

Ascension

Luke 24:44-53

PW Emerson – 05/19/2019 – Ten:27 Ministries

We've been talking about Easter the last 4 weeks.

At the end of the Easter season is Ascension – when Jesus ascended into heaven.

Today we're going to look at the ascension.

Luke 24:44-53

⁴⁴He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

⁴⁵Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.⁴⁶ He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

⁵⁰When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. ⁵¹While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. ⁵²Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. ⁵³And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

He is with his disciples when this happens.

He is talking to his disciples.

Let's break this into a few pieces for a closer examination.

FIRST ... verses 44-47

⁴⁴He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

⁴⁵Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.⁴⁶He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Jesus is saying that everything in the Old Testament pointed to what would happen with the Messiah, the Christ, and that's what Jesus told his disciples all along!

John 5:39

You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me

The scriptures testify about Jesus – and the scriptures he is talking about is the Old Testament (New Testament hadn't been written at that time).

Jesus told his disciples this (John 5) during his time of ministry.

They just didn't understand at that time.

So ... after the crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus is telling his disciples ...

- It had to happen this way

And at this time, since the crucified Jesus was again alive, NOW the disciples believe it!

John 12:16

At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that these things had been done to him.

The writer, one of Jesus' disciples, is writing, in hindsight, that they didn't understand things until after Jesus rose from the dead.

The risen Jesus, just before he ascended into heaven, is explaining the scriptures to his disciples – to MAKE SURE they understood.

And it finally clicked.

Jesus had the same experience recorded earlier in Luke 24, on the road to Emmaus. There he met 2 disciples who didn't understand why Jesus was crucified.

What did Jesus do? He explained everything BY EXPLAINING THE SCRIPTURES – the Old Testament.

Luke 24:25-26

²⁵He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" ²⁷And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

Ask yourself, why did Jesus do that – explain everything.

These were his disciples. They had seen Jesus do incredible miracles ...

- Healing
- Feeding of the 5000
- Raising someone from the dead ...

Not only that, he confounded the Pharisees with incredible wisdom and understanding of the scriptures.

The disciples had these experiences.

BUT

Jesus knew that those experiences were only helpful if they connected them to the scriptures.

That's how they would be able to continue spreading the word – other people would only have the scriptures to go on

The resurrected Jesus is saying to his disciples that

- The experiences they had with him are not enough
- Seeing Jesus RISEN from the dead was not enough

Those things MUST be connected to the scriptures!

It's imperative that they understand that.

For us too ... gives us wonderful experiences.

But we must also understand the scriptures.

We need to be able to understand God experiences in the context of God's word.

Then other people will have experiences from God that are also connected to God's word.

Being connected to God's Word connects us all to God.

SECOND ... Verse 46-48

The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.

Jesus is saying to his disciples that as people

- Who have witnessed all that Jesus has done
- Who understand the scripture ...

They are to be preaching in his name!

Preaching about repentance for the forgiveness of sins

Preaching to ALL NATIONS – that includes the Gentiles.

Luke goes on to write, in Acts 15:14-18

¹⁴Simon has described to us how God first intervened to choose a people for his name from the Gentiles. ¹⁵The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written:

¹⁶“After this I will return
and rebuild David's fallen tent.

Its ruins I will rebuild,
and I will restore it,
¹⁷ **that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord,**
even all the Gentiles who bear my name,
says the Lord, who does these things'—
¹⁸ things known from long ago.

If WE

- Have had experiences from God AND
- God has opened our eyes to the scriptures

THEN

It is our duty to be spreading the word about it!

When someone asks me

- why I preach
- why I proclaim the Good News
- why I LOVE talking about God's Word at every turn

I can honestly say that Christ has demanded that I do this!

I want people to repent of their sins and have forgiveness.

I want people to come to know God's Word ... God's Love ... to know God!

That's something that all Christians should want!!

THIRD

Verse 49

⁴⁹I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

Jesus is talking about the Holy Spirit, which came down on the disciples at Pentecost
It's the idea that their power comes from God!

Trying to drive a car without the keys, operating a power tool without electricity, a hydroelectric plant without any water source—all of these futile actions make as much sense as trying to minister to others without the power of the Holy Spirit. Believers can do nothing good without his power, yet how often they try! Christians schedule revival as if God ran on their schedule, they launch evangelistic efforts without praying that God will prepare people's hearts, and they run churches and ministries as if God were more interested in marketing and management techniques than people's souls.

Live Application Commentary, Barton & Veerman

Our power ...

- to proclaim the Good News
- to share God's Word

Comes from the Holy Spirit.

We need to always be ready because we work not on our schedule, but on God's schedule!

That's why I Peter 3:15

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.

That was written by Peter, one of the disciples, who went through this.

FOURTH Verse 50

⁵⁰When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them.

Jesus blessed his disciples

Jesus consecrated his disciples.

Matthew 3:16

¹⁶As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him.

The Spirit of God went on Jesus and he began his ministry.

It was God the Father putting his hand on Jesus, blessing him.

From there, Jesus started his ministry.

When I was ordained another minister laid his hands on me as an outward sign of the recognition that God's spirit was on me.

I was blessed.

I was consecrated.

That blessing wasn't just meant for me and it wasn't just meant for ministers.

It was meant for all Jesus' disciples, furthering God's mission in the world.

That includes YOU!

Only after that time does Jesus ascend into heaven.

Because now there are others empowered to continue God's mission, God's work.

CONCLUSION

Let me wrap this up ...

In John 1:14

¹⁴The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

Unfortunately many theologians have taken the flesh ... the stories and experiences, and turned them back into words.

Karl Barth

Clarence Jordan, author of the "*Cotton Patch*" New Testament translation and founder of the interracial Koinonia farm in Americus, Georgia, was getting a red-carpet tour of another minister's church. With pride the minister pointed to the rich, imported pews and luxurious decoration. As they stepped outside, darkness was falling, and a spotlight shone on a huge cross atop the steeple. "That cross alone cost us ten thousand dollars," the minister said with a satisfied smile. "You got cheated," said Jordan. "Times were when Christians could get them for free."

The last things Christ did before ascending into heaven was to look at his disciples and say that he's given them all that they need for ministry.

Now it's their turn.

God says that to us too!