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# Knowing Jesus

## **The Mission of Christ**

**Luke 24:36-49**

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**4/28/2019**

**Main Idea: Our experience with a risen Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit propel us on mission with God.**

**Lesson Objective: Rely on the Holy Spirit to empower us to proclaim the gospel.**

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## Introduction

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

Let's reflect on the saying of some of the great men of god who were used lightly by Him:

*"Lord, give me Scotland, or I die."* – John Knox (c.1514-1572), Scottish clergyman and Protestant Reformer.

*"I cared not where or how I lived, or what hardships I went through, so that I could but gain souls for Christ. While I was asleep, I dreamed of these things, and when I awoke, the first thing I thought of was this great work."* – David Brainerd (1718-1747), American missionary to the Native Americans.

*"Lord, give me souls or take my soul."* – George Whitefield (1714-1770), Anglican priest and leader of the "Great Awakening" in Europe and the new American colonies.

*"Give me Lisu converts, and I can truly say I will be happy even in a pigsty."* – J.O. Fraser (1886-1938), missionary to the Lisu people of China.

*"Here let me burn out for God."* – Henry Martyn (1781-1812), missionary to India.

*"I am very tired, but must go on ... A fire is in my bones ... Oh God, what can I say? Souls! Souls! Souls! My heart hungers for souls!"* – General William Booth (1829-1912), British Methodist and founder of The Salvation Army.

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Every generation has its men and women of God who would rather die than miss an opportunity to share the Gospel of God's great love and grace. Probably few of us have shared the desperateness of their conviction—but it may not be because we don't love and care for the lost (though our zeal for reaching them could no doubt be increased greatly). Rather, it may be because we do not share their reliance upon the work of the Holy Spirit through them. Jesus commissioned His church to go into the world with the gospel. As His followers, we are called to tell others what Jesus has done for us. Because we have experienced the resurrected Christ and are empowered through the Holy Spirit, we can boldly take hold of a life lived on mission with God.

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## Comfort

### Luke 24:36-43

*<sup>36</sup> 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. [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#).*

The news of the resurrection had spread around and it seemed that the disciples were trying to process the earth shattering news. Many of the disciples had a first hand experience with the risen Savior, and they were sharing their stories with the others. Suddenly, Jesus appeared to them in order to confirm the resurrection for those to whom he had not yet appeared. Jesus took this moment as an opportunity to give them final instructions. These words would prepare them for the events of the book of Acts, as the disciples preach “**repentance and forgiveness of sins ... to all nations**” in light of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

The disciples were **startled and frightened**, because they thought they were seeing **a spirit** or ghost. They could see with their own eyes that Jesus was standing before them, but they had also witnessed the crucifixion and knew without a shadow of doubt that He was dead. Their present reality was in conflict with their understanding. The only conclusion is that they were seeing

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an apparition, a bodiless being, a ghost. Jesus did not rebuke them but reached out in love to prove that they were mistaken. He proved to them that he truly had a resurrected body by having them look at his **hands and ... feet** and to **touch** him, since **a ghost does not have flesh and bones**. Luke's next statement beautifully expresses their inability to comprehend what was happening. **They still disbelieved because of joy and were marveling**. We typically would phrase it by saying, "It is too good to be true." To further prove that he was not a ghost, Jesus asked for something **to eat** and then ate **a piece of broiled fish ... in their presence**.<sup>1</sup>

Luke's purpose in this account was twofold. One point was proof of Jesus' resurrection. As we followed Luke's account of the resurrection, we saw that Jesus appeared not only to Peter and the two Emmaus disciples, but also to all the disciples at once. Jesus gave them an opportunity to verify for themselves the reality of the resurrection. Thus what was delivered to Luke and what he subsequently passed on to his readers in this "orderly account" (Luke 1:3) came ultimately from the eyewitnesses (1:2) who had personally witnessed the risen Christ (cf. also Acts 1:21–22). Their experience was of such a nature that it could not be doubted, but led to certainty (cf. Luke 1:4).

Another purpose was to demonstrate the physical reality of the risen Christ. What the disciples experienced was not the immortal soul of Jesus or some ghostlike apparition from the realm of the dead. Rather, they experienced the resurrected Christ, and this involved the resurrection of the body. True, Jesus' body was in a sense different. He could disappear and appear at will, but he did possess flesh and bones. For Luke the resurrection was furthermore not

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<sup>1</sup> Mark C. Black, [Luke](#), College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press Pub., 1995), Lk 24:36–39.

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simply a resuscitation of a corpse, but the transformation of Jesus into his eternal state, and this transformed state involved a real body. Whereas Paul in 1 Cor 15:35–50 sought to emphasize the difference between Jesus of Nazareth before the resurrection and the Lord Jesus after the resurrection, Luke sought here to emphasize the similarity. The difference between 1 Cor 15:50 and Luke 24:39 may be more apparent than real. The risen Lord of Luke’s Gospel was, like the risen Christ of 1 Cor 15, different from the Jesus of history and did not possess the flesh and blood of which Paul spoke (1 Cor 15:50). Yet Paul’s risen Lord was, like the risen Lord of Luke 24, also corporeal, for a Pharisee would have regarded a spiritual resurrection of Jesus’ “soul” as a contradiction of terms. The resurrection involved the transformation of the body to its final, eternal state. For both Luke and Paul the resurrection of Jesus was truly a resurrection of the “body.”<sup>2</sup>

**If Jesus could, in His resurrection body, pass through a locked door, why in every Gospel account is the stone rolled away? What does this teach us about Jesus?**

**How would you describe the lives of the earliest disciples after the resurrection? How did the resurrection transform their lives?**

**Why should the resurrection matter to you? How is the resurrection the ultimate proof that God has the desire and the power to make all things new?**

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<sup>2</sup> Robert H. Stein, [Luke](#), vol. 24, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 616–619.

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## Comprehension

### Luke 24:44-48

*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 for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#)*

Once Jesus established that He had risen from the dead, He explained the work of God, how the Scriptures witnessed His coming, and that ministry was crucial for the disciples. He called them to remember His words while He was still with them. In those pre-crucifixion times, Jesus told them what lay ahead for Him. Betrayal, death, burial, and resurrection happened just as He had predicted.

Jesus explained these events as a fulfillment of the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms. All three divisions of the Old Testament (Law, Prophets, and Writings) witnessed to the place of a suffering yet victorious Messiah. Jesus claimed His place as the Messiah by virtue of having fulfilled what the Scriptures promised.

After stating the fact of this fulfillment of God’s plan as announced in the Old Testament, Jesus **opened their minds to understand the Scriptures**. The disciples along with the people of that age had a preconceived idea of what the Messiah should be, and they could not understand the harsh truth that He would

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suffer and die. Jesus reminded the disciples that the Old Testament proclaimed the Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead the third day. This statement summarized the essence of Old Testament teaching in light of Jesus' mission as Savior. He knew that service to God required suffering and sacrifice. God rewarded that service with spiritual victory. Jesus helped the disciples buy into God's perfect will. Now, however, by seeing the risen Savior it made the picture clearer, and they began to grasp it.

Much of Old Testament prophecy had been fulfilled in Jesus, but one great task still remained. Repentance and forgiveness of sins would be preached to the entire world. True repentance speaks not only to turning from sin but also turning to Christ in faith. The preaching of the gospel would proceed in Jesus' name, under and by His authority. His followers would be His representatives, living according to His teachings and bringing others to faith in Him.

Jesus stated the gospel message with striking clarity. Jesus is God sent from God. He suffered on our behalf and rose from the dead. We respond to that truth by repentance; this is our role in salvation. The result of repentance is the forgiveness of sins. That's it! Jesus did all the work for us. Any efforts on our part to earn salvation through guilt or works just complicate the free gift of grace that God extends to us. Jesus specified the disciples' part in carrying out the purpose of God. On the basis of their experience with Him, repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed. Repentance involves a change of mind and attitude toward God. Repentance is changing your thinking, moving from believing the wrong thing to believing the right thing about something else. Repentance is not trying to conjure up the appropriate amount of remorse or trying to will ourselves to be as good as possible to earn our salvation. The "right view" that we are to have in genuine repentance centers on four key

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biblical truths: (1) God is both holy and loving, (2) Sin is evil and destructive, (3) Jesus is the Messiah who paid sin's penalty, and (4) we are guilty and need a Savior. Once we repent of our sins and of our wrong way of thinking, we are forgiven by God and enter into a relationship with Him. As His disciples, we are given a task, which Jesus described in Luke 24:47. It leads to forgiveness of sins and a new life. Telling this truth became the mission of Jesus' disciples.

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. A proclamation indicated a special message to be trumpeted in His name. Jesus' name represented all that He accomplished, especially the cross and resurrection. The preaching of this life-changing work to all the nations stated a radical truth: Jesus came to save even Gentiles. Many Jews considered Gentiles unable to receive God's forgiveness. This mission was to spread from Jerusalem, where the disciples were at the time.

As a result of what they learned from personal experience, the disciples became witnesses of the things they were to proclaim. Life with Jesus qualified the disciples to tell what they experienced in relating to Him. Jesus' disciples became faithful interpreters of Scripture who would communicate it to the world. For this reason, it was of utmost importance that they understood what Scripture said about Jesus. Understanding the Scriptures remains crucial for the future of Christianity today. Bible study is a discipline we must take seriously if we are to carry on Jesus' mission.

**How did Jesus sum up the gospel message?**

**How would you describe repentance to a non-Christian?**

**Why is it important to understand what repentance means?**

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## Clothed with Power

### Luke 24:49-53

*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 And 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. [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#)*

What Luke summarized in these verses involved 40 days of interaction between Jesus and His followers (see Acts 1:3). Jesus spent these weeks after the resurrection preparing His followers to proclaim the gospel. He ordered His followers to stay in the city of Jerusalem until empowered from on high. They received a commission but also needed to be equipped with the main tool necessary to accomplish it. The Holy Spirit was essential to the success of the mission. He promised that He would give them all that they would need, **“I am sending you the promise My Father upon you.”** This promise represented the power of the Holy Spirit (see Acts 1:4,8). The church would still have the presence, power, and guidance of God.

After these instructions, Jesus led them out as far as Bethany, just outside the city of Jerusalem. There He lifted His hands and blessed the faithful. This resembled the priestly blessing that took place after a temple sacrifice. Jesus’ blessing, however, followed His own sacrifice. Possibly this served as a final goodbye. As the blessing continued, He left them and was carried up into heaven. (Acts 1:9-11 provides a fuller description.) His work done, Jesus went

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up into heaven to dwell with the Heavenly Father. The results of Jesus' completed mission on earth, however, never end. That continues through the witness of the church.

The disciples in turn worshiped Jesus. The ascension confirmed for them the divine orchestration of Jesus' life. They bowed to God in recognition of that truth. The disciples returned to Jerusalem with great joy. Just as Jesus' coming produced joy, so did His ascension. The cross created confusion and hopelessness in believers' hearts. After 40 days with Jesus and the experience at His ascension, clarity, and hope returned.

Luke ended his Gospel by returning to the setting of the temple (compare Luke 1:5-23). Now the enlightened followers of Jesus were continually in the temple complex. As Jews, this remained the center of worship for them, so they went there often to meet with God. At the temple, the believers were praising God. They expressed gratitude at the privilege of being involved in God's amazing, continuing work.

**What responsibility did Jesus give to His followers? Was it optional?**

**Why do we often have difficulty carrying out this assignment?**

**What did Jesus promise to give His disciples?**

**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?**

**What would change if we saw ourselves (first and foremost) as those sent by God on His mission?**

**How might we work together to move from an emphasis on once-a-week worship to focusing on a supernatural, daily walk with Christ? How might this affect our ability to advance the kingdom?**