

The Gospel According to Luke

Luke 24:50-53

Reading: Acts 1:6-11

Parallel Passages: Mark 16:19-20 and Acts 1:6-11

King Jesus

Sermon #109
February 21, 2021

On *April 8th of 2018* we began this adventure with Luke as he faithfully told of the eyewitness accounts concerning his Lord and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Luke's investigations and interviews of those who were actually there and saw and heard Jesus proved to be a very profitable study. We have seen Jesus heal those who society had all but written off. We observed Jesus making the sick well and the blind open their eyes to see for the first time. We read of the miracles Jesus performed, like when Jesus touched lepers and their skin becomes as soft as a baby's. As we read the Scriptures together, we entered into the experience of those who were with Jesus when He placed His hand on the coffin of a widow's only son and said, *arise!* We were on the boat that day when the waves were about to capsize it. Everyone was in a panic and Jesus was sleeping in the midst of the storm. The others woke Him and He says, "oh, you of little faith". He then walked to the front of the ship stretches out His hand and actually rebuked the wind and the waves in Luke chapter 8; Jesus speaks as if the storm could hear Him, for the truth is, the storm did hear and obeyed and immediately hushed its roar. Everyone in the boat stood soaked to the bone and speechless. They wondered, who is this Man that even can command the storm and the storm obeys?

As we studied our way through Luke's Gospel account, we heard Jesus also teach. He taught as no one ever taught before or since. His words were not words that resulted in legalism such as all the rules the Israelites placed on the Sabbath and much of life. Jesus' words were God the Father's words. Jesus taught us what God desires - not what man desires or thinks. He taught that sin runs much deeper

than just sinful deeds but that sin originates within our hearts. If you think lustful thoughts then you have committed adultery or if you are angry with someone, God equates it with murder. He taught us that it is not what goes into a person that makes them defiled but what comes out.

Luke showed us the birth of Jesus like no other Gospel. He told us about the angels and how Mary treasured up these things. Luke wrote about Jesus' forerunner, John the Baptist and how John would make Jerusalem ready to hear Jesus' Words.

Luke took us to the cross and challenged us to look long and hard at just what Jesus did to save you and me. We saw the soldiers arrest our Lord and the Jewish mob shouting "crucify him!". We traveled through the pain of the mock trials. We read that all the officials declare Jesus' innocence. And yet, they beat Him, mocked Him, and crucified Him. Luke took us to the cross and Jesus' death. He took us to the tomb as Jesus was laid to rest. Luke brought us to the sunrise, that morning with the women who came to anoint Jesus' body, only to discover that He had risen indeed. After the resurrection, Luke explains to us that all this was told about in the Old Testament. Every prophecy, vision, prediction, narrative, and teaching of the Old Testament was saturated with Jesus.

Now it is time for our Lord to return to heaven and be our Intercessor. Luke alone takes us to the location near Bethany as our Lord leaves and ascends to Heaven. Know this truth, **the ascension of Jesus to heaven is the rightful King reclaiming His throne.** History now marches on to eternity where believers will appear before the Mercy Seat of Christ and unbelievers before the great white throne of judgment.

As we travel through history, in our fallen state, we tend to think we can do everything ourselves. Uncovering human potential is the battle cry of our liberal society. Society tells us that mankind is basically good and all that needs to happen is to eradicate poverty and illiteracy and all our society's ills will go away. This is the world's way and the world's way is broken because of mankind's sin nature. The world wants us dependent on our government instead of Christ. The world wants us to participate in evil of the prince of this world instead of living the precepts of the Scriptures of God.

Jesus knew that His followers were going to overcome sin and be a powerful force for God's Kingdom, but they could not do it by themselves, they would need help. So, Jesus announces the coming of the Helper, the One who empowers His people to continue His mission; believers would be indwelt by God the Holy Spirit to better deal with sin and the evil of this world and be witnesses for Christ.

As we consider all this and the journey Luke has taken us through for almost 3 years - lets go to God in prayer.

King Jesus Blessed Them (v. 50-53)

When Jesus returns to heaven, He leaves His followers the promise of God's blessing. Reading at verse 50, "And he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands **he blessed them.** ⁵¹ While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. ⁵² And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, ⁵³ and were continually in the temple blessing God."

Know this truth my beloved, all who are in Christ live with God's eternal hand upon them and that includes you and me. We are not left as orphans but we are God's beloved children. Jesus lifts His hands and promises God's goodness to

His followers. Because God cannot lie or break His promise, then we, as His people, can always rejoice in the fact that God's grace and mercy follows us. Brothers and sisters when we encounter trials of every kind and when we encounter struggles; remember Jesus left behind His blessing. His blessing will follow you wherever you go. When you believe in Jesus as your Lord and Savior the promise found in Psalm 23, verses 4 to 6 is fulfilled, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. ⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. ⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever." This should give you courage and hope and peace as we journey through life in a chaotic world.

Two Sundays ago, we learned of the peace that Jesus gave His followers. We learned that the peace was purchased for Jesus' followers on the cross. He gave them peace as a gift of grace. I pray you have experienced this peace and also the blessing of God's grace. When Jesus lifts His hands to heaven He is, in fact, pronouncing the benediction of blessing upon His followers. Many church services end with a benediction, that is, when the pastor prays God's goodness would indwell the people and guide their lives. Here, Jesus is giving the people His benediction at the conclusion of His earthly ministry.

Because of all Jesus accomplished while on earth, His people can have grace and peace. This is one point that we must understand; when Jesus pledges God's goodness and blessing upon His people He is giving them what God promised to Israel if they were faithful and keep His covenants. The dilemma for God's people Israel was that they rarely kept His commands as He taught them to. They

continually broke His covenant and continually received what God promised for those who break His Word - curses.

Brothers and sisters, Jesus kept God's covenant perfectly and through the death and resurrection and His sinless covenant keeping, His perfection is attributed to us! God sees us through the perfection of Jesus!

This is what was foretold in Deuteronomy chapter 28, “And if you faithfully obey the voice of the LORD your God, being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. ² And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the voice of the LORD your God. ³ Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field. ⁴ Blessed shall be the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground and the fruit of your cattle, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock. ⁵ Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. ⁶ Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out.” (v. 1-6) The difference between those who lived at the time of this writing and us today is - we have Jesus, who is perfect and God sees us through His perfection and those who believe in Jesus have God the Holy Spirit to empower them, to strengthen their faith, and to help them overcome temptation and sin less. Do you understand Jesus, the sinless Savior, was able to lift up His hands and declare that God's covenant blessing and Jesus' blessing will be forever on His people until He returns? Let me ask, “Do you believe Jesus has done this for you?” It is my prayer that the answer is yes.

With all that Good News and all God promises to His children, I just read to you, there still is the flip side of the coin and that is these wonderful promises are not intended for everyone in the world but only those who have trusted Christ as

Lord and Savior. Only for God's people are the great blessings declared and placed upon. The curses in Deuteronomy 28 begin in verse 15 and will forever be upon those who willfully reject God's offer of Christ as their Savior. Those who do not think they need Jesus because they really do not think their sin is all that bad or those who do not think they are sinners at all will suffer forever in a place prepared for the devil and his fallen angels that became demons. I encourage you to read Deuteronomy chapter 28 and let the blessings sink into your hearts and give you great peace and hope through Jesus. And, as you read of God's curses for disobedience, I pray it will move you to action; the action of declaring Jesus is the Christ and the only hope for the lost.

King Jesus Ascends His Throne (v. 51)

Reading verse 51, [“While Jesus blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven.”](#) It is significant that Jesus ascended back to heaven to take His throne while in Bethany. Why? Let me take us to Zechariah chapter 14, where the prophet speaks of the Coming of the Lord. The world will be in chaos and Jesus will come in judgement, reading at verse 1, [“Behold, a day is coming for the LORD, when the spoil taken from you will be divided in your midst.”](#)² For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken and the houses plundered and the women raped. Half of the city shall go out into exile, but the rest of the people shall not be cut off from the city.³ Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations as when he fights on a day of battle.⁴ On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward.⁵ And you shall flee to the valley of my mountains, for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal. And you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake

in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones with him.” The prophet tells the place where the Lord stood is none other than the Mount of Olives, which is in the vicinity of Bethany. Luke tells us in Acts, his 2nd book, Jesus will return in the same way. Jesus leaves for heaven with blessing and He will return with judgement. Jesus’ return to heaven is called the ascension meaning “to take up and to take to oneself”, as Jesus returned to His rightful throne in heaven. The ascension of Jesus is significant in several ways.

First, the ascension shows King Jesus is exalted and has power over all the universe. He was born to the family of a carpenter, He walked the earth as a homeless preacher, but no more, He is now revealed fully as the Son of God. No more will Jesus be the preacher and prophet walking among His fellow Jews, calling people to repent and return to God – His ascension declares to all His Godhood and His Kingship and as God the Son He is exalted above all. As Paul wrote, ⁸ “Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ For this reason also, **God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,** ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:8-11)

Second, the ascension vindicates King Jesus. He is completely sinless and perfect in every way, in every sense of perfection, yet, Jesus came to this wicked and sinful world to remake sinners into His image. To accomplish this Jesus had to become fully man and suffered and be tempted by sin, yet, remained sinless. Again, the Apostle Paul makes this clear, “*God made Jesus who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*” (2 Corinthians 5:21) By Jesus’ miraculous ascension God is showing all those there, near

Bethany, the glory of His Son and vindicating Jesus. All Jesus did as the Man-God was by the will of the Father and He fulfilled God's plan for redemption.

Third, by Jesus' ascension to His throne in heaven it validated He will continue God's plan of redemption by preparing a place for His followers. Reading from John's Gospel Account, chapter 14, Jesus comforts His disciples, saying, **“Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. ³ If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴ And you know the way where I am going.”** (John 14:1-4)

Fourth, the ascension guarantees our future glory. Jesus is in heaven interceding for His followers, for those who believe in Him as their King, their Lord and Savior, He intercedes day and night. By His intercession we receive the promised eternal inheritance. The writer of Hebrews makes this understood, **“For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.”** (Hebrews 9:15) Our eternal future is guaranteed because Jesus is in heaven interceding for the saints.

Because of Jesus' resurrection, we too, have been raised from the dead and because of His ascension, we too, have been granted access to the heavenlies. We need to understand that even though we find ourselves still here on earth; for God all is fulfilled and we are already with Him in heaven. As Paul explained to the believers in Ephesus, **⁴ “But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us**

alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and **raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,** ⁷ so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” (Ephesians 2:4-7) My beloved, through Christ we have entered the eternal and are passing through this world on our way to heaven.

Fifth, the ascension of King Jesus reunites Him with the Triune Godhead and as God, He gives each believer Himself as the Holy Spirit. The Apostle John recorded Jesus’ words, ²⁶ “**When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me,** ²⁷ **and you will testify also, because you have been with Me from the beginning.**” (John 15:26-27) My brothers and sisters in Christ, God knew us before the creation of the world and we will be with Him forever. His gift is His Holy Spirit to dwell within us, to carry us through this world until we are with Him in heaven. This is the fulfillment of the promise God made to Abraham that through him all nations would be blessed in Genesis 12, the promise that Gentiles would receive God’s blessing of the Holy Spirit.

Not only did the disciples receive power when the Holy Spirit came upon them, but by the Spirit coming to them validates that Jesus was seated at the right hand of power on His throne in heaven. When the Holy Spirit indwells a believer, it is proof God the Father has had a plan of redemption before the creation of the universe and God the Son, Jesus Christ, fulfilled the eternal plan of redemption and by the power of God the Holy Spirit believers are empowered to be witnesses of God’s plan of redemption and finally that Jesus’ promise to return is assured. Jesus and the Holy Spirit are the fulfillment of God’s promise to Abraham and when He returns, He will never vanish again but He will return in glory forever!

King Jesus Is To Be Worshipped and Loved (v. 52-53)

There has been an important change. The disciples were sad and had lost hope when Jesus was laid in the tomb, but now their hope is eternal and joy fills their hearts. Reading verses 52 and 53, “**And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy,⁵³ and were continually in the temple blessing God.**” The disciples know without a doubt that everything Jesus had taught them was true. They now understand the Messiah, King Jesus, had to die in order to accomplish His mission of bringing God’s redemption to the lost world. They understood that all of Jesus; His life, His teachings, His death and His resurrection had been predicted in the Scriptures centuries before. He came to the earth and now ascended to heaven - further proving His Godhood. They now believe in the completeness of God and His Son. Before their understanding was limited, but now it is complete. They also now understood, that Jesus, as God, was to be worshipped. He was not just a prophet, but God incarnate. With this knowledge and truth, they obey Jesus and return to the city and wait for the Holy Spirit to be revealed to them. While they wait in the city, they continually worship in the temple blessing God the Father for God the Son. My beloved, you remember it was in the temple where the Gospel of Jesus, found in Luke’s record, really begins, in chapter 2, Joseph and Mary present Jesus in the temple and there was a righteous man named Simeon reading at verse 28, “**then Simeon took Jesus into his arms, and blessed God, and said,²⁹ ‘Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace, According to Your word;³⁰ For my eyes have seen Your salvation,³¹ Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples,³² A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, And the glory of Your people Israel.’³³ And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him.³⁴ And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, ‘Behold, this *Child* is**

appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed—³⁵ and a sword will pierce even your own soul—to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.’³⁶ And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel (*fan·oo·ale*), of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with *her* husband seven years after her marriage,³⁷ and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers.³⁸ At that very moment she came up and *began* giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.” (Luke 2:28-38) Simeon and Anna worshipped and waited on God, now 33 years later the followers of Jesus are in the same temple worshipping and waiting on God’s Spirit. Both at the beginning and the completion of Jesus’ ministry there was faithful worship and praising of God. The question this brings to mind for me is, “My beloved, we too are waiting, we are waiting for the Lord’s return. Will we be faithful as Simeon, Anna and the disciples as they waited?” As we wait - Jesus calls us to worship Him; we are to spend time in prayer, studying the Word of God, praising Him as our Lord, Savior and King, and telling the lost world of our wonderful King!

The ascension of Jesus is the rightful King reclaiming His throne. We are called to spend our life here on earth worshipping our King and praising Him and sharing His gospel of redemption. I pray we are up to this challenge. By the power of God’s Spirit that lives within us - we will be! My beloved, prepare for spiritual battle to take territory for our King! Amen and amen!

Benediction