

IV. Thy Word is Truth in Biblical Perspective
The Supremacy and Sufficiency of God's Word
"Thy Word to the World"

Luke 24

Dr. Harry L. Reeder III

February 15, 2015 – Morning Sermon

We will start looking in Luke 24 which is the wonderful account of the day of resurrection and our Lord's ministry after the resurrection. I want to start by reading this encounter Jesus has with two disciples on the Road to Emmaus. This takes place on resurrection day. Luke 24:13-35 says [13] *That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, [14] and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. [15] While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. [16] But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. [17] And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. [18] Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" [19] And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, [20] and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. [21] But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. [22] Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, [23] and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. [24] Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." [25] And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! [26] Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" [27] And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.*

[28] So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, [29] but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them. [30] When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. [31] And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. [32] They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" [33] And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, [34] saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" [35] Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

The grass withers, the flower fades, God's Word abides forever, by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

This is a wonderful, insightful text on the resurrection of Christ. I'm going to focus on a small part of it in this study. I will be going back to this text in another study

but there is one simple thing I want to draw from this text. In this next week we'll be celebrating our 50th mission's conference here at Briarwood and only five years ago we were celebrating our 50 years of jubilee as a church. Briarwood started in 1960 and it was a wonderful time of celebrating God's goodness and renewing our commitment. Our vision became re-embraced somewhat. We continue with our mission of for God's glory we are committed to equipping Christians to worship God and reach Birmingham to reach the world for Christ. Now our vision for moving forward is for coming generations Briarwood desires to be a Christ-centered, Gospel-driven, Spirit-filled equipping church where every member is a minister and every member is a missionary.

Now five years later we are celebrating our jubilee of mission's conferences. That doesn't mean in the first five years that Briarwood wasn't committed to missions, we certainly were, but there was a sense of a value of taking a couple of weeks and focus our commitment on what has become a legacy ministry at Briarwood and that is world missions. We focus upon this and introduce faith promise giving at Briarwood. We have been able to multiply this in many churches and out of that commitment God has been gracious to bless this congregation with extraordinary things. Literally thousands of missionaries have been supported. Hundreds of our sons and daughters have gone to take the Gospel from Birmingham to the world. There have been untold financial resources. During the conference there will be some amazing statistics that will be shared to show what this church has done. I praise the Lord for what He has done in this congregation and this cause of International world missions.

We want to continue that faith promise and when we talk about faith promise we are saying 'God we believe from Your Word and from what You are going to do in us and what You do in us we promise will get through us.' When people hear faith promise they tend to immediately go to finances and rightly so but also think about your children. Will you by faith promise the Lord that if He calls your children to serve Him in vocational pioneer missionary work that you'll be ready to send them? By faith I promise if you call me I'll go. Some of you are thinking you're too old. I don't really care how old you are and let me tell you what the Bible says about retirement. The Bible doesn't say anything about retirement. If He calls you go and if you're at the retirement age you won't even have to raise support because you already have you're golden parachute. God has something for you to do anywhere He wants you to be.

We want you to by faith undergird with prayer because for us to do world missions there has to be praying, going, and giving. So faith promise is you'll go if He wants you to go and if you're not sending us He'll be sending other people so we'll pray for those He is sending. We'll not only pray for them but give beyond our tithe. My wife and I do this every single year and it's been a great blessing for us for over three decades now. We call this systematic, sacrificial and supernatural. Systematic is here is our tithe and then our first beyond that is systematically and sacrificially what can we give and or do this year that we can give up and sacrifice for world evangelism. Then we say supernaturally what is it we believe that You are going to give to us that we sense is coming and when it comes we'll give it to world evangelism. We will arrive at that figure as we do every single year and two Sundays from now we'll make that commitment along with many of you. I am praying that 100 percent of our congregation will participate at whatever level the Lord leads, big or small.

Why do we do this as a church? The mission's committee has decided on a theme for faith promise and it is, Thy Word for the world. They are trying to fit this in with our ministry theme for this year of Thy Word is Truth but there is even something more profound than that underneath. If I say 'Thy Word for the world' you might then say to me shouldn't it be Christ for the world or the Gospel for the world. Who is Jesus? You have to go to the Word to find that out. So you can't take Christ to the world until the Word tells you who Christ is to take to the world. The Gospel to the world? What's the Gospel? It is something so unique no other religion has this message. We have this interesting, glorious, unique message that salvation is a purchased gift from God which He freely accomplished through His Son, Jesus Christ and that's the Gospel message. Amazing love, how can it be, that thou my God, should die for me? We found this out in His Word, the Word of God.

We want people to come to Christ and how do they come to Christ? They come to Christ by faith. How do they come to faith? Faith comes from hearing the Word. So our mission's committee has made an amazingly, insightful, appropriate statement about Thy Word because it's the Word that defines Christ whom we preach. It is the Word that defines the Gospel. It is the Word that tells us to go. Why go to the world and give our sons and daughters or ourselves or our prayer time or our finances? It is because the Word of God has given us the call of the Gospel of the Kingdom to the world. That's why churches that have inadequate views of God's Word don't have Gospel missions. Once you lose the Word you lose all reason for world missions.

So I'd like to take this text in Luke 24 and show you a couple of things from it. Luke 24 is basically outlining the resurrected Christ and His initial ministries on the first day of His resurrection. He'll be on the earth for forty more days. Luke focuses on the first day of His resurrection and the encounters of Jesus and then in the last couple of verses of the chapter he fast forwards to forty days later to the ascension of Jesus. Luke shows Jesus' encounter with Mary, with Peter, and in the afternoon on the first day He has an encounter with two disciples on the road to Emmaus. These two were bewildered, unbelieving and discouraged. Jesus says they were slow of heart. In other words they were depressed and confused.

Here was the One they thought was the Messiah yet He died on a cross, was buried and now on the third day we have these women telling us that He has resurrected. We don't really know what to believe. By the time Jesus leaves them what did they say? "Did not our heart burn..." What got them from a slow heart to a burning heart? This is what they say themselves. Luke 24:32 says [32] *They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?"* What did He do? Luke 24:25-27 says [25] *And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! [26] Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" [27] And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.*

Now there is going to be another encounter so let's pick up where we left off. We are now back in the Upper Room along with these two disciples, the women and other disciples. Luke 24:36-40 says [36] *As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you!" [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.” [40] And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.

I want to stop here for a minute. I had two wonderful seminary professors, Dr. Henry Krabbendam and Dr. Sinclair Ferguson and when they showed me what I’m about to show you, I can’t tell you how many times I had read this before and never saw it. The disciples still had doubts. Luke 24:41-53 says [41] **And while they still disbelieved for joy 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.**

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

(Now fast forward forty days later.) [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. [52] And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, [53] and were continually in the temple blessing God.

They went from disbelieving joy to worshipping joy. He went to the cross, was buried and this is the third day. He has risen. The reports are leaking back to them that Jesus has risen. Now all of sudden there He is right there in the Upper Room. Can you imagine the joy that filled them? Their Savior was back in front of them yet they were wondering ‘is this really Him?’ This reminds me of a time I was witnessing to one of my professors at East Carolina. As I was witnessing he said “Let me kind of help you here.” He gave me a book to liberate me from this myth in a resurrected Jesus and the book was titled The Passover Plot. Basically the plot was that at most the disciples hallucinated. I was even smart enough to say “You mean all these guys went and died for a hallucination? This isn’t something new because even the disciples themselves thought they were hallucinating. They thought about this long before you did.” Then Jesus ministered to them.

Jesus dealt with them to affirm the reality of the resurrection by doing two things. Number one He pastorally shepherded them. He is going to move them from disbelieving joy to worshipping joy. Do you think I’m a ghost? Look at Me. Watch Him increasingly assuage them and shepherd them. Touch Me. Can you touch a ghost or a spirit? His next step was to meet and eat. They gave Him some broiled fish and that’s why I know there were women in the Upper Room. I know men can cook but not so that you would want to eat it. I can just see them watching Jesus eating that fish and enjoying it. Ghosts don’t do that. See My feet, My hands and the marks. Touch them. So He shepherds them through their disbelieving joy. That hasn’t gotten rid of it yet.

Here is the miracle of the resurrected Christ and then He goes from Pastor Shepherd to Pastor Teacher. For three and a half years I have prepared you for this moment. I constantly told you I was going to Jerusalem to be put to death and rise on the third day. I even had to tell Peter to get behind Me Satan because he didn’t believe it. By

the way it didn't start with My teaching you. Let Me take you back to the first author of Scripture, Moses, the Psalms, the Prophets for all of them were there to teach about Me. They all taught that I was to suffer, die and be raised on the third day. All of those sacrifices, promises, offerings and prophecies have already been given to you. The Messiah coming to die an atoning death is all over now for that is what you saw three days ago.

That same Word now tells you to go and proclaim it to all the nations. That same Word tells you what to proclaim to all the nations. It is forgiveness of sins for those who believe and repent and come to the King. That same Word tells of the promise of the Father. They probably thought how could we be effective witnesses of this and how would they go to all the world. In the Word the Father has already promised you the Holy Spirit. The same One that is opening your eyes, mind and heart while I open the Scriptures is the One who will be upon you with power. This is going to so move Luke that what He is doing is setting up volume two which is that powerful witness going to all the nations – to Jerusalem (Acts 1 through 8), the Judeans and Samaritans (Acts 9 through 12) and to the utter most parts of the world (Acts 13 through 28). Now they are marveling in joy and worshipping, no longer disbelieving. Why? The Word has come. Faith has come by hearing. They no longer have disbelieving joy but worshipping joy.

So here is the takeaway. We can take the Word of God to the world and not take Christ and His Gospel, but we cannot and in reality we would not take Christ and the Gospel to the world without the Word of God and the Spirit of God. There are people who can take the Word of God and misrepresent it, twist it, misuse it and deny its message but you cannot take Christ and the Gospel to the world without taking the Word of God. All you have to do is look in this text. How did they move from disbelieving joy and marveling to believing and worshipping joy? The Pastor Shepherd opened the Scriptures for them and the heart was now inflamed because the mind was being informed from the Word of God.

I would like for you to consider these four things from the text. The first thing is the Word of God by the power of the Spirit of God defines the ministry of Christ for the Gospel. Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets He explained to them that the Christ had to die an atoning death, would be raised on the third day and the Word of God had defined this moment. What you thought three days ago was a tragedy was a triumph for it was the fulfillment of everything that had been promised in the Promised One.]

Secondly, He then from the Word of God defined the message of Christ and the Gospel for it is the preaching of the Good News that you can be forgiven of your sins if you will believe and repent in Jesus Christ. We can send here from Birmingham, missionaries out into the world with this unique message, not get religion but Jesus has come to get you. He has paid for your sins on the cross and that's what makes sense of the Bible and the Bible makes sense of what He did on the cross. Now the Bible defines it as Good News and the message you proclaim to the nations.

Thirdly, He defined the mission for Christ and the Gospel. I'm going to come back but I'm not coming back until this Message goes to all the nations. Your mission is to send the proclamation of this Gospel. I want to say I'm very grateful for the diligence of our Great Commission, our world mission's team for when you make that faith promise commitment prayerfully, financially and personally, this team has gone to great links to make sure that is exactly what we're doing. That's what we're doing in sending

out the Gospel of the proclamation through evangelism, discipleship, church planting and church revitalization to all the kingdoms of this world. This is our mission and we're committed to this. Do Gospel deeds need to go with this? Absolutely, we'll dig wells but our mission is to get this Message proclaimed to all the world. It is that you can be redeemed and saved from your sins. We will send out so that this Gospel message can reverberate throughout all the world.

Fourthly, we also have the means of Christ and the Gospel defined and that's the power of the Holy Spirit. So let me bring this to a close by asking you two questions. First, if you had a choice between Jesus or the Holy Spirit what would you choose? I know you want to answer what makes heaven heaven and what makes heaven heaven is when Jesus says "I go to prepare a place for you so that where I am you may be also." We want to be with Him but for right now would you choose Jesus or the Holy Spirit? Jesus would tell you 'I go away so that I can send the Holy Spirit to you for its better for you than even with Me here.' When the Holy Spirit comes Jesus comes right to the heart of every single one of us. He says "I will clothe you with power from on high. I will come to you and with you by Holy Spirit." Therefore until Jesus comes back and we have a new heavens and a new earth, as much as I love Jesus and want to be with Him, I need Holy Spirit and the power to know Him, serve Him and to proclaim this Message and mission.

The second question is if you had your choice between a real life miracle of perhaps seeing someone being raised from the dead or a sermon faithful to the Word of God exalting Christ, which would you choose? They had miracles in front of them, the resurrected Jesus but they were slow of heart, disbelieving. What turned a slow heart to a burning heart and disbelieving joy to worshipping joy? He opened the Scriptures to them and Holy Spirit spoke to them. That is the joy every time a sermon is preached. This is God's voice for His people. That's the frustration of every sermon preached by every preacher for you know your inadequacy and you know you can open the Scriptures but you can't open mind and heart. That's why you need Holy Spirit.

This is what we are here for. It is not to send miracles around the world. God can be pleased to do it if He sovereignly desires but it's to send the Word to the world, proclaiming Christ and the Gospel to all the nations. In the next few weeks at our mission's conference we'll have the opportunity to embrace it personally because the Word has opened our hearts and minds and we have heard the call of the Kingdom. Now we are ready to go. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together in Your Word. Thank You so much for the clarity of Your Word as it defines who Jesus is and it defines what He has done for this was no tragic death but a triumphal death and resurrection. It established the Message for the Word defines the message of forgiveness of sins in Jesus' Name. The Word defines our mission to proclaim it to the nations and the Word gives us the promise of the power to do that through Holy Spirit who is poured out upon every believer as we are baptized into Christ by His presence and sealed in Him. Now Father, thank You for Your Word that has come to us, now in these next few weeks help us to understand how we will send that Word to the world and how every one of us can participate – going, sending, praying, giving – by faith, that the One who fulfilled His

promise for us, we now promise to send the Word of His glorious saving grace to the world, resting in the Holy Spirit, who will use our going, praying and giving in Jesus' Name, Amen.