



Luke 24:36-49
89th Message
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PEACE TO YOU

SERIES: THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

I. Intro

He has risen! He has risen indeed.

Good morning. We Californians know the name Maria Shriver right? Did you know that she was a children's author?

A few years ago, she put out a children's book about heaven that I think became a best-seller.¹ You may have seen it. In it, she gives what I think is a common view of heaven.

She talks a lot about floating on soft, white clouds and sitting next to the stars, where they are the brightest of anywhere in the universe.

So, we have to ask, is this what we have to look forward to for eternity? Disembodied spirits floating on soft white clouds next to bright stars. I think Hallmark would add some harps for us to play. So, we can float on soft clouds next to bright stars and strum harps forever and ever. Is it really "pie in the sky" when we die?

Now, I'm not sure about you, but this does not get me very excited about heaven. So, I don't even like heaven and that's where I'm going? And here's (supposedly) the really good news, I can never leave it?

Well, against that image we get the resurrection appearances of Jesus, which lead us in a very different direction.

Today we come to the third and final resurrection appearance of our Lord in the book of Luke. It is also our last full week in the book of Luke. Do I hear a hallelujah? I think it's been at least 10 years since we began this book. If you are new with us today, I'm sorry you've missed it, but hang around because we want to get to know you. In two weeks Brian will speak on the Ascension which combines the last few verses of Luke with the first few verses in Acts. They both recount the ascension of Jesus.

We begin this morning in Luke chapter 24, verse 36.

II. Peace and Proof

As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you!" But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate before them. (Luke 24:36-43 ESV)

Setting the Scene

This scene immediately follows the Emmaus Road scene. It is the first Easter evening, and Cleopas and his friend return to Jerusalem after spending the day with the Resurrected Jesus. They find the 11

(or ten if Thomas is not there) gathered in an upper room and begin sharing their story. They are probably breathless with excitement.

But as they're sharing, Jesus appears again. John tells us that the room was locked, so Jesus has come in through locked doors. Jesus is in His glorified body which allows him to appear and disappear at will, but Luke does not describe what kind of body he has. He probably does not know, but it is a body as we will soon see. As we come to this text it is important to remember that resurrection does not mean resuscitation or rejuvenation. Jesus has not been called back from the grave as Lazarus was. Jesus is called through the grave and out the other side into a new order of existence where he cannot die again. Resurrection means alive in a new way and alive as never before. That's what we are dealing with this morning.

The Fear

The disciples, as you can imagine, are caught off guard. Luke tells us that they are startled, puzzled and terrified, and think they are seeing a ghost. Who can blame them? Once again, as we saw last week on the Emmaus Road, the word "see" is a key word repeated here four times. It's as if Jesus is encouraging the disciples to see the magnitude of what has happened. Do you see how life-changing this is? Do you see what has just happened? Do you see me and see the magnitude of what is going on here?

The Peace

But the disciples are slow to see, a theme throughout Luke's Gospel. And in the midst of their fear and puzzlement Jesus greets them with, "Peace to you!" In other words, get rid of your fear and, here, have peace instead.

Peace has also been a theme throughout Luke's Gospel. It began with Zechariah and his prayer. He blesses the Lord for visiting his people and providing his son, John, to be a prophet of the Most High who will guide our feet into "the way of peace" (1:79). The angels sing about peace at Christ's birth (2:14). Simeon takes the baby Jesus in his arms and says, "Now, Lord I can depart in peace for my eyes have seen your salvation" (2:29). In chapter 10, Jesus instructs his disciples to proclaim peace to those who welcome them into their homes. In chapter 19, Jesus approaches Jerusalem on a donkey as the King of Peace. And here in chapter 24 he greets his disciples with the common greeting in the middle eastern culture, "shalom" or "peace to you."

On the lips of anyone else this means "I wish peace for you." But, on the lips of Jesus it means a whole lot more. It means "I'm giving peace to you." One scholar has said, "For the first time in history, peace is no longer a wish, it is a fact."²

As you know, Biblical peace is not just the absence of war or strife or fighting. It is about presence. Peace is the presence of wholeness and soundness and well-being. Peace is where things work the way they were created to work. It is where our relationships work together the way they were meant to work. And most importantly, it is where

our relationship with the living God works the way it was created to work. On the lips of Jesus after the resurrection shalom means, “I am peace, and I now give it to you.” It is being given for the first time in history.

The Wounds

Jesus then shows the disciples his hands and feet, presumably showing them his wounds, and emphatically says, “It is I myself.” Jesus is making the connection between peace and his wounds, because it is through His wounds that we can have peace.

Colossians 1:19-20 says,

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Isaiah 53:5 says,

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

Peace is the great gift of Easter, which comes as a result of his wounds. It’s almost as if Jesus is asking them, “do you see that my wounds have brought you peace?”

Have any of you read the book *Unbroken*? As usual, the book is much better than the movie. The book is the story of Louis Zamperini who was an Olympic runner who ended up serving in WW II. After his bomber was shot down, he was captured by the Japanese and placed in awful prisoner camps. At these camps he suffered awful beatings and horrendous conditions. There was one particular guard who treated Louis terribly, beating him at will. The guard’s nickname was “the Bird.” After the war was over, Louis was haunted by nightmares of this man. He would wake up in cold sweats with the same fear that he had had in the POW camps. He became an alcoholic to numb his pain. Then, on the verge of bankruptcy and losing his marriage, his wife convinced him to go to a Billy Graham crusade. At that crusade he met Jesus and peace flooded his life and he never had another nightmare. He was never again gripped by his fear.³

This is the peace that is on offer from Jesus through his wounds.

The Giddy Disbelief

After the disciples see his wounds they move out of their fear, but they still are in disbelief, now with joy and wonder (verse 41). They are in a state of giddy disbelief.

It’s like in sports; we get this way when the unthinkable happens. Of course, one of the most famous Bay Area plays of all time is called “The Play.” Sorry to all you Stanford fans. In 1982 Cal somehow scored a touchdown on a last second kickoff return that featured 5 laterals and a knocked over trombone player as the Stanford band had already walked onto the field to celebrate. I listened to both the Stanford and Cal announcers this week and they both said, “I can’t believe it! I can’t believe it!” But it happened right in front of their eyes—it was real.

The Physicality

I think that explains how the disciples felt. They are in giddy disbelief. They were probably running around the room saying, “I can’t believe it!” But, it’s happening right in front of their eyes. They are in disbelief but with joy and wonder.

Jesus isn’t finished. Jesus really wants them to see and believe.

He delivers the final blow to their joy and amazement when he asks for some food. He’s hungry! But that’s not the point. The point is that he wants them to see that he has a real body. This is no apparition.

So they give him some fish and he eats it. This is a real physical body! Maybe the hardest part of the resurrection to understand is this new body that Jesus has. It is a new kind of body, a new creation, parallel only to the original creation itself.⁴ Luke is unusual among the Gospels in that he emphasizes the physical body of Jesus. As we read in our Scripture reading this morning, “this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality” (1 Cor 15:53). Do you see this?

Although you are not supposed to stare at someone while they are eating, I bet the disciples were wide-eyed and staring while Jesus ate that fish.

III. Plan and Proclamation

Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.” (Luke 24:44-47)

The Plan

Now Jesus has their attention as never before. So he wants to share a truth with them which addresses their minds and hearts. As David Garland points out, Jesus wants to make sure “Christianity is not just about a rapturous experience that sweeps over the soul and elates the believer. It involves the Word, which addresses the mind and heart.”⁵ Jesus wants to impart the truth of the Gospel to his followers so that they can then proclaim it.

He gives another Bible study, as he had with the travelers on the Emmaus Road. For those disciples on the road, their eyes were opened. For these disciples, their minds are opened. When Jesus began his ministry in chapter 4, he stood up in a synagogue in Nazareth, read from Isaiah 61, and said that that text was fulfilled in him. He now ends his earthly ministry by showing how the Scriptures have been fulfilled in him. He wants to show them that this was God’s plan all the way along.

He would have taken a seat as a good Rabbi with all eyes fixated on him. Can you imagine being there? You wouldn’t be falling asleep, as some of you are doing now. As he would unroll the scroll, you would be able to see the wounds in his hands in the candlelight.

We don’t know what he said, and we would only be speculating as to where he went in scripture. But let me speculate for a second.

I think that he began with Genesis 1, the creation story, because it is there that we see a good God creating a very good world. A very good world that was flooded with peace and harmony.

And when sin entered the world in chapter 3, the question that he may have asked them is, “will our God abandon his very good creation?” He would have gone through the Old Testament and shown them the answer is a resounding “NO!” What we see is a good God, a good father, who wants to restore, renew and transform his creation back into a world flooded with peace and harmony. This was his plan all along. And he would have said that his bodily

resurrection is the guarantee from his Father that he will indeed do that.

That's enough of my speculation—Luke tells us that Jesus goes through the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms. There is no part of Scripture which does not bear witness to Jesus. He is the key to understanding all the scriptures.

Jesus is like the Rosetta Stone. I said this to the Young Adults and they thought I was talking about some software package. But no, that remnant of a stone sign constructed in the 1st century BC which connected lost languages with known languages. It was the decoder. Just like that, Jesus is the decoder for us. When we understand the person and work of Jesus, we have the decoder to unlocking the meaning of the Old Testament scriptures.

He opens their minds to connect the dots for all that has happened, finishing with the content of the proclamation that needs to go out to all the nations beginning in Jerusalem.

The Proclamation

The evangelistic program is about to begin in Jerusalem. Jesus summarizes the Gospel message for what should be proclaimed: Repent. Turn around and start on a new way of life, for your sins are forgiven. This is the good news that is to be proclaimed to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem. And who is to do the proclamation?

IV. People, Promise and Power

“You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.” (Luke 24:48-49)

All three of these appearances of Jesus in Luke end with witness. The women ran from the tomb to share the good news with the eleven. The disciples on the road to Emmaus go back to Jerusalem to share what had happened on the way. And here Jesus makes it formal. You are the witnesses of these things. You are the people to proclaim the Good News because you have been given the eyes to see. But you have to wait here in Jerusalem for now because I promise to give you help through the power of the Holy Spirit.

This promise will be fulfilled in Acts on the day of Pentecost.

So these eleven are the first witnesses. They can testify to and affirm everything that has happened—the life, death, resurrection (and soon to be the ascension) of Jesus. They will establish the facts on which all future believers will rely.

That's our text for today, but what are some reflections to take away from this text?

V. Reflections

Peace

Do you know this peace that passes all understanding?

If you were here on Easter Sunday for the third service, you heard a good friend of mine, Matt Wong, share his testimony about how Jesus brought him peace in the midst of fear. He was on a mission trip to the Yucatan peninsula. This particular year he caught dengue fever which increased his temperature to 106 degrees. As he lay in bed, fearful of possible death, he began to lose feeling in both of his legs. A couple of his buddies came in to check on him and when they did, he asked them to pray for him. They prayed for peace. Matt said this two weeks ago, “peace that I'd never experienced overwhelmed

me”. Like what happened to Louis Zamperini, this peace is what is on offer from Jesus, a peace that passes all understanding.

When Jesus appeared in that upper room, peace had come. Peace between a holy God and sinful people had come through those wounds. And the resurrection initiates this new world where this peace is available.

So, the question is this: do you know this peace? Do you see that through his wounds, Jesus is the way to peace? If you don't, today is a great day to know this peace. Just come as you are because there is forgiveness of sins. No sin is too great! Those wounds will absorb all sins. Do not fear. Just come. There will be a prayer team up front after the service to pray with you this morning.

Proclamation of Peace

If you know this peace, then you are an Easter person. And Easter people are in the Good News proclamation business! It's our turn now. We'll talk much more about the theme of witness as we go through Acts, but I'll kick it off right here because the theme is introduced here. As Tom Wright says, “This passage points the way toward the whole mission of the church”.⁶ The 11 established the facts on which we rely, but it's our turn now to be witnesses to the truth. It is our turn. We are all called to be his witnesses.

A few years ago, we put on a youth discipleship retreat in Liberia for the next generation of church leaders there. We began the weekend by handing each young person a baton, symbolizing that it was now their turn to enter the Good News proclamation business in Liberia.

This morning I want to tell you that it's our turn now here in the Bay Area.

We proclaim a God who does not condemn, but rather welcomes all people, all nations, to his wounds. We need to tell people it is safe to run right toward the risen Jesus in their sin because we run right into those wounds where there is forgiveness of sins! There is no sin too horrible that these wounds will not absorb!

It's our turn! You may not feel adequate to be a witness, but a witness only requires four things:

1. A firsthand experience of Christ.
2. A way to express this experience in words, however simple.
3. A confidence in the power of God even through our stumbling testimonies. Remember that the most convincing argument for God is the Spirit (which gives you power) and your changed life!
4. A compassion for those around us who are lost; those at home, those at work, those at school, those in our neighborhoods, those on our little league teams.

Proclamation of Hope

Not only do we proclaim peace and the forgiveness of sins, but we proclaim our hope as well.

As Chancellor Adenauer of Germany once said, “If Jesus is not alive, there is no hope for the human race”.⁷ But He has risen! He has risen indeed.

So what do we do? We proclaim the hope that this text shows us. Christ has a renewed, transformed, glorified body which is what we, who come to those wounds, will have.

As N.T.Wright also says, “You know how we say of older people that they are only a shadow of their former selves. Guess what? You are only a shadow of your future self”.⁸

This world is only a shadow of its future self. Revelation tells us that heaven and earth will come together once more, flooded with peace and harmony. And that’s where we will live with our glorious bodies. We will not be bouncing around clouds strumming harps.

I think John Dickson, a pastor from Australia, helps us here:

For many of us, even long-term believers, our picture of the kingdom come derives from an unlikely combination of ancient Greek philosophy and modern Hollywood movies. Plato taught that the physical world is a kind of grubby reflection of the ultimate non-physical reality to which everything is headed. Buddhism and Hinduism with their goal of nirvana, share a similar outlook.

But, Christianity is altogether different. Christianity says that we are going to move forward to a world where everything flourishes, where everything works together again like it was meant to work.

And when I find myself doubting that such a fantastic hope could ever become a reality, I need only to go down to the beach near where I live or look up at the glorious night sky and remind myself that God has already done it once: the proof is right there before my eyes. Why should I question his ability to do it a second time. But there is another piece of evidence left in the world by the Almighty to indicate his intention of resurrecting the physical world itself. It is the resurrection of Christ himself. This is God’s tangible pledge within history that he intends to do the same for the whole creation at the end of history.⁹

That is our hope and that is what we proclaim!

The Key To Our Proclamation

But here’s the key to our proclamation—to it being our turn—it’s the way of the wounds. Our proclamation is only effective if we live the way of the wounds. See, this resurrection appearance coupled with seeing the wounds is God’s great “YES” to a life of sacrifice. God’s great “YES” to a life characterized by the cross and dying to ourselves in love and forgiveness. I think sometimes we go through Lent choosing lives of sacrifice, but then Easter comes, and we forget about the way of the wounds. We forget about death and the cross and sacrifice. But no. The Resurrection is God’s great declaration that the way of the wounds is the way to true life, the way to true peace, the only true way to live. And it is when we live our life this way that our proclamation becomes most effective.

- *Jesus says, blessed are those who believe even without physically seeing the wounds.*
- *You are blessed.*
- *Now may, He, the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing even without seeing, that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit.*
- *Have a great week!*

Amen

1. Shriver, Maria, *What’s Heaven?* (New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), p 8.
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3. Hillenbrand, Laura, *Unbroken* (New York: Penguin Random House Company, 2010), p 375-6.
4. Based on studies from N.T. Wright’s book *Luke for Everyone* (London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), p 300.
5. Garland, David, *Luke – Exegetical Commentary on the NT* (Michigan: Zondervan, 2011), p 966.
6. Wright, N.T., *Luke for Everyone*, p 301.
7. Green, Michael, *The Day Death Died* (Illinois: IVP, 1982). p 18.
8. Wright, N.T., *Surprised By Hope* (New York, NY: HarperCollins e-books, 2008), p 154.
9. Dickson, John, *If I Were God, I’d End All The Pain* (UK: The Good Book Company), p 57-9.

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