



First Baptist Church Selmer

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE • THE ASCENSION • LUKE 24:49-53 • 4/30/2023

MAIN POINT

As Jesus ascended into heaven, He blessed His followers to carry out His kingdom purposes.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

How many times have you moved in your lifetime?

Has someone else's move been as difficult for you as your own move? How did your life change when that person moved away?

It can be difficult when someone we love moves away. Even when we are happy about another person's new opportunity, we find ourselves sad thinking that our own lives will not be the same. Luke's Gospel account ends with Jesus blessing His disciples and ascending to heaven before their eyes. What a range of emotions Jesus' disciples must have felt! Because of Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and ascension, their lives would not be the same, and neither are ours.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ LUKE 24:49.

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." (ESV)

What does Jesus promise in verse 49?

How does that affect the church's ability to fulfill this mission?

What has changed about the church's mission since Jesus' original charge to the disciples?

The disciples knew the mission, were trained for the mission and had been given their marching orders but one thing remained undone. Jesus tells His disciples that they would need the power of the Holy Spirit in order to fulfill the mission. The mission is too big and too difficult for His disciples to complete in and of themselves. But... the power of the Holy Spirit was coming.

The directive to proclaim repentance through forgiveness remains relevant for Christians today. Your experience with a resurrected Christ and empowerment through the Holy Spirit propels you to be on mission for God.

| ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ LUKE 24:50-53.

50 "And he led them 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 worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, 53 and were continually in the temple blessing God."
(ESV)

Read Acts 1:8. What was the content of Jesus' blessing to the disciples?

What does the phrase, "While He was blessing them," indicate to you about the scene that took place? What might Jesus have wanted to communicate to the disciples and to us in continuing to bless them as He ascended into heaven?

From verse 52, what was the mood of the disciples at this point? Why?

In verse 49, Jesus instructed His followers to remain in Jerusalem until they received what the Father promised. Jesus had promised His disciples earlier that when He went away, He would send another Helper, the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17; 16:7). This promise was realized on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), but the end of Luke's Gospel describes how the disciples lived in the meantime. The disciples returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and they spent their time of waiting, worshiping God, and gathering in His presence. From their example, we see that waiting on God is not passive; rather, waiting is an active pursuit of listening for God. We must posture ourselves to listen by creating space to hear from God and seeking Him out in prayer.

What important truths do we learn from waiting? What does it teach us to do or believe? How does it shape our character?

Is it possible to follow through on Jesus' mission to proclaim forgiveness to all nations if we fail to take time to listen and pray? Why or why not?

What does a failure to listen to God and wait for His direction reveal about a person's belief in or relationship with God?

Learning to wait on Jesus as He leads us is a difficult but essential lesson to learn as His disciples. Even when the wait is difficult, we can trust that God is working His plan for our lives and that His timing is better than our own. Through His life, death, resurrection, and ascension, Jesus proved Himself trustworthy.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

What blessing is Jesus ordaining over your life today?

How should this knowledge change the way you approach each day?

The disciples didn't wait alone; they waited together. Like everything else in the Christian life, it is important that we link together in the waiting. As a group, what should we pray for as we wait for Jesus' return?

PRAYER

Thank God for His blessing on your life through the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ and the indwelling of His Spirit. Ask Him to help you wait and watch for Him each day as you join Him in His kingdom purposes.

COMMENTARY

| LUKE 24:49-53

24:49 OT passages that clearly prophesy the suffering of the Messiah are Ps 22 and Isa 53. A key OT passage for Messiah's resurrection, cited several times in the NT, is Ps 16:10. Significant OT passages that Jesus may have had in mind about repentance... proclaimed... to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem are Isa 2:1-4 and 49:6. Luke 24:47 is Luke's version of the Great Commission (Mt 28:19-20; Mk 16:15; Jn 20:21-22; Ac 1:8). These verses echo Ac 1:4-8. Since Luke wrote both this Gospel and the book of Acts, he skillfully intertwined the conclusion of his first volume with the beginning of his second volume. The city refers to Jerusalem.

24:50-51. Bethany was located just over the Mount of Olives, about two miles from Jerusalem. Acts 1:12 specifies that the ascension of Christ occurred at the Mount of Olives.

24:52-53. As Jesus had requested (v. 49), the disciples returned to Jerusalem and stayed there until the events of the day of Pentecost (Ac 2). Although at least some disciples were continually in the temple complex praising God during that time and later (Ac 2:46; 3:1), it should not be assumed that all of them were always there. Acts 1:13-14 also speaks of the apostles, some of the women disciples, and Jesus' brothers (the sons of Joseph and Mary) being "continually united in prayer" in an upper room in Jerusalem. Such devotion to prayer was a fitting prelude and precondition to the wonderful things God would do through Christ's earliest messengers. Christ's church was set to explode onto the scene as a beacon of light and hope in a spiritually dark world.