

Witness

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[0:00] Good morning, let me add my welcome to David's. If you don't know me, I'm Daniel, one of the leaders of the church here. We've thought about prayer, we've thought about giving, we've thought about fellowship.

This week we're thinking about this subject, witnessing. Before we dive into this passage and this theme, let's pray together.

Heavenly Father, we thank you so much that you do speak to us through your words. And we pray this morning that you would indeed do that again as we look at this passage and some others and think about this theme of witnessing.

Our Father, speak to us so that we may too speak of you. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, they had witnessed the most extraordinary events. They had seen nails hammered through his hands and his feet.

[1:40] They saw a crown of thorns being placed on his head. They saw him mocked and scorned and spat upon.

They saw him struggling for breath. They saw him breathe his last. They had been witnesses of these things.

He was buried. He was dead. He was cold and lifeless in a tomb. And as they gathered in a room and had heard that some people had seen him, they just couldn't believe it.

He's died. We know he's died. But then suddenly there he was. Standing in front of them in the room.

Standing alive. He was dead. Surely this is a ghost we see. Surely this isn't real.

[2:57] It's their emotions tricking them. Why are you troubled? Why do doubts rise in your mind? Look, see my hands are my feet.

It is I. But they still couldn't believe it. They were too amazed. To believe this could possibly be real. And so they asked them. So he asked them, Do you have anything to eat? And so they found some fish. And he took it. And he ate it.

Ghosts don't eat. He's really alive. Jesus is alive. He has flesh and bones. This is Jesus alive.

Who was dead and now is alive in the room. And the disciples, they have witnessed these things.

[4:00] And that's what we're thinking about this morning. Being a witness of these things. And these disciples were a witness of the Lord Jesus.

His life, his death and his resurrection. Exciting and extraordinary things. And a witness, if I need to tell you, is someone who can testify to something that they have seen.

Someone who can testify to something they have seen. If you were to go to a court trial, they would probably summon the witnesses. Summon people who had seen a crime take place so they could testify about what they've seen.

Or if you were to read a news article, they may interview eyewitnesses of the news in question.

Witnesses testify about something they have seen.

And these disciples in Luke 24, they have seen extraordinary things. And Jesus tells them this in verse 48. You are witnesses of these things.

[5:12] You are witnesses of these things. We're going to see three things this morning, particularly about witnesses.

These particular witnesses in Luke 24. And we'll see how, hopefully, this applies to us today as well. So the first thing we're going to see is that they are witnesses of scriptures fulfilled.

Witnesses of scriptures fulfilled. That's what we see in this passage. So verse 48, Jesus says, You are witnesses of these things. Well, what things?

Verse 44, He said to them, This is what I told you while I was still with you. Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms. Right in front of their eyes, scriptures were being fulfilled. scriptures were being fulfilled. Things that God had spoken through hundreds of years, through the centuries.

[6:21] Things that people had longed to see being fulfilled. Were being fulfilled right in front of their eyes in this person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, God made flesh.

Scriptures were being fulfilled. The one who was going to come to rescue Israel and actually even the whole world, as the Old Testament shows us, was standing in front of them in this room in Luke 24.

Scriptures had looked forward to him. Back at the beginning, soon after Adam and Eve sinned, we read this verse in Genesis chapter 3, And I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and hers.

He will crush your head and you will strike his heel. Talking of one who was going to come to crush Satan who deceived Adam and Eve in the garden.

That promised serpent crusher. Right from the beginning of the Bible, we're looking forward to the one who was going to come and crush Satan under his feet.

[7:41] And they are witnesses of these things. Witnesses of these scriptures being fulfilled. God's continued speaking from that moment in Genesis 3.

He continued speaking. He called Abraham and told him that through him and his descendants, all nations on earth will be blessed. And as Jesus says here, they are witnesses of things that must be fulfilled from the law of Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms.

And so as the Bible continues, as Moses comes, as the law comes, we see things that were spoken of there fulfilled in the Lord Jesus.

As the prophets spoke, we see things that they spoke of fulfilled in the Lord Jesus. And even in the Psalms we do. See, that's kind of how the Bible works.

It kind of works a little bit like a puzzle. If you were doing a puzzle and you had all these puzzle pieces and you're trying to work out, where does that bit of blue go? Is it sea or is it sky?

[8:56] Where does it fit in the big picture? You don't quite understand how all these pieces are going to make a big picture. But then you get to the end of the puzzle.

You put the last piece in and it all makes sense. That's why that piece went there. That's why it didn't go down there. Because it's meant to go there.

And the Bible kind of works like that through the Old Testament. It's like we're seeing bits of the puzzle revealed and then in the Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament, we see the things in the Old Testament make sense.

Jesus says to them, you are seeing Scripture fulfilled in front of you. So you read Leviticus, read all about all those sacrifices that needed to be made and you puzzle, why is all this necessary?

What's all this about? And we get into the New Testament, we see that Jesus, he's the Lamb of God who comes to take away the sin of the world. Jesus, the great final sacrifice for sin.

[10:07] Read that famous passage in Isaiah 53, Isaiah the prophet speaking, we all like sheep have gone astray. Each of us has turned to his own way and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

When we read the New Testament, when we read of Jesus on the cross, that verse makes so much more sense. Who's the him who has iniquity or sin laid upon?

It's Jesus. The law of Moses, the prophets speak of him, the Psalms speak of him. So Psalm 22, an example, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

David writes. We think it's just about David, but no on the cross. Jesus says those exact words. The law of Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms speak about Jesus.

Speak about him who would come to suffer and rise from the dead. And then excitingly, as we get into the New Testament, as Jesus, we see, is born into this world.

[11:30] We read in Luke's Gospel, maybe turn there if you would like, to Luke chapter 2, verse 28, we read of a man called Simeon, who was a righteous man, who was told that he wouldn't die until he would see the

Messiah.

Luke 2, verse 28, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, as he has promised in the Scriptures, you may now dismiss your servant in peace, for my eyes have seen your salvation, your salvation, which was spoken of in the Old Testament Scriptures, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel.

Simeon holds in his arms the Messiah, the one the Scriptures spoke of. He sees him. Salvation for the world is going to be found in this one.

And now we're at the end of Luke's Gospel and we see the risen Lord Jesus who has died for sin as the Scriptures foretold and has risen again as Scriptures foretold.

Standing amongst them, Scriptures being fulfilled. And these disciples, they got to be witnesses of the Scriptures being revealed right in front of them as they spent these few years with Jesus.

[13:17] And Jesus has told them these things before, but they've been slow to understand. But now the risen Jesus in all his power, it says in verse 45, he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.

Jesus gives understanding to his disciples about what the Scriptures are speaking of about him. And he says in verse 46, this is what is written. The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day.

And repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations beginning at Jerusalem.

And there he says, verse 48, you are witnesses of these things. Witnesses of what the New Testament talks about, a mystery hidden, but a mystery now revealed in Jesus about how men, women, boys and girls from across the nations can come and find salvation in this long-awaited Messiah.

They are witnesses of these things. They can testify about these things of Jesus that they see happening right in front of them. And we ourselves, we have these Scriptures in front of us too.

[14:49] We kind of get an even fuller picture in many ways. We have the complete Bible in front of us, Old Testament and New Testament. And we ourselves can read it and we can see.

As we read the pages of the Old Testament, we can see how they make sense in light of what we see in the New Testament, in light of what we see in Jesus.

We ourselves are witnesses of Scriptures being fulfilled. We might not be eyewitnesses directly of Jesus physically in front of us, but we read of Him in the Scriptures.

We read reliable, trustworthy accounts of Him, of the Scriptures that speak of Jesus. And we ourselves have come to repent and find forgiveness of sins.

We've heard that message through other witnesses. witnesses. We can testify that these things are true. These things that we see in the Scriptures, we can say they are true.

[16:05] They make sense because of Jesus. So witnesses of Scriptures fulfilled.

Secondly, witnesses who will proclaim. Witnesses who will proclaim remember what a witness is. It is someone who testifies about something they have seen.

That involves speaking. And for these disciples, that means speaking about seeing Jesus. Seeing His death and resurrection, which has happened just as the Scriptures had testified.

right? And this is what Jesus says they must proclaim. Verse 47, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in His name to all nations.

They've got to speak. They've got to tell people from all nations about what they have seen of Jesus and preached this message about repentance, turning around from following sin and self and turning around to follow Jesus and find forgiveness of sins.

[17:33] That's God's plan for the good news that is found in Jesus to be spread to the world.

through these people telling others, through these witnesses telling others. In Acts chapter 1 verse 8 we get similar instructions in Luke 2 volume in the New Testament.

He says, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

This is how God was planning for his message of salvation to be told to the world. Not through Jesus walking about amongst all the nations.

Not through some super television broadcast by Jesus to the whole world. No, through ordinary people like you and me. His plan was to take these disciples, very ordinary men like tax collectors, fishermen, uneducated men to go and take that message that Jesus has died and risen again.

[18:55] That you can find forgiveness for your sins in him. It was for these ordinary people to spread this extraordinary news. That's how the nations were going to hear.

and his plan remains unchanged. Still the whole world hasn't heard of Jesus.

Still there are nations and tribes and tongues which have been unreached. His plan remains unchanged and yet it remains. This is how God intends for his gospel to be made known.

For people to see Jesus, to see what he has done and to tell this message that repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations through people like us, through human beings.

I was thinking of these verses in Romans chapter 10 where it begins. Paul writes, everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

[20:10] And then he says, how do they call on the name of the Lord? How then can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?

And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written, how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.

How can people hear? It's through others telling them. It's like, how could I have possibly known that marmite and peanut butter on toast goes well together unless my wife told me?

It's a great thing, but even more so with the Bible, with the message of salvation. How can people hear unless someone tells us?

Most of us in this room who are Christians will be here because someone has told us the gospel. Someone has told us the good news. Someone has told us about Jesus.

[21:19] And that's what these verses in Romans are about. How can they, Tim Keller helpfully comments on these verses about those who are sent?

It says, how can anyone preach unless they are sent? And Tim Keller says there's kind of two aspects to this, sending, these people that are sent. First is that Christ has sent us authoritative witnesses and teachers, the apostles, whose message we have here in the Bible, who Jesus speaks to here in Luke 24.

The apostles have gone to tell the nations to be witnesses as Jesus commands them. But second, that word sent is likely to also refer to the way Christ, through his church, sends out missionaries preachers and preachers and ordinary Christians into all places and all times to be messengers of the apostolic word.

So we have in front of us the Bible. We have in front of us the apostles and others who have seen the Lord Jesus, who tell us about his message.

church and we, even us as Christians today, we are sent to tell others about this. So in other words, the apostles whom Jesus spoke to in Luke 24, they were sent to be his witnesses.

[23:11] They are not here now, are they, to spread the good news? So we take that task. We have been passed down the batons through generations of Christians to continue that work of witnessing, of making known to the nations the message of Jesus.

And we are witnesses of it, aren't we? We are witnesses of the life transforming power of the risen Lord Jesus who's physically been raised.

We see that here in Luke 24. And we know that reality as Christians in our lives, don't we? We're witnesses of the fact that he does forgive us our sins, that we can have peace with God, of the certain hope that we have of life forever with him.

We are witnesses of these things. And we are witnesses of that work in others, in people we see here around us, we see God's work in them, God's work of grace in other people, in other Christians.

We're witnesses of what the power, the risen Lord Jesus can have on other people. Each one of us is a witness.

[24:41] But we need help. And that's the third thing we see, witnesses who need power. This week in the news, I read on BBC News a report about a US journalist called Jarrett Peton who was an eyewitness to Taylor Swift and her new love interest.

He recorded a four-second clip of Taylor Swift and this guy whose name I've forgotten. He recorded this four-second clip on his phone and he posted it on X, which is what Twitter is now called if you hadn't heard.

And in 24 hours, 15 million people around the world had seen this four-second clip of Taylor Swift and her new love interest. But Jarrett Peton is a man all on his own.

He does not have the power on his own to tell 15 million people. But he does have a phone and phones are pretty powerful.

And he can record this video and the internet is pretty powerful and X or what was Twitter, it is pretty powerful. And so he used those powerful means to spread the words.

[26:07] And 15 million people and probably now even more because it was on the news now know about Taylor Swift and her latest news.

As one person shares the video, people watch and other people share it and they watch and it goes viral. It goes around the world to the nations. nations. And God was choosing in these disciples, in these ordinary bunch of men, these ordinary bunch of men to make his news, the gospel, go viral, go to the nations.

nations. But on their own, they don't have the power to do this. On their own, they're just fishermen, unacademic men.

Think of Peter, just a few days before Jesus rose again. On the night of Jesus' trial, he was kind of standing nearby and keeping himself warm by the fire and he was asked, wasn't he, do you know this man?

Weren't you with him? Three times he was asked, do you know Jesus? And three times Peter said, no. No, I don't. And all three times he denied it, just as Jesus said he would and just as Peter said he wouldn't.

[27:44] How on earth could the nations hear about this message if these men were like that?

Shy, weak, ashamed to know him. And are we much better? I know I'm not. I remember not so long ago seeing some friends in Crawley and really wanting to invite them to an evangelistic course and there seemed to be several occasions where I could have done that and every time I was like, no, I'm too tired to get in a conversation about no, they're going to say no.

So many excuses about sharing Jesus with them. Such an important thing to be doing. we're human, we're weak.

We need help. I know I need help to be a witness of the Lord Jesus. Well, Jesus isn't sending them on their own.

He's going to give them help. Verse 49, I'm going to send you what my father has promised, but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.

[29:18] He is clothing them with power from on high. He's not just giving them a little bit of help over there. He is sending them power from on high, clothing them with it.

He is giving them himself to dwell with them by his spirit. He's giving strength for the weak, courage for the shy, wisdom for the foolish.

God clothes us in power. The Holy Spirit come to dwell within the believer. And if you're in doubt how that could help, you know Peter, that disciple of Jesus who denied him three times, well, on that day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus' church.

Peter was one of those. He was filled with the Spirit and instead of going around denying that he ever even knew Jesus.

Peter, in a city where people had just recently shouted, crucify him, crucify him, where Jesus, the risen one, had left them behind, where religious leaders probably wanted them dead too, Peter stood up and boldly preached of the Lord Jesus.

[30:53] You can read that sermon in Acts chapter 2. It's terrific. Was this really Peter, that man who denied him three times, preaching about Jesus whom you crucified, he said, but God, but death could not keep him?

Well, he did that because he was clothed with power from on high. today. And that same spirit is at work in us today.

Though perhaps we don't see him working the ways we see it on the day of Pentecost, he has no less power to save. He has no less power to use weak, sinful men and women, boys and girls, to use as witnesses of the work of Jesus.

And so in our work of witnessing to others about Jesus, this week, don't look to yourself and to your own strength and abilities.

But look to the Lord for help, the Lord who lives within you by his spirit. Maybe some of us are going to be helping with Cafe Calvary beginning on Friday.

[32:24] Maybe this coming Friday or in future weeks. We want to tell people we want to be good witnesses of the Lord Jesus, but let's not think we can do that on our own.

So remember to pray and depend on the Lord Jesus and the help that he gives us. We could pray as the Apostle Paul asked the Colossians to pray.

The Apostle Paul, like, think of him as such a bold man, courageous man, able to do wonders. And yet even he said to the Colossians, he said, then pray for us too, that God may open a door for our message so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ for which I am in chains.

The Apostle Paul needs to ask for prayer. We need to ask for prayer too. And we need to pray. We need to pray that God may open a door for the good news, for us to tell the message of Jesus Christ.

God of him who died and rose again as the scriptures promised. Him, because of him we can repent, we can turn around and follow God.

[33:56] We can have our sins forgiven. let's pray. Pray that God may open a door for our message, this message, this message of the gospel to us this week.

We might share it with just one person, that would be great this week. Lord, open a door. Why don't we pray that prayer now?

Let's pray. Father, we come to you, human, frail, weak.

We come to you knowing that you have clothed us with power from on high. and by that power we pray that you would help us to be effective witnesses of you and of your work.

And we pray that you would even open doors for us to share that message with someone this week who needs to hear, who needs to hear the good news of salvation.

[35:16] We pray to you that you would work through the cafe as we begin that on Friday, that you would help us to share the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Use us, we pray, as weak as we are, by your spirit, and we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.