

“The King’s Mission” // 10 – Kingdom Come //

Luke 24:36–53

We come to the end of our study of the Gospel of Luke. The Gospel of Luke has been the story of the coming of a King. Today, I’m going to show you how it all ends. Except it doesn’t really end. It’s kind of like Winston Churchill said, ‘It’s not the end. It’s not the beginning. But it might be the beginning of the end.’

This story has all the power and drama and passion of the greatest of stories. In fact, C. S. Lewis said that one of the reasons we love fantasy stories and fairy tales about knights who slay dragons and Kings who come back to rescue their people is because they are modeled after one great, true story.

This story. Last time most of the disciples saw Jesus someone was taking his dead body down off of cross. A couple of the disciples, and the women, said that they’d seen Jesus, but most of them thought, “You’re seeing things!” vs. 11. It seemed like nonsense to them.

[36] As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them,

- It says He “stood among them,” not that He walked into the midst of them. The Gospel of John tells you the door was locked. Like Star Trek. He “beamed Himself into the midst of them.”

...and said to them, “Peace to you!”

- This is humorous. They think He’s dead. He appears in the midst of them and says “Peace to you!” He had to know that’s not what they were about to feel.
- Imagine you are in your home alone late at night working at your desk and I come up behind you, grab you and scream “RELAX!”
- I think Jesus got a good chuckle.

[37] But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit.

[38] And he said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? [39] 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.” I am not a disembodied spirit. I have a real body with real skin that you can see and touch.

- Never ceases to amaze me the alternate theories people come up with for the resurrection in spite of what is pretty clear here.
 1. Risen spiritually
 2. Risen in our hearts
 3. (Time magazine): Risen in our teaching

[40] And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.

- Why His hands and His feet? You know why. The nail scars.
- The Gospel of John says that He still had deep evidence of the scars.

[41] And while they still *disbelieved for joy* (great phrase: had gone from disbelieving because not possible to “too good to be true”) and were marveling, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?”

[42] They gave him a piece of broiled fish, [43] and he took it and ate before them.

- It's stories like these that make you see that these accounts are not made up. People like to say that the resurrection stories are a myth.
- New Testament scholar NT Wright points out that these stories just don't read like a myth. There was one passage in the OT that talks about the resurrection, and it says that in the resurrection our bodies shine like the stars of heaven.
- So if you were going to write a myth, you would include mythical elements. There was a document called "the Gospel of Peter," which was written about 200 or so years after Jesus' death (so, not by Peter), and that one reads like a myth. It says that *3 men walk out of the tomb and in between them is the third man whose head sticks out above the clouds and a cross follows him out of the tomb and the voice from heaven says, "hast thou preached to those that are dead?" And the cross says, "we have."*
- But in the Gospels in the Bible, you have details like these. And he eats a piece of broiled fish. If you were writing a myth, would you really included as one of your only stories the fact that Jesus showed up and ordered fish & chips?

[44] 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."

[45] Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, [46] and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead,

- It had been there the whole time! Like one of those pictures with all the dots... Remember those?
- There are two things that run throughout every story of the Bible... (and if you can learn to see this you'll become a good Bible interpreter): **the Gospel and the person of Jesus** (which are really kind of the same thing).
 - The Gospel is that God had to save us by doing for us what we could not do for ourselves. And so Jesus, our Savior, was coming to rescue us and restore us to God.
- I love studying the Bible and seeing Jesus all through it. That's when it gets fun. Peter Kreeft says studying the Bible is like looking through a keyhole and seeing someone stare back at you.

[47] and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

- There's your mission.

[48] You are witnesses of these things.

[49] 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."

[50] Then 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.

- Interesting: We know He has a real body. He didn't dissolve didn't go back into the immaterial world. His physical body is somewhere right now. So where did He go? C. S. Lewis said it was most likely, "A fold in space." Like, a curtain you take a bow and slip back through.

Here's our key verse: [52] And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, [53] and were continually in the temple blessing God.

They had joy...

- Which is kind of counter-intuitive. Jesus is leaving... the miracle-worker. And He's told them that they are going to carry His cross. Just like He had been hated, they had been hated. Just like He had laid down His life for them, they'd lay down their lives for others. *What's joyful about that?*

- There joy was anchored in 4 things they got from the resurrection of Jesus: **certainty; hope; purpose; presence**
 - And what I want to show you is that each of you, all of us, are trying to find joy through those same 4 things.
 - If your certainty, hope, purpose, and presence is found in the right thing, you'll have joy. Joy is a byproduct of anchoring your life in the right thing.
 - Think of it like a flower. If the root is planted in the right soil. You and I are both given a flower. I take mine out and plant it in a garden. Rich soil. You put yours in a block of cement. Then you complain that your flowers don't flourish. It all has to do with where it's planted. You don't develop joy by new techniques, or changing circumstances. Joy is the byproduct of being planted in the right place.
 - The disciples anchored their certainty, hope, purpose, and presence in the resurrection of Jesus, and as a result had a joy that death and deprivation could not take away. I want to ask you where you are anchoring those 4 things?

1. Certainty

- Notice, vs. 38, before this, they still doubted. Contrary to what a lot of people will try and tell you, they were not looking for a resurrection.
 - A lot of people have tried to suggest that coming up with a resurrection story was a very natural way of dealing with the death of your political leader.
 - That is not true. The Jewish people had no category for a crucified and risen political leader. There's only one passage that talks clearly about a resurrection, Daniel 12:3, and it says that in the end the unrighteous will be raised to judgment and the righteous to reward (it says that the righteous will have bodies that shine like the stars.) The Messiah was supposed to throw off the yoke of oppression, not be overtaken by it and then teach His people to carry their cross.
 - Why would they have made this story up about a Kingdom that is not of this world? Christianity was, at least for the first 300 years, very non-political. The earliest Christians were a very persecuted sect... Church history tells us all of the Apostles died an unnatural death, except John.
 - They taught people to not fight back against their enemies but to die willingly like Jesus had; they taught people give up their money to gain reward in heaven. Why would they have made it up if it weren't true?
 - To say that they just "made up" the stories about Jesus means that they were sitting around one day after Jesus had died fishing and Peter jumps up and says, "I know! Let's tell everyone that He resurrected! And we'll get to be the leaders of this new religion. Except, let's teach everyone that Jesus' Kingdom is not of this world, and so we should give away all of our money; and when other people try to kill us, we won't fight back. And maybe, just maybe, if we're lucky, we can all get martyred through painful, humiliating deaths. Us and our families." And all the disciples are like, "That's a GREAT idea. Yeah. ME FIRST!"
- And why would they have celebrated Jesus' death? Something we know about Christianity. From the earliest times, the earliest Christians celebrated Jesus' death, not mourned it.
 - For example, the earliest Christians celebrated communion. When your leader is martyred, you don't celebrate their death, you mourn it. We celebrate the birth of Lincoln and Martin Luther King. We don't have little ceremonies to celebrate how they were murdered.
 - We have no idea where exactly Jesus was buried. If you go to Israel, they'll tell you they know, but we don't. There are 2 major guesses, but that is all they are. Within 2 decades nobody knew. What's significant about that? When someone you love dies, things they leave behind become precious to you.

- “This was their room.” “These were their shoes.” You don’t have them anymore, so you hold on to what remains of them and what reminds you of them.
 - If they are alive, you don’t care about those things: You are annoyed by their shoes. “Your shoes are in the floor again.” “Clean up your room or at least shut the door so I don’t have to see it.”
 - They did not care about Jesus’ tomb because Jesus was not there anymore. He was alive.
- The earliest Christians believed Jesus rose from the dead. That’s not something that got slipped in their later by people trying to beef up Christianity.
- And that gave them a joy that turned Jesus’ death into triumph and was willing to face their own death. They had a joy that death and deprivation could not touch or take away.
- They had certainty. What is your certainty in? I have staked my hope in that Jesus rose from the dead. If you are not a follower of Jesus, you have staked your hope in the fact that He is not. You say, “Are you 100% for sure?” In one sense, no. I can’t guarantee you that my whole consciousness is not the dream of a butterfly. (I’ve seen “the Matrix.”) But I can tell you that the evidence is enough to convince me to stake my life on it.

2. Hope

- In two ways.
- He gave them a picture of the creation they were headed to...
 - His resurrection showed them creation at it’s fullest. He could be touched. He could eat fish. But he could beam into rooms.
 - I’ve told you throughout this series that Jesus was more alive after the resurrection, not less alive. All that we love down here is a pale reflection that we get to experience a resurrection version of up there.
 - If Jesus’ resurrected body could eat fish but pass through walls, what does the resurrected Alps look like?
 - Heaven is not whisking us off into the clouds or Nirvana. Jesus said it was a new heavens and a new earth. A resurrected one.
 - Down here you have 5 senses: taste, smell, touch, sight, hearing. Maybe there you’ll have 100. Imagine trying to describe light to someone who has never had eyes. Paul says “Eye has not seen and ear has not heard...” I take that to mean you don’t have the sensual capacity to understand what God has prepared!
 - That gives hope to people in pain or deprivation, like Joni Eareckson Tada. The blind will see. The lame will walk. The lonely will have companionship. The poor will abound. The good is coming!
- The other way He’s giving them hope is by showing them that there’s a purpose in their pain
 - Remember it says He showed them His hands and His feet? Jesus’ crucifixion was when life seemed most out of control. If there were ever a time that the bad guys won... but it was all part of God’s perfect plan.
 - God says that He uses even your pain as part of His plan. Romans 8:28. That gives you hope!
 - There are 3 kinds of movies: First, there are movies with bad endings. Second, movies with good endings. I like movies with good endings. When you have one of these movies with a bad ending, I always feel like, “I want my money back” (critics are like, “oh, it’s so real to life.” I know, my life has got enough depressing stuff. If I’m going to pay \$20, I at least want to feel good when I leave. I can stay out here and be depressed for free.”
 - Then there are movies with good endings where the bad things that happen actually create the good ending.
 - Signs by M. Night Shamamalyan. Feel like I’m speaking in tongues when I say his name.

- The best stories are those where the bad things somehow are part of the great conclusion at the end. And in that time all the pain we lived with is swallowed up in something beautiful.
- Remember the phrase: “Disbelieve for joy”? Too good to be true. What if you could see that just like God was working through Jesus’ scars our eternal good, He was working all the painful things out in your life for a beautiful plan?
- That’s the hope the resurrected, nail-scarred body of Jesus gives to you.
- Question: What’s your hope in? Your ability to make a good life for yourself? Your ability to hold onto it?
 - What happens when life goes wrong? When you get sick and die? Your marriage partner passes away, or leaves you, or disappoints you?
 - There is a verse in Proverbs that says, “Hope deferred makes the heart sick.” That means there is nothing worse than what you’ve built your hope on... they place you depended on for the good life, is taken away and you are left with nothing.
 - These guys anchored their hope in something that disease, death or deprivation could not take away. And it sustained them even in death.
- Where’s your hope?

3. Purpose

- Because of His resurrection, He showed them they did not have to be on an obsessive quest to obtain everything down here
 - You remember last week... If the resurrection is true, bucket lists don’t matter that much... because what we miss out on down here we get a better version of up there. Our refusal to believe that keeps us from being able to live like true disciples, because we are so obsessed at what they are missing out on.
 - I’ve got to get married... only one shot.
 - I’ve got to see the Alps...
- Obtaining everything down here is not essential.
- But people do matter:
 - Interesting thing about Jesus’ resurrection: His followers recognize Him, but not at first.
 - When Mary, a close friend of His, saw Him in the garden, she didn’t recognize him.
 - Here, at first, they “thought they saw a spirit.”
 - In Jesus’ resurrection appearances, He usually has to say, “Hey, it’s Me.” And then they are like, “Oh yeah!”
 - What’s going on with that? There’s a certain “graduation” or “flowering” in the resurrection that has continuity with the past, but so much more.
 - I think my daughters are the most beautiful people in the world. I can see beautiful women in them... (I’m with my daughter at the playground and I see it happen. Mean girls...) I see their beauty in them, but I don’t quite know what it will look like. Imagine I was separated from my 3-year old daughter, Ryah, for 20 years... thought she had died. 20 years later she comes up to me—this beautiful, articulate, young woman comes to me, and she says, “Do you know me?” I might say, “I’m sorry. I don’t.” Then she says, “Daddy.” And then it hits me. And I see in her the little girl I knew as a 3 year old. And I say, “I knew it. I always knew you could be like this.”
 - It will be that way in the resurrection. You’ll see people and you’ll say, “I knew it. I always knew you could be like this. I saw little flashes of this in your best moments, but only little flashes and ONLY in your best moments.”

- What we invest in people's lives right here and right now matters! We are watering the seeds that will flower into the most beautiful Christ-likeness.
- This is what was behind that great passage in C. S. Lewis' sermon *The Weight of Glory*:
 - "It is a serious thing... to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree, helping each other to one or other of these destinations. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no 'ordinary' people. You have never talked to a 'mere mortal.'... It is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub and exploit -- immortal horrors or everlasting splendors. This does not mean that we are to be perpetually solemn. We must play. But our merriment must be of that kind (and it is, in fact, the merriest kind) which exists between people who have, from the outset, taken each other seriously." **C. S. Lewis**
- Bucket lists don't matter, but people do. So we take them seriously.
- People all over the world matter. Vs. 47, He lifts their eyes to the nations. This Gospel must be preached to all nations. All people must be called to repentance and receiving this gift of forgiveness. They only get one shot!
 - God has made all people of one blood; they are all alike made in His image. This Gospel was not just for Jews. It was for all the people in all the nations. It is not just for us. The people in Unreached People Groups around the world, it is for them. They are made in the image of God like we are. Jesus loves them like us...
 - The HOPUD. Some of them have lived all their lives in situations where they have not felt love. But they are loved by God. This message has to get to them, and we've only got one shot to do it.
- Summit, people from our generation who die without hearing about this Gospel will never get another chance.
- **This generation of Christians is responsible for this generation of souls, all over the world.**
- Which means that our bucket list ought to be comprised primarily who only have one shot to hear the Gospel.
- These guys had a joy that came from knowing that Jesus had an eternal purpose and that they were part of it.
- **Question for you: Do you have that sense of purpose? Is your life really mattering for eternity?**

4. Presence

- 3 last things He did there:
 - **Shows them His hands and feet:** His eternal, undying love for us. The resurrected body of Jesus still had those scars. It will forever have those scars; a permanent reminder to them and to us of how much God loved us, and how far He went to save them.
 - **Promises them the Holy Spirit:** Which was His presence in their hearts always until we see Him face to face.
 - **Eats with them** (Twice in Luke 24... that's a lot for one chapter. Jesus' few last scenes on earth and both times He's eating with them. One of the reasons I love Jesus.) Eating is a sign in Jewish culture of intimate fellowship. Scholars say these scenes are instructive for the church, giving us a picture of communion. The early church's worship services were

dominated by communion. Eating with Jesus, remembering His intimacy with us and fellowship with us).

- Their joy flowed out of His presence with them. The God who created heaven and earth, who had left heaven to come for them and die a bloody, gruesome death to save them, and still had scars in His hands and feet to prove His love for them, that God was always with them, now living inside them.
- That presence was with them. And it was satisfying to them.
 - They would say things like, “The Holy Spirit fills our hearts with the love of God” (Romans 5:5) and teaches us to rejoice in Him in all things (Philippians 4:4); “We have an eternal inheritance, imperishable, uncorrupted, unfading, reserved in heaven for us.” (1 Peter 1:4) and “if God be for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31).
- Now, you seek a presence in your life. Something that will fill your life with satisfaction and joy. What are you seeking it in?
 - Some of you have sought it in marriage—many of you got married thinking that you’d marry that perfect companion and you’d ride blissfully off into the sunset with happiness and joy. But you are disappointed. That’s because you were looking to marriage for something only God can give. **The arms you sought in romantic love were His arms.**
 - The thrill you sought in drugs was in His presence.
 - The security and significance and soul delight you sought in money was found in Him.
 - **If we find in ourselves a desire that nothing on earth can satisfy, the only explanation must be that we were made for Someone who is not part of this world!**
- The disciples, from this point on, would, in many ways, have hard lives. Read Acts. They are shipwrecked, beaten, despised, lied about, mistreated. But they had a joy that amazed everyone.
- Do you have that kind of joy?
- What is your joy dependent on? The right circumstances? Owning this? Accomplishing this? Being with *this* person?
- **Your ability to have joy in all things is the measure of how much you understand and believe the Gospel.** If you knew the treasure of the Gospel, even when other parts of life go wrong, you are not devastated, because you have something better than life.
 - **Somebody punches you in the face.** Nothing happy about that. But if you knew how much Jesus had forgiven you of, you are able to maintain joy even in the midst of a bloody nose because Jesus’ forgiveness is a greater treasure to you. You don’t lose your temper because you have joy in God. Your problem is not in your ability to control your temper, your problem is in how little Jesus and His forgiveness matter to you.
 - **Your stocks crash.** Nothing joyful about that. But if you knew how much Jesus had forgiven you of, you are able to maintain joy even in the midst of an economically tough time because Jesus’ forgiveness is a greater treasure to you.
- **Your ability to have joy in all things is the measure of how much you understand the Gospel.**

Conclusion:

Again, the disciples are going to become pretty unbelievable people. They are joyful, bold, zealous people. But they didn’t start that way. They were selfish, scared, unbelieving.

Their joy, boldness and zeal were the byproduct of anchoring their lives in the resurrection of Jesus.

Where do you find certainty? Hope? Purpose? Presence? The disciples are not different than you. They had simply anchored their lives in something that gave them joy and boldness in all things.

Where do you anchor yours? My hope is built on nothing less, than Jesus blood and righteousness...

He is the only Rock you can build your life on that can never be moved.

Bullpen:

- He fulfilled the desire of their hearts by eating with them and promising them the Holy Spirit.
 - He ate with them. Eating was a sign of intimate fellowship. And He promised to come back for us one day, and in the mean time, He would send the Holy Spirit to come and live in us.
 - A lot of us growing up had animage in our minds of finding someone who would make all our dreams come true. We'd ride off into the sunset and be happy forever.
 - Our problem was when we grew up we tried to marry that person. And they didn't deliver. Most people are unhappy in marriage because you pinned so much to them. They were supposed to make you happy.
 - No one on earth can do that. No one except one. Jesus is that one you were created for. The arms you sought in romantic love were His arms. The thrill you sought in drugs was in His presence. The security you sought in money was found in Him.
 - He's the God you've sought in vain everywhere else.

A few things you notice about the resurrected Jesus:

- He eats
- He has supernatural power
- They kind of recognized Him, but not at first. "Thought they saw a spirit." Characteristic of resurrection appearances: "It is I."
- Imagine I hadn't seen my daughter for 20 years... I would say, "I knew it. I always knew you could be like this."
- The seed is there
- In the resurrection, you're going to see people
- Two implications for you
 - People matter: C.S. Lewis
 - You don't have to get it all now
- He has the wounds

He blessed them

Worship: Luke has saved this until the end

Joy;

Obedience;

Mission