

# Everything's Ready

## Luke 24:36-53

**Series:** The Climax of the Cross (Luke, Spring 2020)

**Preaching Date:** April 19, 2020

**Worship:** King of the Nations

**Key Sentence:** We have been given everything we need to live as Christ's people in the world.

**Outline:**

I. A Risen Lord (Luke 24:36-43)

II. A Clear Mission (Luke 24:44-49)

III. A Blessed Hoped (Luke 24:50-53)

**Luke 24:36-53** As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you!" <sup>37</sup>But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. <sup>38</sup>And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? <sup>39</sup>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." <sup>40</sup>And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. <sup>41</sup>And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" <sup>42</sup>They gave him a piece of broiled fish, <sup>43</sup>and he took it and ate before them.

<sup>44</sup>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." <sup>45</sup>Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, <sup>46</sup>and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, <sup>47</sup>and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup>You are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup>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."

<sup>50</sup>Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them.

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## Everything's Ready Luke 24:36-53

Thomas Chalmers, a 19th century theologian is said to have said: “The grand essentials of life are something to love, something to do, and something to hope for.” Ben Patterson took that thought and wrote a book, “The Grand Essentials” about worship, work, and hope. “With worship, work, and hope,” he said, “life becomes meaningful.” The end of Luke’s Gospel reflects this same kind of threefold pattern. Luke 24:36-53 shows that the grand essentials of the Christian life are a foundation on Christ, a mission to serve Christ, and a blessed hope in Christ. With these things we live meaningfully as Christ’s disciples. So as this gospel ends, we’re left with everything we need for a meaningful life: a risen Lord, a clear mission, and a blessed hope.

Look first at our risen Lord. Luke 24:36-43 *As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, “Peace to you!”* <sup>37</sup>*But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit.* <sup>38</sup>*And he said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?”* <sup>39</sup>*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.”* <sup>40</sup>*And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.* <sup>41</sup>*And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?”* <sup>42</sup>*They gave him a piece of broiled fish,* <sup>43</sup>*and he took it and ate before them.*

We talked last week about the encounter two disciples had with Jesus, first on the road to Emmaus, then in their home. They knew Jesus as he opened Scripture to them, and then revealed himself to them. They ran back to Jerusalem and found the eleven disciples gathered, rejoicing because Peter had seen the risen Lord. They then told the eleven and the others gathered in the upper room what had happened to them. In our verses today, no time has passed since telling that story. They are still talking about this when suddenly Jesus stands in their midst. and he announces himself by saying “Peace be with you!”

This week the two pieces of what it takes to know Jesus are reversed. First comes the personal encounter, then the encounter with Scripture. Luke’s first concern is that his readers see real proof Jesus was raised from the dead, the risen and living Lord. At first the disciples are terrified, thinking he may be a spirit or a ghost. Their culture, like most, had stories and folklore about the spirits of the dead. But this was not a spirit or a ghost they saw. Luke is at pains to show this truth so that any accusation that the resurrection was a spiritual deception or a case of mass hypnosis or wish fulfillment can be ruled out.

Jesus says to them: “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?” Remember, there have already been at least three reports of the resurrection to this group in the upper room. There is the report of the women who were told of the resurrection by angels. There is Peter’s report that he had seen the Lord, and there is the report of the two from Emmaus, who had spent time with Him, They should have known by now that the resurrection was real. But as one commentator said, hearing that someone has risen from the dead, and actually seeing the risen person for yourself are significantly different things.

Jesus, compassionate to them, but caring about our need to believe as well, proceeds to give several simple proofs that he is alive and has risen in a real, material body. First he says: “See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself.” He doesn’t say “Look at the nail scars in my hands, look at those in my feet,” but that is clearly implied, for a hand or a foot by itself will only rarely serve to identify someone, but a hand with a nail scar, a foot with a nail scar, will be clear proof that the one talking to them had been crucified. We know he had these scars. In the Gospel of John he showed them to Thomas. The sight of his hands and feet was proof number one that Jesus had been raised.

Next he says: “Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” Proof number two that Jesus has really been raised: you can touch him. Not just his flesh, but you can feel the bones inside. We had a baby doll at some point when the girls were little. It was heavy like a baby and had a what felt like a skull in it head, and arm bones and leg bones. It was supposed to seem real, but it felt nothing like a real baby. Do a demonstration for yourself: Reach out and squeeze the arm of someone near you. I realize that for those watching alone because of the virus this may not be possible. If that’s true just grab your own forearm. But the rest can squeeze someone else’s forearm, and let them squeeze yours. Is there anything else in the world that feels like a real living person? No. Is there any way that can be faked? Not easily. Jesus was just as real as that person next to you, or as you are.

Notice, how the attitude of the disciples is changing. In verse 37 they are startled and frightened. In verse 38 they are troubled and doubting. But after these first two proofs the light is beginning to dawn, and in verse 41 they can’t believe it because of joy and amazement. Imagine these changes of expression: startled and frightened, troubled and doubting become joyful and marveling.

The third proof that Jesus was really raised from the dead, comes when he asks them “Do you have anything here to eat?” “Uh, yeah. Some of us ordered a pizza a little while ago and we’ve got a couple of slices left over.” Well, it wasn’t pizza, it was fish, which seems to have been the functional equivalent.

Jesus eats it. I don't know that he needed it for nutrition. He was after all raised immortal. But he was still fully human and probably enjoyed it. Luke's point is that he does the things real people do. If you wanted to prove in court that somebody had been alive and healthy at a certain place and time, and you had eleven people who would testify he'd been there, they'd touched him and he'd had some fish, no jury would doubt. Neither should we. The foundation of our faith is Jesus raised from death. Only if he's raised and alive do we have a mission and a hope. "What's your mission?" "Oh I want to tell the good news about forgiveness in Jesus." "Isn't he that dead guy?" "Yeah." "Well, don't bother." "What's your hope?" "Hope of eternal life in Jesus." "Isn't he that dead guy?" "Yeah," "Not much of a hope." The resurrection is foundational.

But what was this physical body like? I bring this up because on one hand we see him touching, being touched, and eating. He's real, physical. But we've also seen him, since the resurrection, disappearing from sight, and appearing inside a locked room. So was this a physical body exactly like the one that died, or was it different? At the least we have to conclude that the resurrected Lord was freer in his use of personal miracles than before the resurrection. But most would say his body was transformed, a glorified body such as Paul talks about in Corinthians: "The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." I believe the body Jesus has, and similarly the bodies we'll have, are renewed in wonderful ways with wonderful capabilities. Same body, new capacities and qualities.

This is important, because the fact of Christ's physical resurrection is foundational to our mission and our hope. As a result, the resurrection has been the subject of many attacks over the centuries. Mike Bauer, who used to be the associate pastor here and planted a church in League City, did seven short videos before Easter addressing the major attempts to explain away the resurrection. It was good stuff and I invited him to our Tuesday devotional to summarize it. Why? Because this truth is the foundation of our faith. In 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians Paul says "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. <sup>18</sup>Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. <sup>19</sup>If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied."

Jesus, our risen Lord, is the foundation of the Christian life, someone to love, someone to be loved by, someone to worship. He also gives us something to do. In this moment Jesus gives the disciples a clear mission. Luke 24:44-49: *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."*

*<sup>45</sup>Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, <sup>46</sup>and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, <sup>47</sup>and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup>You are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup>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.”*

Just as on the road to Emmaus, Jesus opened the meaning of the prophetic Scriptures. We’ve read Luke 18:31 several times now “See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished.” Jesus expands that a bit here, and says everything written about him in the prophets and the law of Moses and the Psalms will be fulfilled. The Jewish Bible, our Old Testament was divided into the law, the writings, and the prophets. Jesus is saying all three parts witness to him.

Jesus shows them from the Scriptures that “the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead.” As I said, I really would’ve liked to hear this teaching. But we can infer some of it from what the disciples later preached. Christ must suffer and be crucified. The passage we so often use, Isaiah 53, is the one that Philip used in preaching to the Ethiopian Eunuch, “He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. <sup>8</sup>By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people?” Isaiah 53 clearly teaches the Messiah’s suffering. So do many other passages, especially Psalm 22, which prophesied the crucifixion and burial in detail.

In Psalms, we find several passages often quoted by the disciples to indicate that the Messiah must rise from the dead. Psalm 16 “You will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.” And passages like Hosea 6:2 convey the idea of resurrection on the third day. “After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him.” These things are found in the Old Testament Scriptures, and Jesus must have explained these to the disciples, because they are among those later used by these same disciples to preach Jesus. There were, of course, many more prophecies than I’ve mentioned and even more than the apostles ended up using, that we have record of. Alfred Eidersheim, in his classic book on Christ in the Old Testament, found more than 400 Messianic prophecies. Now some of these are obscure, but there are at least 100 very clear applications of Old Testament Scripture to Jesus. And the odds of one person fulfilling all these prophecies without being the Messiah sent from God are almost infinitesimal.

But Jesus doesn't only point them back to what has been fulfilled, he also points forward to what will be. Luke 24:47 "Repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Even more prophecies of the Old Testament will be fulfilled, by the disciples. A favorite, which I quote often, is Isaiah 49:6 God says: "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth." The sacrifice, forgiveness, redemption and eternal life found in Jesus is to be made available to all nations.

Sharing this good news about Jesus is the clear mission of the disciples. Verse 48: "You are witnesses of these things," or even "You are to be witnesses of these things." Jesus proved himself to be resurrected, he explained the Scripture and now he expects them to share the message of repentance and forgiveness of sin in his name to all nations. But really he was talking to more than just these few disciples. He was really talking to you. And to me. We have this mission to share with others the good news, the message of repentance and forgiveness of sins. You may remember a Mercedes-Benz ad some years back. It shows their car colliding with a wall during a safety test. Somebody then asks the company spokesman why they do not enforce their patent on the Mercedes-Benz energy absorbing car body, a design copied by other car makers. He replies in clipped German accents: "Because some things in life are too important not to share." That's the way it is with this good news. It's the good news of salvation, the good news of freedom, the good news of peace, the good news of eternal life. The good news of Jesus is too good not to share.

We need to be reminded of this. We ourselves have received the incredible gift of salvation through Jesus. That same gift is the only hope for countless lost and suffering people around us, men, women and children. This coronavirus crisis has made it more obvious than ever to many people that they cannot fully control their own fate. It may have brought people into a more open stance toward things of faith. But how will they hear unless we tell them, unless we witness to the resurrection life and eternal salvation found in Jesus?

But then Jesus gives them a major caution, which also applies to us. He says "don't start right away. You still lack something, the one thing that will make this ministry possible. You lack the Holy Spirit. Verse 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." God's work is done by those who depend on him, who work not in their own strength, but in the strength that He provides. You can't do outreach, you can't fulfill Christ's mission, without the strength and guidance of His Holy Spirit.

If you compare these men to their task, it's obvious. What you have in this room is a motley crew of fishermen and fanatics with little human competence and no influence. They don't have contacts, they don't have degrees, they don't have eloquence, they don't even have courage or strength of conviction. Their task is to spread the good news about Jesus to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem, the place of greatest danger, where his enemies were in control. It's an impossible task. But nothing is impossible with God. If they wait for God the Holy Spirit it will happen. He can do forty impossible things before breakfast.

And He can do it for us. The people around us are not naturally inclined, even at this juncture, to hear and believe the good news. The world system is not set up to honor the proclamation of the unique and risen Lord. We ourselves are filled with fears and doubts, distraction and speechlessness. We are no better equipped than they to change the world, despite our college degrees and years of study. What we need, is the Spirit at work in our circumstances, ourselves, and the minds and hearts of those who hear. The Holy Spirit has graciously agreed to indwell and strengthen all who believe in Jesus, to convict and bring to faith all who are called according to God's good purpose. We need him.

What have we seen? We have someone to love and worship, the risen Christ. We have something to do, a mission to preach Christ to all nations. Jozef Abrman, who we know, lives out this mission. He was born in Czechoslovakia when it was communist ruled. He came to faith as a child. One of those who shaped his heart for sharing Jesus was a crippled, bed-bound young woman named Jane. "Jane was a disciple maker. She was an evangelist. I just loved visiting with her just about every weekend, for years. And I learned how to witness because I heard her witnessing too, and she sent me to do the same. Now when some people came to see her, laying on that bed, they would express themselves like this "Ahh, poor girl." She was bones, just skinny, just bones and skin, but she was full of life. I mean she loved Jesus. She would always tell people 'Don't feel sorry for me. Don't you ever feel sorry for me. I am happy. I am a child of God. I know the meaning of life, and He loves me, I love him, and you need to be saved, people. She just was very confrontational.'" I wish you could hear Jozef's eight minute character sketch. It's great. But the point is that with a foundation in the love of Christ, even with her limitations, Jane had purpose and meaning in life, to share the good news of Jesus.

We have a risen Lord and a clear mission. And we have a blessed hope. Luke 24:50-53, the last verses of Luke *Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. <sup>51</sup>While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. <sup>52</sup>And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, <sup>53</sup>and were continually in the temple blessing God.*

There is no question that Luke is already committed to a second volume for his history, so he only briefly describes the fact of Jesus' ascension into heaven. In Acts he tells us this ascension took place forty days after the resurrection. There Jesus lifted his hands and blessed them. A blessing was typically done when a rabbi or leader was preparing to depart. Just as Isaac blessed Jacob, as Jacob blessed Joseph's sons, so Jesus makes it clear that he is preparing to leave them.

Verse 51 "While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven." The word 'parted from them', 'departed', is the same word used at the Transfiguration when he talked to Moses and Elijah. He departed, as they had discussed, and was taken up to heaven. Luke gives more detail in Acts. Jesus said "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." <sup>9</sup>When he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. <sup>10</sup>And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, <sup>11</sup>and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go."

The significant thing about the ascension of Jesus is the hope it gives. We have hope because the ascension signals the time when the promise of the Holy Spirit will be fulfilled, and we desperately need the promised Holy Spirit, in order to have strength and guidance for the Christian life and mission. But we also have hope because we know Jesus is coming again. "For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever." This is the blessed hope that he gives us, that the angels affirm even at the moment of his departure. Jesus is coming again.

Third, his ascension is also a blessed hope, because of where he is now. He is seated at the right hand of God in the throne of heaven. The New Testament writers tell us wonderful things about what Jesus will do at God's right hand. Acts 2. "Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing." Romans 8 "Christ Jesus is the one who died - more than that, who was raised - who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us." He speaks for us to the Father, affirming our righteousness in Him and bringing our requests and weakness with sympathy.

Ephesians 1 God “put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church,<sup>23</sup> which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.” 1 Corinthians 15 “For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.” Jesus has a wonderful ministry at the right hand of God the Father. He reigns at the right hand of the Father, especially as head of the church, which is his body. And one day he’ll come to complete the victory he’s won for us.

As believers, then, we have tremendous hope, the hope of his return, the hope of his ministry for us now at the right hand of the Father, and the hope of the Holy Spirit within us. The Apostle Peter put it this way: “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In His great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

Again, I can easily think of people we’ve known who have had that living hope. One is Ed Lewis, who went to be with the Lord in 2004. Ed was a faithful member of the church for twelve years, teaching Sunday School, helping us purchase this building, and joyfully loving God and others. He also had a great hope in the return of Jesus and in eternity. After he passed away, suddenly, at the age of 66, we looked at his Bible and things and found all kinds of evidence of his hope. I still get a kick out of how beautifully marked up his Bible was, especially in the Psalms that gave him hope. But the gem that we found was a small piece of paper that said “In death: glorious return to be with the Lord.” It was dated 1977, when Ed was only 40, and it listed the hymns that he wanted us to sing at his homegoing. And we did, believe me we did.

May we have this living hope. Our foundation is Jesus, our mission is to proclaim Jesus, and our hope is in Jesus. What else can explain the fact that those disciples returned from his departure worshiping him, in great joy, continually at the temple, praising God? They had someone to worship. They had something to work for. They had a blessed hope. May it be so for all of us.