

Luke 24:44 - 49 Then He Opened Their Minds to Understand the Scriptures

44 Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are 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 He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; 47 and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 "You are witnesses of these things. 49 "And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

We begin this morning in the middle of an event, a teaching, and though we are at the end of Luke's gospel, we aren't at the end of Luke's story, his message he wants to convey. These words are the launch pad for the book of Acts which Luke will also write down for us. Luke is writing the history of all things Jesus, and these verses this morning are the groundwork of a story that isn't finished.

From Luke's perspective, Jesus here lays out the marching orders based in history, based in old testament scriptures, based in the events of His death and resurrection, and based in future power of the promise of the Father, here is the marching orders that reaches all the way down through 2000 years of continuous church history to us.

We are here because others have obeyed these orders, and we are relayers in a relay race who must faithfully pass on the baton to others who will continue to run this race that began in this room on this night, and is still ongoing this morning.

And Jesus, because He is God, the Word, the Logos, can outline history past to history future in so few words our jaws drop. Here in a couple of sentences He says, everything God did in the past is the groundwork for

everything God will do in the future until the end of time.

Pinch yourselves, here we are, 2000 years later, and we find ourselves in the massive flow of God's sovereign plan of history, just like Jesus said to these men on this night so long ago.

If anyone is having a hard time wondering if this book and everything it says is for real, one proof that is impossible to deny is that Jesus set these things in motion 2000 years ago with these words we will study this morning and you can trace the church, with all of the setbacks Satan has thrown at it, unbroken, back to this room on the evening of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead!

There is an unbroken line of relay racers passing the baton from them, to us. Add to that, that the Jews are still a distinct ethnos, separate and distinct in the world, prophecy unraveling around them, as we speak, it's all unfolding according to what this book foretold eon's ago.

To disbelieve all of the evidence that aligns with this book is actually an act of willful disbelief, as we said last week and we'll get into that a bit again this morning. You don't dis-believe for lack of evidence, you disbelieve willfully because you love your sin and have no desire to leave it for anything else.

So, let's look at this economy of words that captures history, past, present, and future according to the sovereign plan of God who speaks and it happens!

44 Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you

These are my words? What are my words? We've entered a discussion this morning that was already under way. So to get the context set again, by way of review, let's look again at the previous words and what has already been said just before this.

It is the evening of the resurrection. Two disciples who were on their way to Emmaus, walking about 7 miles away, were joined by Jesus, and He opened up for them all of the scriptures about Himself beginning at Moses and through all the prophecies, and their hearts were burning within them as they understood it all, it all made sense, and then He revealed Himself to them and vanished.

So they get up and hustle the 7 miles back to Jerusalem to share their experience with these disciples who are huddled together in this room. They are fearful people, despondent people, hopes dashed people, bewildered and upset over the death of Jesus who they loved, not knowing what to do next, fearful they might be next up on a cross, afraid of the Jews who killed Jesus, huddled together in a room. Bewildered might be the best descriptor. We believed He was Messiah. What good is a dead Messiah?

Then suddenly Cleopas and the other unnamed man bang on the door. Let us in! Let us in! We've got news! And they unbarr the doors to let these two disciples come in, and they begin their tale of how Jesus met them on the road and totally explained all of the scriptures, but they don't get to finish, because suddenly, there aren't two presenters, there are 3. Jesus miraculously appears.

Just the opposite of what happened when he broke bread with the 2, they recognized Him, and He vanished. This is the opposite. He was there and He vanished, now He wasn't there, and suddenly, He is! Resurrection body 101. And Jesus has to begin at their unbelief! Why are you surprised that I'm here? We'll back up a few verses for the context of our opening verse;

36 And while they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst. 37 But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit. 38 And He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 "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." 40 [And when He had said this, He showed them His

hands and His feet.] 41 And while they still could not believe it for joy and were marveling, He said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" 42 And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish; 43 and He took it and ate it before them.

That's our context. Mark tells us He reproached them for the level of their unbelief. No excuse for thinking He's a ghost when He has already told them over and over that He would die and rise again. Then when He does, they can't believe what's in front of their eyes.

Touch me, handle me, look at my hands and feet, put your fingers in the nail holes, give me something to eat, I'm not a ghost. Knuckleheads. And then pick it up in vs. 44 where we begin this morning.

44 Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you

This is what I told you while I was still with you. Your surprise and unbelief is inconsistent with what I have told you for three years. Why are you surprised that what I said would happen has actually happened. He reproaches them for their unbelief.

You didn't listen, to the point that when what I said would happen actually did happen you're startled and amazed and frightened and you think I'm a ghost? Come on! *"These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you*

It's like, it's time to get with the program boys. You didn't listen before, I'm back from the dead, it's time to get your brains engaged. It's time to wake up and listen.

Now, I get it. I wouldn't be in any better shape than any of them if a man who I knew was dead 3 days ago was standing in the room with me with the nail holes in His hands that killed Him. I would be dumbstruck with awe. Just like these guys. Probably worse off than them.

But Jesus is like, I told you this would happen. It did. Next time I tell you something will happen, will you maybe listen up. It's a bizarre situation. We get pretty excited just reading about it. The resurrection from the dead is the single most bizarre occurrence since death was introduced by Adam at God's warning.

After Adam, everybody died. Every one. In the grave. Turn into dirt. Done deal. Until Jesus. Death couldn't hold Him. The prophets had said: *10 For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol, nor will You let Your Holy One see decay.* PS. 16:10 Prophecied 1000 years before this day.

After Adam, every person eventually went into the grave and turned back into dirt. Until Jesus. 3 days. No decay. He's standing in a room telling knuckleheads, I told you so! Pay attention.

This is what I told you. You had no compartment in your minds to formulate the thoughts into reality. Dead people don't come back. Or do they? When Jesus said, Lazarus come forth! Lazarus came back from the grave. That should have been a hint.

He reproaches them a little. I told you this would happen. It happened. Next time I tell you something will happen, listen up. Except Jesus is much more gracious about it than me. He lovingly meets their wavering unbelief where it's at. Touch me. Handle me. Put your fingers in the nail holes. It's Me. I was dead. I'm back. I'm not a ghost. Give me some fish to eat. Ghosts don't eat fish. OK, now listen.

44 Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

This phenomenon isn't something new. It's something old. The firstborn from the dead has been God's unfolding plan since Adam. Since Adam's fall into sin this moment has been unfolding. It's all written down in the

book.

The entire book since Adam has been about this day. Adam brought death because of sin. Everything after that event has been and now is some form or fashion about this moment now realized in the sight of these overwhelmed believers. It's all about Him. It's all about taking back this stolen world from Satan and purchasing life for those who are dead in their sin.

All of it! I can't repeat that enough. The entire book is about Jesus. Jesus beats death. Jesus provides a way, a pathway from death to life for those who will believe. Jesus is back from the dead. It's all true.

And beyond that, all of the stuff about the ultimate victory over Satan and retaking this world in a fearful cataclysmic standoff between Satan, anti-christ, false prophet, and some kind of weird image of the beast, that's all true too!

A dead man, now alive, is teaching us what the entire book is about. ***all things . . . which are 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,

Whoa! Wouldn't you have liked to have been there for THAT lesson?? And yet I think we have that lesson unfolded for us in the entirety of the book of Acts. The whole book. Every time the apostles get up to preach, it's the old testament, (they didn't have the new testament yet, they were the authors of the New Testament) but every time they start to preach in Acts, something of what Jesus taught them here comes out.

A little parenthesis here. John tells us that Jesus appeared after the resurrection for 40 days. They didn't digest everything in this single meeting on the evening of His resurrection. He opened the old testament scriptures to them for 40 days before He ascended into heaven. Luke has it

all jambed together in this paragraph.

I would add here that without the Holy Spirit opening your minds, you can't understand scripture. The reverse is true. Spirit indwelt believers have the indwelling teacher to open their minds to understand. The world cannot understand this book. They get it wrong every time! Believers have the same resident truth teacher that these men had that night.

But this opening of their minds to understand the scriptures about Messiah was transforming for them. Listen for example to Peter at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit comes down to the church, the disciples, and they all speak in languages they didn't know; From Acts chapter 2;

14 But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: "Men of Judea, and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give heed to my words. 15 "For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day; 16 but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel:

*17 'AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS,' God says,
 'THAT I WILL POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT UPON ALL
MANKIND;
 AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHECY,
 AND YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS,
 AND YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS;*

*18 EVEN UPON MY BONDSLAVES, BOTH MEN AND WOMEN,
 I WILL IN THOSE DAYS POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT
 And they shall prophesy.*

*19 'AND I WILL GRANT WONDERS IN THE SKY ABOVE,
 AND SIGNS ON THE EARTH BENEATH,
 BLOOD, AND FIRE, AND VAPOR OF SMOKE.*

20 'THE SUN SHALL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS,

*AND THE MOON INTO BLOOD,
BEFORE THE GREAT AND GLORIOUS DAY OF THE LORD
SHALL COME.*

*21 'AND IT SHALL BE, THAT EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE
NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED.'*

*22 "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man
attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God
performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know— 23
this Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of
God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to
death. 24 "And God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of
death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.*

Where did that come from. The prophet Joel? The predetermined sovereign plan of God? Theology old and new! Peter is a fisherman. From the sticks. Peter didn't sit at the feet of Gamaliel. Peter sat at the feet of Jonas, his dad, and learned to pull his weight dragging fish into a small wooden boat in order to sell them and not starve to death.

Peter didn't have written notes, like I have to, he breaks into this text of the old testament verbatim. Where did that come from? I'll tell you where it came from. It came from this night when Jesus showed up with the nail holes, previously dead, and said, it's time for you guys to listen.

And you read through the book of Acts and it just goes on and on like that. Acts 3; *22 "Moses said, 'THE LORD GOD SHALL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BRETHREN; TO HIM YOU SHALL GIVE HEED in everything He says to you. 23 'And it shall be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'* *24 "And likewise, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and his successors onward, also announced these days. 25 "It is you who are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, 'AND IN YOUR SEED ALL THE*

FAMILIES OF THE EARTH SHALL BE BLESSED.’ 26 “For you first, God raised up His Servant, and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways.”

That's Peter. The fisherman from nowhere. Where is that coming from? All of a sudden Peter of Galilee is the pre-emminent biblical scholar in Israel. And the Jews recognized that. They're rubbing their collective elitist heads going, these are un-learned men. Even then we had the elite's and the nobody's from fly-over land.

We could use up a lot of time and look at all of the old testament references in the book of acts as the church is being formed out of nothing, like creation itself, but you get the idea. Jesus has opened up the minds of these men to singularly understand the entire scope of the revelation of God. All of it is about Him. All of it is usable.

46 and He said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day;

They were astonished, but they were more astonished when they understood their Bibles had been fore-telling these events all along. The disciples and apostles were the product of a generation who had cherry picked certain things they wanted to hear about Messiah and ignored all the rest.

Israel wanted a Messiah who was a warrior, a victor, a ruler who would set Israel up as the pinnacle nation that all other nations bowed down to. They wanted a Messiah who performed signs in the skies, like Joel the prophet said.

*19 ‘AND I WILL GRANT WONDERS IN THE SKY ABOVE,
AND SIGNS ON THE EARTH BENEATH,
BLOOD, AND FIRE, AND VAPOR OF SMOKE.*

20 ‘THE SUN SHALL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS,

*AND THE MOON INTO BLOOD,
BEFORE THE GREAT AND GLORIOUS DAY OF THE LORD
SHALL COME.*

That's the messiah Israel wanted. Great and glorious day of the Lord messiah who is doing wonders in the sky, and blood and fire and vapor of smoke on the earth beneath. That's messiah.

Jesus takes time to open the book to explain that first messiah must die in our place for forgiveness of sin. Blood and fire and vapor of smoke is great, but without forgiveness we'd all be on the receiving end of that judgement.

BTW it hasn't escaped my notice in the previous week that we're getting closer to blood and fire and vapor of smoke than we've ever been since Nagasaki. The doomsday clock is ticking down the seconds to midnight. That just makes the forgiveness purchased by His death and resurrection even more important than ever.

The blood and fire and vapor of smoke on earth with signs in the skies Messiah is yet coming, but the necessary Messiah for these men to form a people for His name who will escape death and hell, is the suffering Messiah who must die and rise again. Imagine having the first born from the dead standing there telling you all these things.

Why is *suffering-Messiah* necessary before *signs-in-the-skies-and-blood - fire - vapor of smoke Messiah*? Next verse in this economy of words.

47 and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

Astonishing economy of words. The entire book is about Him. He opens their minds to understand it all. An hour ago they were confused, despondent, depressed, bewildered, fearful people. Now they know more about the sovereign plan of God and it's execution over the eons than

anyone else on earth.

Vss. 44 - 46 tell us that the entire revelation of God since Adam has swirled with purpose around one person, Jesus. Vs. 47 tells us in a dozen words or so what the purpose of the church will be for the next 2000 years. So we've got 2000 years previous in 44 - 46 and 2000 years future in vs. 47. Nobody else can do that but Jesus. No human mind could think this stuff up. It has to be from God!

The roll of the book is about Messiah. He had to suffer and die and rise again from the dead, the first born from the dead, why? So that vs 47 can happen;

47 and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

About a dozen and a half words that we've been working on for 2000 years and it's not finished yet. Astonishing truth. Only the mind of God could say these things.

We need to break these words down carefully. This is our marching plan. This is what the church is tasked to do. Whatever else we do, sing together, eat together, study together, pray together, none of it is of any purpose or meaning unless somehow it works together to accomplish this one task.

The church's one ultimate task is to proclaim to all the nations that repentance for the forgiveness of sins is possible and available in the singular name of Jesus. It's like the current TV joke. You had one job. That should be a gob smack for us. People, we have one job. All of the other stuff is peripheral. One job; proclaim to all the nations that repentance for the forgiveness of sins is possible and available in the singular name of Jesus. Let's look at these loaded words;

Let's begin by talking about this forgotten idea of repentance. Nobody wants to talk about repanance these days. Totally forgotten, almost

shunned by evangelicals at large. Nobody wants to hear it, so we oblige them by not saying it.

What is repentance. It isn't tearful weeping and sorrow per se. That could be part of it. Repentance is understanding that you have offended a holy God. Repentance is understanding that your entire life has revolved around being a sinful citizen of Satan's world and suddenly you're sorry for the fearful offense and you want to leave that world behind and be a child of God, sins forgiven, instead.

Repentance is at least the desire to come away from Satan's grasp and belong to God. It's a willingness, even though we're helpless to accomplish it, a willingness to come out of this world and walk with God, in His world. John 7:17 *"If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself."*

You say, that's pretty delusional. Walk down the street through the neighborhood and ask every neighbor if they'd like to leave their sin behind and belong to God and be a son or daughter of His instead of Satan's and see how that goes for you.

Nobody wants that! Maybe we can soft-sell a religion that lets you keep your sin but you get all the benefits. Jesus just loves you and wants you no matter what and you don't have to change anything to be in alignment with God's laws, just come as you are and He'll save you and you can keep right on doing what you were doing. It's a good deal. Sin here, heaven later, no repentance required.

That's what American evangelicalism is selling. The church looks more like the world than, well, the world. Those folks are tares amongst wheat.

47 and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

Repentance is the understanding that you've lived sinfully in rebellion

against a Holy God and a willingness and desire to live in whatever way pleases Him, because He is Lord. Of everyone!

Repentance is all about the two opposing authorities to reign. Satan's world. God's world. Repentance is the desire to leave sin and Satan behind and be a citizen of God's world.

Later on, we find out repentance is something that God grants to us. The reason I could knock on every door on the street and nobody would want to repent and leave their sin behind is because repentance isn't even possible unless God grants it.

Let me modify that. The reason I could knock on every door on the street and might find someone who desperately wants to be right with God at any price is because God grants it.

In the book of Acts, it always talks about God **granting** repentance. Nobody wants to leave their sin and walk with God, unless God grants them the repentance that leads to life. Repentance originates with God, not us.

And repentance is the door that leads to forgiveness. In vs. 47, it's our job to proclaim. It's God's job to grant repentance and forgiveness. It's the Spirit's job to convict of sin and grant repentance and forgiveness. And Jesus told Nicodemus, the Spirit blows where it wills. We are tasked to proclaim. We have no control over the results.

Next we are told that repentance for forgiveness should be proclaimed in His name... What does that mean. Peter heard Jesus say that and it comes pouring out of Peter again in Acts chapter 4. In His name . . . In His name . . . in the NAME of Jesus Christ . . .

Listen to Peter as he preaches and the old testament is just pouring out of him and then these very words that Jesus just said here. All mixed up together. All the Word of God;

10 *let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that **by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene**, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—**by this name** this man stands here before you in good health. 11 “He is the **STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED** by you, **THE BUILDERS**, but **WHICH BECAME THE VERY CORNER** stone. 12 “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other **name** under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved.”*

By the name of Jesus Christ. Why is it the name. What is the significance of the name? Jesus says we are to proclaim forgiveness in His name. *No other name.* It is because of the exclusivity of the person with the name.

Our faith is directed to a singular person. In His name is the equivalent of that truth. The name is the person. God told Moses His name. I AM that I AM. The name is the being of the person. Forgiveness is in the name of Jesus. No other name.

Peter makes another old testament quotation in that passage we just read. The stone that the builders rejected is from Psalms 118. And then Peter requotes what Jesus told them on this night. *for there is **no other name** under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved*

Nothing these days seems to make the world more angry than the idea of exclusivity in religion. Especially this particular exclusiveness. Satan has been very successful in what we used to call burnover. The term means a land that is so scorched nothing can grow there again. Burnover.

And Satan has successfully had so many dead end religions that claim exclusivity that the one correct religion that does by God's command claim exclusivity falls on dead angry ears. The world hates exclusivity almost as much as it hates repentance.

But that is the message we are told to proclaim. The world is intolerant of it. Intolerant of a God who defines sin. Intolerant of the need to repent

from sin. Intolerant to the idea that forgiveness for sin, if there is such a thing, is exclusively available in a single name. Jesus the Christ, who was crucified and rose up again from the dead.

Well, *that* isn't good news. Who is it that we are tasked to proclaim this message to?

47 and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem

You had one job. Proclaim the singular exclusive name of Jesus for repentance for the forgiveness of sins, to the whole world.

Beloved, nothing else we do matters. We've got one job. Everything we do should somehow come back to that singular focus. Proclaim the name of Jesus to the world. Forgiveness is only available in Him. Leaving sin behind and coming under the authority and rule of Jesus as Lord is required. That's our message.

Take it to all the nations, *beginning from Jerusalem*. This was as foreign to Jewish ears as God telling Jonah to go save the Ninevites. Why would I do that! I hate the Ninevites. I want the Ninevites to suffer God's judgement. The Ninevites deserve God's wrath. Why would I do anything that might benefit them! That was pretty much how Jews looked at the nations.

Peter had to have a special vision of unclean things on a sheet with God telling him to partake. Two times. Then Peter goes to Cornelius, and the gentiles and God grants them repentance. The apostles are dumbfounded! Peter is like, what could I do! I didn't want this. God forced the gentiles on us. They get the Holy Spirit exactly the same as we did!

Paul even more so. Paul not only hated the gentiles, he hated the Christians even worse. We don't know how much personal instruction Paul got in his three years in the desert after his conversion on the Damascus road, getting his doctrine from Jesus. Paul actually did sit at the feet of Gamaliel.

Jesus said, Proclaim this message to **all the nations!** Listen to Paul in Romans 15; 8 *For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers, 9 and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written,*

“THEREFORE I WILL GIVE PRAISE TO THEE AMONG THE GENTILES, AND I WILL SING TO THY NAME.” 10 And again he says, “REJOICE, O GENTILES, WITH HIS PEOPLE.” 11 And again, “PRAISE THE LORD ALL YOU GENTILES, AND LET ALL THE PEOPLES PRAISE HIM.” 12 And again Isaiah says, “THERE SHALL COME THE ROOT OF JESSE, AND HE WHO ARISES TO RULE OVER THE GENTILES, IN HIM SHALL THE GENTILES HOPE.”

Paul didn't get the message about proclaiming to the gentiles at the same time as the apostles. He was *one untimely born* according to his own words, yet a full apostle. And Paul DID know the scriptures from previous study, unlike the fishermen.

Paul certainly understood Jesus commission to proclaim the message of repentance for the forgiveness of sins to all the nations. He started walking and began the work to complete that task. All the way to Rome!

How could something as impossible as turning the whole known world upside down in a generation possibly happen? The next words out of Jesus mouth tell us.

48 “You are witnesses of these things. 49 “And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

The promise of the Holy Spirit. That's how. Jesus could only be in one place at one time. The Holy Spirit can empower every christian to carry out this impossible task, everywhere, at all times, we have Jesus living IN us,

empowering the gospel wherever we take it.

We've got one job. Proclaim repentance and forgiveness in a single Name. The name of Jesus. The Holy Spirit either grants repentance . . . or not. That's God's business. Our business is to proclaim the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit working in us and with us, and leave the results to Him.