

Acts 1:1-14: The Mission Jesus Gave Us

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[0 : 00] Father, your word is a marvel. You write parts of scripture that are so simple that a two-year-old can understand them and remember them.

And yet those same simple stories that even a two-year-old can understand, Father, they can inspire the greatest philosophers, the greatest theoreticians, the greatest poets and dancers and choreographers and musicians to heights of imagination.

And these simple stories can ground us in profound moral wisdom and insights, and, Father, all from very, very simple stories. So we ask, Father, that your Holy Spirit would do a gentle but powerful work in our lives this morning.

Father, I don't want people to remember my words. I ask, Father, that these simple words of scripture will come deep into all of our hearts and that Jesus will be more precious to us and what he did for us on the cross will be more precious for us and that you will change us from the inside out.

And I ask this in Jesus's name. Amen. Please be seated. The resurrection changes everything.

[1 : 36] The resurrection of Jesus changes absolutely everything. If it really happened. If it didn't happen, every single one of us are profoundly, foolishly wasting our time and our money.

Quite literally. If Jesus did not physically rise from the dead on the third day, every single one of us are wasting our time. If you're here as a curious seeker, you're wasting your time.

If you're here as a seasoned believer, you and I have been wasting our time for a long time. But if it is true, it changes absolutely everything.

If it's true, it means that Hinduism isn't right in its totality. But we have a basis by which we can look and see what bits and pieces of Hinduism are true.

If the resurrection actually happened, it means that Buddhism's not true. But it means that we can look at the practice of Buddhism and pick out the bits and pieces that are true. If the resurrection happened, it means that Islam isn't true at a fundamental level.

[2 : 47] And we can look and judge which bits and pieces of Islam are true. If the resurrection happened, it means that critical race theory isn't true. But we have a basis to look at those bits and pieces of critical race theory that are true.

If the resurrection happened, it means agnosticism and atheism are not true. They're just not true. But we can look and see those bits and pieces that led people to those conclusions, which bits and pieces are true.

And it's not just... And it's more. It means that our understanding of scientific theorems is going to change. It means how we read, like, the first and second law of thermodynamics has to change. Like, if the resurrection happened, it changes absolutely everything. And it's not just, though... It's not just, though, that it changes something just, you know, purely and utterly, like those intellectual types of things.

And some of you are yawning and saying... I mean, some of you may be shocked that I would say something like that live in Ottawa in 2023, and it's going to go on YouTube. And are maybe even a little bit threatened that I would say that.

[3 : 52] But it's just true. If Jesus really rose from the dead, it changes everything. And it's not just that Jesus rose from the dead. It's what happened before Jesus rose from the dead that makes it even more precious, that it's not just an intellectual thing.

And, I mean, Deborah picked brilliant songs that help to illustrate how unbelievably significant it is. Because, you see, the message that we are to proclaim is that God so loved every single one of you and me.

He loved us. God loved us. And he saw that we couldn't fix ourselves, and that we were going to die, and that we were in desperate need. And he did something for us that we could not do for ourselves.

And it means that God, the Son of God, left heaven, setting aside his glory and divine prerogatives, and setting aside all of his appearance as God. He enters our human life.

He is no longer God who is distant. He is Emmanuel. He was God with us. He lives amongst us. He suffers trials and temptations like we do, only without sin. He lives the life that we should live, but we are never able to live.

[5 : 03] And he lives that life. And he's fulfilling all of these stories and all of these prophecies and all of these images that God has sent messengers about for 1,500, 2,000 years.

And he's fulfilling them. And many of these images touch on the very, very deepest longings and yearnings of our hearts, that death is not the final word. That there is a way to be reconciled to ourselves and to know forgiveness and to know that we are forgiven by God.

And these intimations we have when we see beauty, and we think when we see beauty, there must be something no more. And Jesus comes. And in all that context, when he dies upon the cross, he's not dying for anything that he has done.

And he's not dying to show off. It's not like he's going to try to win a mixed martial arts contest or an Olympic medal or anything like that. The message is that he does it for you and me because he loves you.

And he loves me. And that's why he dies. Because he loves you. And it means, and then he dies.

[6 : 15] He dies the death that you and I deserve to offer you and me the destiny and the rewards that we don't deserve, but he deserves. And when we put our hand in his and trust him, he takes our doom and gives us his promise.

Because he loves you. He knows you and he still loves you. He knows the things about you that you're ashamed of. And still he loves you and loved you enough to die on you.

And there's no amount of sin or death or shame that is too deep that Jesus did not go deeper in his identification and is dying for you.

And the resurrection of Jesus vindicates that all of what I have just said is completely and utterly true. So that it's not just a matter of, okay, now we know that critical race theory is a bit, is wrong in all these areas.

We can think of, it's not just that. It is that, but it's not just that. It's something of the deepest level of our heart and our affections and our, and how we can start to view ourselves and how we can start to understand that we don't own ourselves, but that one who loved us so much that he died for us, he owns us.

[7 : 28] He doesn't own us so that we can become slaves, but because for the, so he owns us and dies for us because now we can actually start to become free and unashamed.

And, and so if the resurrection happened, it changes everything. Now I'm going to read the Bible. It's going to show you how all this is true. And, and some of you say, well, George, that's fine. You read the Bible and you believe that all stuff, but I don't believe all of that stuff. And I just want to, I just, that that's fair enough.

I'm going to tell you why you should at least listen to what I'm going to read, but let's read it first because you have to read it to understand at least why we have to take it into account and how it fits with what I've just borne testimony to.

So if you, if you have, look at Acts chapter one and look how it begins. In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach.

[8 : 28] Now we just need to pause. It says there's a first book. This is the second book. Now here, if you have your Bibles, you can follow along. If you don't have your Bibles, it's going to be on the screen.

What's his first book? Well, his first book is what we now call Luke. And, and here's how Luke begins. In as much, chapter one, verse one, in as much as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished amongst us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them, sorry, to deliver them to us.

Seemed good to me. Seemed good to me also. So, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty

concerning the things that you have been taught.

Now, here's just a couple of things about that. It's, you'll notice in a moment when we go back to it, he's speaking to the same Theophilus. He wrote Luke, this guy by the name of Luke wrote two books.

So, a couple of things about this, and this all goes to why or not we should, in fact, listen to this and at least think about it. First of all, Theophilus, we don't, nobody knows whether Theophilus was a real person, but it's really neat because even if he was a real person, it's all part of what I would say as a Christian is part of God's providence, that he didn't pick somebody whose, I don't know, name meant all hail Zeus or something like that.

[10:02] In fact, the Theophilus means, it can be translated as one of two ways in English, friend of God or lover of God. And so, many people think, I mean, whether or not there was a real person, now in a sense, it's addressing, it's like some people write, when they write, they say, dear reader.

But rather than saying reader, they say, dear friend of God, dear lover of God. Now, does this mean that he doesn't want to address skeptics? Not at all. One of the things I tell, I don't always do it, but often I tell people when I'm doing a wedding rehearsal, is I tell the men and the women involved, I say, we're going to pretend for the next 45 minutes.

And so, what we're going to see is we're all going to be using very polite language to each other and a very exalting language to each other. And on one level, you might actually not feel that way towards some of the people, like, you know, there might be family members who are there and you hate their guts and all of that type of stuff.

But we're going to act formal and polite in a way that's sort of good and proper, the way you should act, right? And so, that's the same type of thing here that Luke is doing. He's writing it to the friend and lover of God.

He's giving you, he's not saying, by the way, I know some of you are deranged skeptics who rage against God for irrational reasons like a brutish beast.

[11:18] I mean, he could say that, but he doesn't. Instead, he says what we do at wedding ceremonies and other things. He uses very polite language. And this book is addressed to a lover of God, a friend of God. That's who it is who's reading it.

But the other thing about it is you need to know a couple of other things about this, which are very significant, is that, first of all, Luke was a pagan who became a Christian. We don't know how many years after death and resurrection of Jesus, but Luke was not an eyewitness of anything that happened with Jesus.

When you read the ancient biography written by John and Matthew, you're reading an ancient biography, eyewitness, written by actual literal eyewitnesses. And Mark would have been an eyewitness of some of the events, but not all of them.

But Luke didn't see any of them. In some ways, then, when we read Luke and Acts, it's like us reading them, because none of us have literally seen Jesus do all of these types of miracles. The other thing is, and no matter what, if you go and Google this later on, and they'll give you all sorts of dating things about Luke.

And I, you know, basically... Go ahead, George. Tell us what you really think. Basically, if they give you really late dates, they're just blowing smoke at you. Because, trust me, I studied...

[12:31] I took courses at a secular university, an ultra-liberal seminary that didn't believe anything in the Bible happened. I heard from the horse's mouth how they think, and there's actually no evidence for late dates.

In fact, all of the actual evidence, like stuff that people really think of as evidence, like real stuff, it would say... We know that Paul died.

He was arrested in Rome in 62 AD. We know that historically that that's the case, and he died a couple of years later. And so we know that the book of Acts was written before Paul died, because it ends, if you go to the end of it, it ends before we find out what happens to Paul.

He's just arrived in Rome to be tried by Nero, and we don't find out what happened. So we know that the book of Acts and Luke had to be written before that. And the other thing, of course, is that it had to be written before the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70.

So, you know, maybe nobody knows whether he sat down and wrote Luke in a couple of days, and then the next day he wrote, you know, the next book and did it all quick, or whether there's a big gap of time. But we know that within...

[13 : 38] that what Luke did is he, in a sense, probably retraced his own intellectual steps, that he would have heard this phenomenal claim that a man died an unbelievably shameful death of crucifixion and then rose from the dead on the third day.

And he's a doctor. Luke was a doctor. We know that about him. And so he probably began to research it and talk to the eyewitnesses and go and actually see the things and recount the stories. And so what we have here in this ancient biography by a former pagan who was so convinced by the evidence that he left paganism and became a Christian, and he writes a careful eyewitness-based biography of Jesus and then a careful eyewitness-based story of the early days of the Christian movement.

And it all happened while many, many eyewitnesses were alive and they could contradict it. Now, there's two things that follow from this, and they sound dry and unimportant, but the fact of the matter is is that Christians are concerned about evidence.

We aren't, like, properly understood, instructed Christians. Don't just think you have to have some type of medical vision or that you kiss your brains goodbye when you become a Christian or that it's just a matter of heart or you're just like the little train that could, you know, rather than saying, I will, I will, I will, I will do it.

[15 : 10] We say, I believe, I believe. No, it's not. Those things are all fine, you know, but there's, like, evidence and thinking matters. And that just goes right back to books like Acts. It's because it's, like, it's in the Bible.

And so... If you're to be intellectually honest, you need to deal with biographies like that, and you need to fit it into what we know, because there's all sorts of other evidence around the early Christian movement from historians who weren't Christians and from court records and skeptics, and you need to fit it all in.

And I just want to challenge you. I'm not going to go through all of the evidence. I just want to challenge you that time and time and time again, when people actually look at all of the evidence, when they look at it very honestly, there, it, to my mind, it's very...

There is no explanation of the emergence of the Christian movement that is better, that on the third day, Jesus died upon a cross in an unbelievably public manner outside the gates of Jerusalem on a Friday in April, either the year 30 or April, 33, and that on the third day, the tomb was empty, the body was gone, and Jesus appeared alive, and there is no other better explanation of the facts than that.

And if you're online watching, or you're here, and you're sort of a bit curious, or a skeptic, or sitting here like that, I challenge you to begin an inquiry. I challenge you to do it.

[16 : 42] I encourage you to do it. Why? Because if it's true, it changes everything. So, let's go back to the book of Acts, and we'll see how, in fact, just it continues on with the same theme, that even as Peter...

And so what we're getting here is this very ancient recording of sermons and deaths and persecutions and all of that, and so there's this second aspect of an eyewitness history, which now Luke is writing in the book of Acts.

So let's go back. Chapter 1, verse 1. By the way, just so you know, there's 14 verses. I just spent 16 minutes on the first verse, so you can calculate how long the sermon's going to be.

Just 14 times 16, and you'll come up with the answer. No, we'll go quicker through some others. In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day when he was taken up.

He's sort of giving a bit of a foretaste. He's talking about the ascension. After he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen, Jesus presented himself alive to them after his suffering, that's after his crucifixion, by many proofs.

[18 : 07] And in the original language, you could actually translate it and some translations do put many convincing proofs. And we're going to show in a moment how one of the convincing proofs were.

Appearing to them during 40 days and speaking about the kingdom of God. Verse 4. And while staying with them, he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem.

Now, just before we go any further, if you're looking at some other translations, you'll see that in some translations, they say, and while eating with them. Both translations are valid.

Staying is a little bit more literal. But let's just think about it. Let's just be honest. Unless somebody comes to your door to visit you, and you really, really, really dislike them, and can't wait for them to go, what do you offer them?

Something to drink and eat. And if they're coming overnight, you don't say to them, by the way, I've already organized my own supper and dessert and breakfast, but here's a number for Uber Eats, and you can order your own food.

[19 : 08] Like, that's not what you do. Like, when you're staying with them, you give them stuff to eat. Like, that's what people do. And we're not nearly as hospitable. Some of you are from countries other than Canada, and I can tell you, like, if you go to Africa, they are vastly more hospitable than we are.

And in many other parts of the world, they're vastly more hospitable than we are. So it's staying and eating. Now, why is that significant? Well, here it is. Some of you might know, I've met people who, within the months after the death of their wife or their husband, or maybe a child, they're convinced that they've seen them again.

Like, sitting in their favorite chair. I've met people who've said that. Some of them have come to me and asked me, how do you, like, George, what's going on? Like, how do I account for it?

Like, is it just, you know, wishful thinking? Is it, was I tired? Did I fall asleep when I dreamed it? Like, is it a ghost? Like, is it a demon? Like, what's going on? But many of us have, many people have seen their loved one maybe sitting in their favorite chair, and it shocks them because they know they died.

And that's sort of odd, right? It would be really weird if you saw them in their favorite chair, and then you went into the kitchen to eat, and then they sat down and ate with you.

[20 : 34] Like, like they did just like what they used to do. You made yourself an order of French fries, and they sat down across from you, and they took your French fries and started eating them. Like, that would really freak you out. Well, that's what, you see what I mean by this is what they're making?

They're making this deep acclaim about the fact that that's what these people believed. And one of the things about the book of Luke is that in some ways they didn't do footnotes, is that lots of times throughout the book of Acts and Luke he mentions names, and in a sense those are the footnotes. Luke is saying, oh, go look up one of these guys. They can tell you this actually happened. And they were sitting with Jesus after he died and risen from the dead, and he ate with them. I mean, he is alive.

He rose from the dead. He ate with them. In fact, actually, if you just jump ahead to verses 12 to 14, the next page, you'll see that he does it again.

And here's how he does it. So we're going to get to a moment about the ascension and everything. I'm not that that's unimportant, but there's some other stuff that happens. And so verse 12, then they, that's the disciples, they returned to Jerusalem from the Mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day journey away.

[21 : 47] A Sabbath day journey away is a journey under three kilometers on the Sabbath. So they didn't have a very far walk. Verse 13, and when they had entered, they went, Jerusalem that is, they went up to the upper room where they were staying.

And then it mentions that the people by their names, that Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James, the son of Alphaeus and Simon, the zealot and Judas, the son of James.

All these with one accord, were devoting themselves to prayer. Now look at this next bit. Together with the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus and his brothers and sisters.

Now, if you've read any one of the ancient biographies of Jesus, what do you know about the ancient biographies of Jesus? Jesus, that his mother and brothers and sisters did not believe that he was God, the son of God, and they did not, they thought he had gone nuts.

And it's very clear from the ancient biographies, they thought Jesus had gone nuts. And by the way, obviously in those days, they could not diagnose somebody as bipolar, but they still knew nuts.

[23 : 05] Like, you don't have to be a psychiatrist to recognize crazy. Okay? And that's what they thought. And now here, here, and we're going to see as it goes on, here, they're amongst the group of people who believe that Jesus had risen from the dead.

See, one of the things that has obviously happened, not recorded, is that somewhere along the line, during those 40 days, Jesus appeared and proved to himself that he was alive to his mother and his brothers and his sisters.

Proved to them he was alive. And now they were amongst the Christians. You see, regardless, it's not just the fact that I say this is the Bible and I believe it because it's the Bible, but even if you don't want to grant it that, if you want to be intellectually honest and intellectually curious, these are ancient eyewitness biographies and have to be taken and you have to account for them and you have to account for what Philo and Josephus and others say about the Christian movement and you have to account for it.

And the best explanation is that Jesus rose from the dead. And if he rose from the dead, it vindicated what he said about himself and what he was doing when he died on the cross. And if he really is God, the Son of God, and he really became God with us, and he really died on the cross because he loved you, and if his death is that which can reconcile you to God so that you become God's child by adoption and grace and you receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and all of your sins have been forgiven, there is no better news in the history of the world.

No better news in the history of the world than that news. And part of why we come to church is because we go outside and we watch YouTube and we watch Netflix and we read books and we see people who don't believe that and it starts to become less clear to our hearts and that's why week by week we need to gather with other brothers and sisters to remind ourselves again that this is true.

[25 : 11] This is, as we sang at Matt's ordination, what is my hope in life and death? I have no other hope in life and death other than Jesus is with me and that when I die I will see him face to face and enter into the new heaven and the new earth.

I have no other hope in life and death than that. I have no other hope. There is no other hope. That is the good news. Now, the next little bit, you know, so I've just made a good case for this, I hope, but I'll be very honest.

The next bit actually describes why I became a Christian. And it wasn't because of these clever intellectual arguments. I don't think they're clever.

I think they're, I'm just trying to be honest, be honest intellectually and it's not, it wasn't these intellectual things that led me personally to a faith in Christ when I was in grade 12. This next little bit describes why it is in a sense that I became a Christian.

Let's see what it says. It's, sorry, we'll go back up to verse four. And while staying with them and eating with them, Jesus ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which he said, you heard from me for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.

[26 : 33] So, when they had come together, they asked him, Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? Very, they're still sort of caught up in a wrong way to understand the Old Testament.

And Jesus said to them, it is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father is fixed by his own authority. In other words, that's all, you know, God's gonna, God handles all that. You don't need to worry about it. You know, we need that more.

That's God's problem. Let him worry about it. You deal with these other things in front of you. Like, it's like a Christian version of Steve Covey's Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, right?

And one of the very first things is to separate the difference between things you can control and things you have no control over and not waste time about things you have no control over and think about what you can actually do.

That's what Jesus is saying. Listen, that's God's prerogative about how history's gonna be changed. Don't worry about it. Here's what you have to do. And then in verse 80, he says this, 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 ends of the earth.

[27 : 40] See those three things? You see, what happened to me is I came face to face with real Christians. Maybe, I think, I'd obviously met lots of real Christians before, but I think for me, the real Christians I met were so caught up in a whole pile of, I'm probably being very unfair to them and in heaven, God's gonna show me that it was my hard heart and I wasn't perceiving them correctly.

But it just felt like it was rule upon rule upon rule, do this, don't do that, you're not allowed to do this, you have to do this. And that's what it felt. And then I came into contact with people and when I was

with them and they were praying, the whole room was different.

I didn't expect to get teary. The whole room was different. Like I felt something. And I knew there was something more.

It's the Holy Spirit at work. And so it wasn't because I'd done an intellectual search into the resurrection. Other intellectual searches in the resurrection became increasingly important in the years to come as I had other periods of doubt and other reasons to be more confident in my faith. But it was just that powerful sense that it was, there was another person in the room when I was with those people praying. And I knew I wanted it and I needed it.

[29 : 09] And that's what led me to give my life to Christ. And here we have this wonderful words of Jesus which explains it. You know, he describes the Holy Spirit as the promise of the Father.

And it's a very special type of promise. When I was a kid I was probably a very, very terrible kid. And my parents spanked me.

And I'm not complaining about any of the spankings. I probably deserved every one of them. But at a certain point in time my mom would spank me and it didn't hurt. And when that happened she'd say, when she realized that, then what would happen is when your father comes home I am going to tell him.

It was a promise she made to me and I didn't. That wasn't a promise I look forward to. But fortunately my parents made other promises just like we make other promises.

Like wonderful promises. Like you're going to have a great time on your birthday. You're going to have a great time at Christmas. And that's the type of promise that God is talking about to us as Christians. That's what the Holy Spirit is. Jesus is saying, you know, the Father has made this most spectacular promise to ordinary people like you and me.

[30 : 20] And that spectacular promise it's the Holy Spirit. And the Father is going to send the Holy Spirit. I mean, we get it when we become Christians but back then it's going to be Pentecost in 10 days which we'll read about.

And you're going to have this fantastic thing. You put your trust in Jesus and you receive the promise of the Father. It's the Holy Spirit. And the image of baptism is an image of immersion. It's an image of cleansing. It's an image of purifying. That's what the Holy Spirit is going to do with you. And then he also says it's going to give you power to bear witness. And there's this wonderful, wonderful thing.

You know, we just ordained Matt yesterday and I'm not putting Matt down. We didn't look at Matt and say, he's so unbelievably persuasive. Like, he could go to the Inuit in the middle of a blizzard in January and sell them ice blocks.

like, even though they could go out and dig their own, like, he could just sell anything. Like, you know, he could just sell anything. He's so persuasive. He can convince you that it's pouring rain outside even though you're standing there in sunny.

[31 : 26] Nothing personal. Matt's not like that. And in fact, actually, if he was like that, he probably shouldn't be ordained. Because then he's only going to trust in his own power.

We have a very simple task. On one level, it's very, very simple, but it's also very, very profoundly hard. Because we know that identifying yourself, becoming an out Christian, is not a way to become more popular and win more friends in Ottawa in 2023.

But it's a very, very simple thing. God just says, will you bear witness to Jesus? And I want you to bear witness to Jesus. Look what it says. It says, in verse 8, 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 at the ends of the earth.

In other words, the true ancient movement of diversity, inclusion, and equity is this very simple message of proclamation to Jesus, that we are to go and bear witness to Jesus to the ends of the earth.

All humanity and its diversity can be included when they receive Jesus as Savior and Lord. And why is it equity? Because as Charles Spurgeon so brilliantly said, when you share and witness to another person, you are one penniless beggar telling another penniless beggar where to get free bread.

[32 : 53] That's all it is. Don't say, look at me, I'm so fantastic. No, I'm a penniless beggar. It's not about me, it's about him.

He is the bread of life. He is the river of life. He is the one who will quench your thirst. It begins to be quenched now and it will go on and on and on into eternity and you will be both, your thirst will be quenched.

And, and, you know, so we're not called to be brilliant apologists. If you are, then praise God. Brilliant evangelists, if you are, praise God. God, it's a matter of God will open doors and opportunities for you.

You should pray for it. I should pray for it. As a church, we should pray for it and there'll be opportunities where we just bear witness to who Jesus is and why his life and death and resurrection changes everything and how God loves you and just, it's just a matter of bearing witness.

It could be something as simple to begin with that Tuesday when you go to work and they say, oh, by the way, what did you do on the weekend? And you say, like, rather than saying, oh, I went to hear a talk, say, I went to church.

[34 : 01] Like, it's really important for me to go and recharge my batteries and hear about God's love for me. Like, that's just how bearing witness to Jesus begins.

and it's an interesting thing because it's a team sport. Like, you know, if three days later somebody comes back and says, I have all these intellectual objections and you think, ah, you're a deer in a headlight.

That's when you just say, listen, we have guys like George and Victor and lots of other people in the church and they'd love to talk to you about those things.

Like, why didn't you come? They'll even probably pay for the coffee and you can come and ask them these questions and they'd love to talk to you. You know, it could be Josiah, it could be Emma. There's lots of people who'd love to talk to you about those things.

Handle your questions. We think questions are important. It's a team sport. It's a team thing. You just, all Jesus is asking, he said, we're giving you, I'm giving you the Holy Spirit, cleansing you and to be my witnesses.

[35 : 05] And then there's just one other final thing very briefly in closing. It's a whole other, big books are written on it, but Luke makes clear that the resurrection appearances of Jesus would come to an end, but in a very significant way.

Let's look at them first. A guy was asking me, like, what happened to Jesus the other day and why didn't he keep doing miracles? And I said, well, we're told he didn't want to hear. But anyway, you can hear.

Here's what it says. Verse 9. And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven, as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes.

That's beside the 11. And said, men of Galilee, they're angels, by the way. And they said, men of Galilee, in other words, like ordinary dudes. That's what men of Galilee means. Like Galilee is like Hicksville.

Okay? It doesn't say men of Oxbridge and Harvard. No, it's just, you know, dudes from the valley. You know, Hicks types.

[36 : 13] People who, like Tim Hortons, not fancy coffees, and follow the senators and stuff like that, and know how to fix an engine. Or even if they don't know how to fix an engine, know somebody who does, and they buy them the Tim Hortons double-double, why they fix the engine.

And you say, well done. So that's why he says, men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus who was taken up from you into heaven, he will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.

And there's just so much about this, like there's this symbolism. Remember, I opened my prayer by saying, this is on one level the simplest story in the world. You could read this story to two and a half year old, and they'll get it.

But you can take a story like that, and you know, you can read some guys, just Pajot, and talks about symbolism and the body and nature, and you can have all these creative types, and they can just see all the symbolism of all of this and the poetry and the beauty and philosophers and metaphysics, and they can get it and science, all that, and yet at the same time, it's just a very, very simple story.

And my hope is that you've heard the story, you believe the story, and you believe him. That's my hope. Let's stand. Bow our heads in prayer. Let's stand. Father, we live between the death and

resurrection and ascension of Jesus and his coming again.

[37 : 45] And we know from other parts of the Bible, we, Father, don't know whether Jesus will return in five minutes. We hope he does. That would be far better. than having more church.

We hope he does, but we also don't know if he's going to wait for 500 years. But we live, Father, knowing that he lived, he loved us, died loving us, rose from the dead loving us, ascended into heaven, he loves us, he is there, our risen Savior and Lord.

You are sovereign over all history. Apple doesn't control history. Progressives don't control history. Conservatives don't control history. Capitalists don't control history.

Socialists and fascists don't control history. You control history. You will bring it to its proper end.

We live between his ascension and his coming again. And we ask, Father, that you have these simple but powerful true stories of Jesus and the gospel take a deep hold in our heart and our mind and our imagination and how we understand ourselves and see the world.

And, Father, we ask that the Holy Spirit would have a deeper power and place in our lives and that you would help ordinary people like us, also men of Galilee, that you would help ordinary people like us bear witness to Jesus as you do the wonderful work of conversion.

[39 : 05] And we ask these things in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior and all God's people said, Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.