

Easter Sunday, Luke 24:36-53

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Preacher: Bing Nieh

[0 : 0 0] Luke chapter 24, verses 36 to 53, if you'll turn there with me. Again, that's Luke 24, 36 to 53.

As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, Peace to you. But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit.

And he said to them, Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? 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. And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, Have you anything here to eat?

They gave him a piece of broiled fish and he took it and ate before them. 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.

[1 : 1 4] Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures and said to them, Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem.

You are witnesses of these things. 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.

And he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting his hands, he blessed them. While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven.

And they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the temple, blessing God. This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God. You may be seated. Well, let me add my greetings to others that have certainly greeted you this morning.

[2 : 2 1] Welcome to Christ Church Chicago. I just want to rush to say thank you to all the musicians and all the children and all those who have contributed hours in preparation for the service.

Thank you. And we are beneficiaries of your labors. Let me just pray for us as we turn to the Bible. Father, you are.

Your son is the living word. And in these moments we pray, these next moments we pray, that we would sense that he is alive.

That he is not only risen from the grave, but it's meaningless unless he's risen in our hearts. And so would the Lord Jesus show himself to reign in us.

For your sake, we ask these things in your son's name. Amen. Amen. I remember the scene vividly.

[3 : 3 2] I was holding a children's book, a Bible, a children's Bible. And as I got to the pages that recounted the death of the Lord Jesus, I read the words to one of my children, and they crucified him.

I looked up, and I don't want to identify the child, but tears running down their face.

For a young child, this could not be. This should not be. The tenderness of a child's heart, the innocence of a child's spirit, the angst to read of a hero fail to triumph.

If you become a screenwriter, the movement of a script is to engage the viewer or the reader, draw various emotions. In the end, you are to reach some sort of resolution.

You and I know protagonists often triumph. Antagonists are vanquished. Great scripts are built off of great heroes.

[4 : 49] You and I have this preconceived idea to assume that life takes on this form. If you were to use the template of Greek literature, it's the form of comedy rather than tragedy.

I don't mean ha-ha comedy. I mean a script that has a happy resolution at the end rather than an insufferable catastrophe. This is how Greeks framed it.

And for some seemingly innate reason, this is how we want to write all of our stories. Perhaps we're conditioned by literature and film.

We somehow want to think that good triumphs in the end. Superheroes save. Good will win.

Hardship will be overcome. And it's incredibly disorienting when antagonists win. When foes triumph and when evil reigns.

[5 : 51] Yet the reality of the arc of the natural human life is not comedy, but tragedy.

Let me say that again. The arc of the natural human life is not comedy, but tragedy.

Earthly discomforts. Heavy inflicted pains. Incurable suffering. Physical sickness. Emotional anguish. Will all, will befall all of us.

And only to be met in the end by death. It will strip us of all dignity. All accomplishments. All acquired wealth.

And separate us from loved ones. It is the ultimate tragedy. And this tragedy is your trajectory.

[6 : 49] This is our universal human fate. Death will claim us.

But on this Sunday. But on this Sunday. I want to highlight for you. A single exception.

Death came to claim. But was disarmed. Evil was enraged and ensued. But it was eradicated. Sin bore down.

But found itself powerless. And defeated. This morning. I want to hold out to you. The risen Lord Jesus Christ.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate. Was crucified. Died and buried. Yet on the third day. He rose. Again from the dead.

[7 : 52] And he is ascended to the right hand. Of God the Father Almighty. And lo and behold. He's coming back. You see the resurrection changed the disciples.

Encountering a resurrected Jesus. Forever marked the disciples. And transformed them for the remainder of their lives. It would alter what they thought. It would change what they did.

It would alter their entire dispositions. Meeting the risen Lord Jesus changed the disciples. Meeting the risen Lord Jesus will change you.

It will change me. So I tagged this sermon. Changed by a resurrection. The resurrection goes beyond a historical event. It's a community shaping event.

It's the most decisive event. In all of Christian theology. Arguably. The Christian community is not one that's merely moral or ethical.

[8 : 56] Certainly it is. The Christian community is not founded upon just healings and exorcisms and miraculous works. Though they are certainly present. The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ is fundamentally at the heart of the Christian faith.

Paul would later write, as a matter of first importance. Christ died for our sins. Was buried and raised. See the resurrection, you might say, was the match that lit the fuse that set off the dynamite of the Christian faith.

And this morning as Marjorie read the account to us. I want to reflect on the resurrection as a transformative event. How does it change you?

How should it change me? Well, there's three ways encountering the risen Lord Jesus will change you. And I'll point those out to you from the outset if you're taking notes.

First, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus will turn you toward the scriptures. Secondly, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus will set you on a mission.

[10 : 06] It will set you on a mission. And lastly, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus will fill you with joy. To put it in an adjectival form.

When you and I truly experience the Lord Jesus, the risen Lord Jesus, we become a people that are scriptural. A people that are missional. And a people that are joyful.

Scriptural, missional, joyful. Our text this morning is very unique. Because it's the way that the Bible records for us how Jesus concluded his earthly mission.

It's the only gospel, Luke, incidentally, that tells us how Jesus left. And before he leaves, he must get a few things done.

Perhaps you know the feeling. You're headed off for vacation. Or it's a few days before the academic quarter ends. And there's so much to do. I have to pack. I have to study for exams.

[11 : 07] I must say goodbye. I must submit papers. There's all these responsibilities and errands that need to be run before you leave. You can't think about leaving until all those responsibilities are completed.

It's kind of like this. This is where we are in Jesus' ministry. It's the final checklist. In other words, God's plan, earthly plan for Jesus is coming to a close.

What needs to be done before he leaves? Well, this is what needs to be accomplished. It's the final time in Luke's gospel that there's a resurrection appearance.

And on this third occasion, the band of disciples are assembled in a room. And there's a bit of confusion. You see, a handful of women had already approached them and told them of this awe-inspiring, angelic encounter with an empty tomb.

The tomb was empty. According to 24 verse 11, they thought it was a fairy tale. Two men, later on, making a walk from Jerusalem to Emmaus, a seven-mile walk, had an extended conversation with the man, only to find out at the end of the seven-mile walk it was Jesus.

[12 : 22] He disappears. And these two men are so struck by it that within the hour, they turn around and make a seven-mile walk back to Jerusalem.

And here we have all the disciples in one room and certainly some more. And there's confusion. Some were saying, I saw him.

That's impossible. Others were saying, where's the body? It's just some spiritual manifestation, right? Some ghost.

No, no, no, no. We spoke with him for seven miles. We've seen him. Well, unless I see him and the marks in his hands and place the finger into the mark, the nails and place my hand into his side, I'm not going to believe that.

It would have been a lively debate. Belief, unbelief, astonishment, bewilderment, confusion. You don't have to stretch too far to imagine. If I just approached you one day and said, hey, your loved one whom you buried, I saw.

[13 : 35] Dead individuals simply do not come back to life. And now suddenly, according to verse 36, Jesus sets himself among them and greets them with a common first century greeting.

Peace to you. The room, Luke tells us, is now startled and frightened. The argument that must have been the leading cause of disbelief is now addressed.

They thought he was a mere spirit. But Jesus immediately addresses their doubt and holds forth his physicality and materiality. All the senses are engaged.

They heard him ask the question. They saw him. They were invited to touch him. They shared with him a piece of broiled fish. And this was the final disclosure in Luke's gospel.

Implying that for Luke, there was sufficient evidence up to this point that he was risen. It might be worthwhile to remind you that Luke was a physician.

[14 : 38] He was educated and certainly had some reasonable research methods. And he comes to this point and he only gives us three accounts. He feels he doesn't need to include the other 500 eyewitnesses.

Being a physician, I'm sure he knew the protocol of the day, how to verify whether or not Jesus was truly alive. But what's most noteworthy, I think, is what begins in verse 44.

Because what begins in verse 44 tells us that after verse 43, after hearing, seeing, touching, eating with Jesus, materiality was inadequate for belief.

I say this because there's more disclosure needed. We need to hear more. I'm sure Luke, the investigative journalist, was like asking, oh, well, after the table meal, everyone believed, right?

Everyone was convinced he was the Messiah, right? He was there in the room, right? Well, actually, no. That wasn't the part that convinced us. What convinced us was the fact that Jesus turned us back to the Bible.

[16 : 03] You see that, right, in verse 44. It's the biggest I told you so in history. I told you. These were the words that I spoke to you while I was still with you.

And which leads to the first point. Those who encounter the risen Christ are turned back to the scripture. Physicality was not enough.

It required scripturality. That's not a word, but I made it up. The physical was accompanied by the scriptural. It's a valuable insight to belief.

Because growing up, I always said, oh, well, Jesus, if you just showed up in this room, I would believe you. For these disciples, Jesus showed up in the room.

And it required an explanation. explanation. Well, if I was just like Thomas, if I got to touch the side and the holes and the piercing, I would believe.

[17 : 06] Well, possibly. But for the disciples, seeing Jesus physically was insufficient for belief. It required their physical eyes may see, but their eyes of their heart were still shut off and closed.

we need to be reminded that scripture serves as a witness to show us Jesus. Jesus turns them to what was written.

To the disciples, it was unbelievable, inconceivable that not only a person had come back from the dead, but the biggest stumbling block in their mind was how could the Messiah, the promised King and the Redeemer of the nation not only fail to ascend the throne, but fall so fast.

How could one who held so much promise undergo so much physical agony and pain? How could the triumphal entry lead to a tragic execution?

How could God's chosen one become earth's rejected one? Well, and so Jesus explains it to them. Four times in this final chapter, this becomes the topic of conversation.

[18 : 24] Your expectation was triumph. I was telling you about a tragedy. And it required an explanation, and Luke highlights it multiple times. You could do it for your homework.

Three times, those who experience the risen Christ are turned back to the Hebrew scriptures. And it was only conceivable that after the scriptures were unfolded, that the deal was sealed, or the deal was sealed.

They only believed the resurrection after verse 45, encountering the scriptures taught by the Lord Jesus. You see, the resurrection makes us scriptural people.

And what do I mean by this? The resurrection can't be understood apart from the scriptures. You and I can't understand what the resurrection means unless you and I listen to what scripture says it means.

It's worth mentioning because any biography you read will end the final chapter usually with the account of so-and-so is buried at such-and-such a location.

[19 : 31] And, you know, maybe there's loved ones that leave some familial legacy. And that's it. It's just a historical fact that sits in the back of a book.

But what separates Jesus' death from all other deaths is that there is meaning applied to his death. It's worth mentioning because the scriptures interpret the meaning of the event.

What was tragic is now interpreted as triumph. The death of a man is not just the death of a man. When the natural individual looks at Friday, they see gore and grief.

But when the Christian sees Friday, they somehow see goodness and grace. And how does that come about? How does it come about?

Well, Christ died. Well, you told me that. But the Bible tells us for our sins. in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their sins against them.

[20 : 41] For the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

He himself bore our sins upon the tree. The Bible goes on and on to interpret the death for us. This is what I mean, that we are scriptural people.

The Bible is like this contractual document that is enacted upon in the death and resurrection of Christ.

You are made aware of all its benefits, all its blessings, all the wealth that comes from this inheritance. When Jesus dies and rises, there is a payout to a beneficiary.

The payout is pardon for sins and paradise forevermore. And it's only through the scriptures that you see that. You see, recently I was at a building meeting with my neighbors.

[21 : 43] We are in a sixth flat. And I was made aware that the state of Illinois has a website for unclaimed property. and money.

He said to one of my other neighbors, well, hey, I just looked you up and there's quite a few things that are unclaimed by you. And lo, what I did, I went to the website.

I'm like, well, let me key it in. Bing me. And lo and behold, I've never met another one. And there were two items, unclaimed.

And all I had to do, I read the end of the website, all I had to do was click claim. And there I did. I clicked claim, I proved who I was, and later that week, I received a check, actually two checks, from the Illinois Department of Finance with my payout.

I share this not because I became a millionaire, I didn't. It was like \$23 or something. Because I share this because I think some of us in the room are like me.

[23 : 05] There's property. There's an inheritance. There's blessings. that are for you. And you don't even know it.

Well, I'm here to tell you that there is an incomprehensible inheritance under your name. It's left unclaimed.

Perhaps no one ever told you about it. Perhaps you think, oh, it's some fraudulent scam. They're just trying to get all my information and deceive me and I'm just not going to believe it.

Or perhaps you're just too proud. I can make wealth on my own, save myself. I can get more than I could ever be given. And I'm here to tell you like my neighbor told me, there is an inheritance for you.

And you can't ignore it, brush it off. but no, I encourage you to look. I encourage you to seek.

[24 : 16] I encourage you to turn and you will find that it's for you. All you have to do is submit your claim.

The resurrection may have simply been a recorded historical event, captured in sacred scripture, as some hero epic. But the Bible won't allow it to be just history.

No, it becomes the interpreter for all of history. It serves as the decoder for the life of Christ and the nation of Israel. It moves beyond some inspiring hero epic or some tragic downfall of a tiny nation, and it becomes a very sacred and supreme book it was intended to be, a book that reveals to you and I God's plans and purposes for the world through his son.

You and I are to be a scriptural people, a scriptural people. Secondly, the resurrection not only turns us to scripture, but it sends us on a mission, sends us on a mission, verses 46 to 49.

Taking the well-known editorial language from Matthew 28, we become these great co-mission people. The resurrected Christ, if truly risen, sends us on a task.

[25 : 37] God sends his son, his son sends his spirit to empower his people. God sends his spirit-filled people into the world to witness to his kingdom governed by a crucified and risen king.

For the disciples, they were direct witnesses of these things according to verse 48. And Luke's second volume, the book of Acts, will record how they bear witness, how they live out their marching orders.

But their marching orders haven't diminished over time, because we continue to serve as present-day witnesses to the risen Lord Jesus. You see, an authentic Christian experience will make us a missional people.

And what I mean by missional is this, that we are a people who live evangelistically, and we understand that we are to bear witness to the risen Christ.

We are people who share our faith with others. We are people who speak about Jesus with others. We are assent people, dispatched, commissioned, as heralds of the king.

[26 : 53] Notice that for Luke, the mission actually contains a message, and verse 47 encapsulates it. Repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations.

You are witnesses of these things. Boiled down, it's a message of repentance for forgiveness of sins. And though social ills plague us, disease and sickness ravage us, evil befalls us, Luke presses upon us that the gravest condition is our guilt before God himself.

We haven't measured up to his law and his expectations. We are accountable for our shortcomings, and the question is, how do you plead? You might plead the fifth.

You might plead innocence. You might stand before the judge and plead not guilty. But the Christian is one who pleads guilty.

I'm guilty as charged. I need to turn from my own selfishness, my own distorted loves, my rebellion, and turn toward Christ and repentance and God's enduring mercy upon one's repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[28 : 16] Forgiveness is granted and pardon received. this is the message of Christianity. Our guilt when acknowledged is always met by greater mercy.

And because Christ lives, the disciples are given this task of universal proclamation. It's not a message for a few. It's not an insider message. It's not just a holy huddle of individuals that are trying to preserve a message, but it's a global announcement.

It's not a privatized matter. It becomes a public matter. The disciples are convinced of its universal good. We are those who rightfully are burdened by this message, convinced of its truthfulness and compelled to tell others.

You see, one of the most telling features of whether the resurrection has taken place in your own life is if you have this burden of witness within you. A Christian is compelled by the love of Christ to be a minister of reconciliation.

Sure, among people, but ultimately to implore individuals to be reconciled to God. I'm here to press upon you to consider whether that burden actually rests upon you as you speak to an unbelieving classmate, neighbor, friend, relative.

[29 : 33] Is there a spiritual burden to share Christ? Now, this does not mean that every conversation has to be about Jesus. This does not mean that you must share the good news in every single dialogue.

but would it not be expected that in all the conversations you have, the greatest desire and the heaviest burden is for you to speak about Christ, share his love, and yearn to see someone drawn to the risen Jesus.

You see, the disciples are commissioned in this way, and so are we. we are a missional people endowed by a mighty spirit, a people with a distinct saving message for all the world.

Scriptural, missional, and finally, thirdly, most briefly, the resurrected Christ produces a people filled with joy, filled with joy.

this is the only gospel that tells us how Jesus left, and as he leaves, I don't know if he's waving, but he's certainly pronouncing blessing. He's imparting blessing upon the disciples.

[30 : 46] The Bible tells us in verse 52 and 53, they returned to Jerusalem with joy. It's a bewildered joy in verse 41, and by the end of verse 52, it is now a great joy.

They're certainly filled with joy because Christ is risen. He's ascended, and he's enthroned. The joy certainly comes from the fact that they had entrusted their lives, and based on the resurrection, it would be a good trust.

He was victorious over death. The very Messiah that appeared slain was now the risen Messiah that reigned. And I know this because this is the first explicit mention of worship in the entirety of the gospel.

You see in the second to last verse in Luke, verse 52, and they worshipped him. It's the first explicit mention of direct worship of Jesus in the whole gospel.

And what we find now at the end of Luke's gospel is worship that was exclusive to God alone is now given to Jesus. The disciples are marked by blessing and worshipping Christ with great joy.

[32 : 04] It's a joy that flows out of being forgiven. It's a joy that flows out of how great a salvation. It's a joy that emanates from the kingdom because the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating or drinking but of righteousness, peace, and joy.

And it's not just mere happiness because if you read the book of Acts, things get sad real quick. joy. But what is this joy? And I think a helpful definition is simply gladness in God.

It's not circumstantial or situational. It's given to the people of God by the Spirit of God. It's a gift. It's something that God divinely dispenses and it's accessible whenever and wherever.

Wherever the Spirit of God resides, joy breaks forth. In whomever the Spirit of God dwells, joy bursts forth. See, you and I are to be people that exemplify this divine joy.

Our gladness is found in Christ and his ongoing work and his presence in our lives. This joy is accessible in the highs and the lows, bright days and dark days and loss and gain.

[33 : 19] And perhaps you're down today. Well, it seems like the text at least has one solution. And I just make this observation as I close.

It's telling that great joy would be tethered to ongoing worship. It is as to say that I don't know when, I'll tell you, when my soul is downcast, I go to song, not particular songs, or actually a particular set of songs, I sing Christmas songs all year round, and I know that might be sacrilegious, but why?

Because I think there is something here that Luke tethers our joy with Christ's worship. That when you worship, joy, I think the people of God receive joy.

It is as to say, when the people of God worship the Son of God, they receive the joy or joy in God. It is counterintuitive, but I think it affirms the purposes for which you were made.

that when you fulfill your ultimate purpose in praise and adoration of your Maker, your heart bursts forth in gladness.

[35 : 01] Well, this is the transformative nature of the resurrection. It takes the people and turns them to the Scriptures. It takes the people and sends them on mission. It takes the people and fills them with joy inexpressible.

it is the divine comedy where everything sad becomes untrue. Father, we look at these familiar verses, and we don't really want to just admire them from afar.

But Lord, we ask these words, these living words would draw near to us as we draw near to you, that we would be a transformed people, a people who once had no mercy and have now received mercy, a people who were created really for to declare the excellencies of the one who called us.

And so, Father, may we be a people marked by Scripture, a people out on a mission, and a people filled with exceeding joy.

And Lord, as we close, as we worship you, help us to be a people that recall that we may suffer, we will die, we will all be buried, but in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, we shall all be changed, made new, raised and perishable, and we will behold our God together.

[36 : 58] And while we wait for that day, we ask for a taste of it now. May we behold you. We ask these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. And while I