when they see it. It will be obvious.

Now note what this power will affect. You will receive power...and you will be witnesses. That seems to be the general effect of this new outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It is going to be given in order to make the witnessing of the disciples effective.

I get very nervous when people separate the baptism of the Holy Spirit from the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is easy to start thinking that this power given to the church at Pentecost is primarily to zap out all the difficult struggles against sin in our lives. We begin to think the Holy Spirit was given to overpower us with wonderful emotions. We might even think it is given for us to show supernatural signs. But primarily Pentecost was about empowering the ministry of evangelism. We see later in Acts just how important Pentecost and the signs that accompanied it really were. The supernatural acts that accompanied the ministry to the Samaritans and then the ministry to the gentiles were the very evidences that the Apostles used to validate that it was God who was doing this, it was God who was wanting this. To us who are gentiles in a gentile world, we don't get how important that was. But these Apostles were

Jewish. Crossing into the Gentile world was a huge barrier for them. They found it hard to even imagine that God would want such a thing done. The signs that accompanied Pentecost, and then the expanded ministry to the gentiles, were the perfect events to show that, Yes, this is exactly what God wants. And God, Himself is accomplishing it.

Carla and I have been reading a book about revival. One of the things that is very evident in all the revivals of true God worship in scripture is that it begins with an **act of God**, a **movement of God**. And that movement of God moves human beings to, essentially, get with the program. And as they do God accomplishes wonderful things to glorify Himself. But the point is **that it is God who moves** to accomplish great things for Himself. People are able to get involved in this movement of God, God calls them into involvement, but they don't cause it. Only God does.

God was going to initiate this wonderful ministry of spreading the gospel across the globe with an outpouring of His Holy Spirit. He was going to provide the **internal worker** who was going to accompany **the external witness** of all of these disciples. And that helper would use the truth being proclaimed to point to Jesus Christ in the souls of the listeners.

And what would happen as a result?

you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Look at how this was going to go.

First it would go to the Jews and a minority of gentiles in the city of Jerusalem. God would saturate the original chosen people with the Gospel. They would have the first opportunity to respond. Next it would spread from Jerusalem to all Judea. These are primarily Jewish neighborhoods. But that is not all. It will spread to those who are regarded as nominally Jewish, polluted Jews, the Samaritans. The Gospel was going to be preached to them too, those who were disregarded by any self respecting Jew. God was going to accomplish this work. And then where would it go? This would not have been lost on anyone who was listening. It was going to the gentiles. It was going into all the world. This message was to be preached to people who the Jewish people did not even want to touch. This was culture shock. Christ was sending these Jewish believers to those who had previously been despised by them.

That is what God is like. That is who the gospel is for. And we are the ones who are to deliver it. And God's Spirit will empower the message as He sees fit.

I had never realized before actually studying these passages that Christ actually spent a concentrated effort during this short period of time doing a Bible study with the Apostles. Here is Christ Himself, who was the Word of God. And what did He focus on with the little time He had left? Bible Study. And it was Old

Testament Bible Study. We can never get the idea that Bible Study is not all that critical to our lives. When Christ only had 40 days left to lay the foundation of all future ministry, He seems to have spent a large portion of it teaching the Bible. It is obvious from our text and what we know from later in Acts that we have everything we need to do evangelism and discipleship. We need to always be in our Bibles, becoming better workmen, but we have the tools. Most of us understand **the message of repentance and the remission of sins**. We are **going** into the world on a regular basis. **Christ is accompanying us** through the Holy Spirit everywhere we go in this endeavor. And the **Holy Spirit will work** on the inside of people while we testify on the outside. With all that said, it seems that the only things that will limit this ministry are either our silence or our hypocrisy. It is nearly impossible, approaching the end of the Gospel to not make the point. We should be about the business of making disciples- first of ourselves so that we are following and obeying Christ in everything, and then extended to others by the witness we have of what Christ has done in our lives