

Session 6

April 7, 2024

THE MISSION OF JESUS SHARED

Luke 24:44-53

With the end of redemptive history completed on earth, Jesus ascended to His rightful (and original) place at the right hand of the Father. The Bible pictures Him “seated” there in fulfillment of the Scriptures. It is a place of rest from His redemptive work and a place of reigning over His redeemed kingdom. But He won’t stay seated there forever...for His second coming is as certain as His first! And while His redemptive work on earth is done, ours is not. The Great Commission is exactly that. With eternity in the balance, taking the gospel of salvation to the world is both the greatest of all challenges and the most meaningful of all activities. It is also a sacred duty. In Luke’s account, these last words of the Lord are neatly divided into four W’s.

Words (vv. 44-45). Here at the end of His earthly ministry, Jesus’ words are particularly packed with meaning. Each detail is included for a reason. Verse 44 reveals the origin of Jesus’ teaching. They are His words, proclaimed over the 3 years that Jesus was with them. But more than that, they were His words prophesied throughout the entirety of Scripture. The Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms (or “Writings”) represent the three classical divisions of the Hebrew Old Testament. By fulfilling them all, Jesus was once again declaring that His redemptive work on earth was done (see Matt. 5:17). Verse 45 is interesting. Just as Jesus opened their eyes to recognize Him (see John 20:11ff; Luke 24:31), He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, specifically as they related to His fulfillment of the messianic prophecies. For reflection: *We tend to think of understanding the Scriptures as a spiritual discipline. What does verse 45 say about the role of our minds as well?*

Written (vv. 46-47). “He also said to them...” indicates a change in context. Whereas He had already fulfilled the messianic *texts*, here He emphasized His messianic *task*. The simple gospel recorded in the Bible consists of the good news of Christ’s sacrificial death, which included both the payment for sin and the satisfaction of God’s judgment (hence He “would suffer”) according to the Scriptures; His burial; and His resurrection on the third day, according to the Scriptures (see 1 Cor 15:3-4). That’s the *message* in verse 46. Verse 47, then, gives the *mandate*: repentance was the requirement for forgiveness of sin. Earlier, Jesus had proclaimed, “Unless you repent, you will all perish” (Luke 13:3). The *method* for spreading this good news? Proclamation! Paul stated it clearly: “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Finally, the intended audience for the good news is “all nations,” starting exactly where they were.... Jerusalem. For reflection: *I know there are dozens of ways to share the gospel (and I have tried them all!). But no better way exists than to sit down one-on-one with a person and share the gospel directly from the Bible. Are you ready, willing, and able to do just that?*

Witness (v. 48). The term “witness” is usually used in a legal context. Simply put, a witness is someone who can testify directly and personally to what he or she has seen, heard, or experienced. Jesus’ pointed out that the only ones capable and credible when it comes to sharing the gospel, are those who have personally experienced the salvation that Jesus gives. The good

news about that is that no special training or special gifts are necessary to share about Christ. One only needs a legitimate salvation experience with Him. The challenging news is that we are ALL “witnesses of these things.” Hence, we are ALL as responsible to share the gospel as the original disciples! For reflection: *If we are saved and we are responsible for sharing Christ with “the nations,” why do you think so few people actually do it?*

Worship (vv. 49-53). With the promise of the Holy Spirit’s empowerment (see Acts 1:8), the witnesses were blessed by Christ personally, who then ascended personally into heaven. What followed would set the stage for the early church’ major activity: worship. Notice that they were filled with worship, joy, and continual praise. But notice as well *where* they were gathered: in God’s house. This meant that gathering together corporately for worship was an integral part of the early church’s life. For reflection: *Read Heb. 10: 25. How does that verse inform our study? What does it say about believers’ failure to gather?*