

April 9, 2023 by Steve Brandon



Words after the Cross

Luke 24

- 1. Jesus Opened the Scriptures (verses 1-27).**
- 2. Jesus Opened their Eyes (verses 28-35).**
- 3. Jesus Opened their Minds (verses 36-53).**

For the past few weeks at Rock Valley Bible Church, we have been looking at the last words of Jesus from the cross. First, we considered the words from Luke. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). A word of forgiveness, displaying for us the heart of Jesus. "Today, you will be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). A word of salvation, providing hope to all who seek the Lord. "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit" (Luke 23:46). A word of submission, demonstrating his commitment to God.

Last Sunday, we looked at the last words of Jesus from the cross as recorded in the gospel of John. "Woman, behold your son!" "Behold, your mother" (John 19:26-27). A word of compassion, teaching us of the kindness of Jesus. "I thirst" (John 19:28). A word of suffering, exposing the suffering of Jesus. "It is finished" (John 19:30). A word of victory, giving us confidence in the work of Christ.

On Good Friday, we looked at one last word of Jesus upon the cross. "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34). This is a word of abandonment, showing us the depths of what happened on the cross. This took us to Jesus in the tomb.

Now, this is Resurrection Sunday, when we celebrate Jesus, risen from the dead! This morning, rather than looking at the words that Jesus said from the cross, we are going to look at the words that Jesus spoke after the cross. Now, this isn't as nice and neat as the seven words that Jesus spoke from the cross. We have many more words recorded in the Bible that Jesus said after the cross. So, we aren't going to chase them all down. Rather, we are going to focus upon the words of Jesus after the cross as recorded in the gospel of Luke.

So, you can open in your Bibles to Luke, chapter 24. I'm going to read through this entire story and focus upon what Jesus said after the cross. We begin with the story of the empty tomb.

Luke 24:1-12

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise." And they remembered his words, and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest.

Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened.

This is what Easter is all about. It's about Jesus, not being in the tomb. It's about Jesus, conquering death. It's about Jesus, staying true to his word, that he would rise on the third day.

At this point in the narrative, there is some confusion among the disciples. The women saw the empty tomb. The women saw the angels (verse 23). The women heard what they had said, and they remembered how Jesus had predicted his resurrection. Seemingly, they believed.

But when these women returned to tell the eleven, there seemed to be some disbelief among them (verse 9, 11). What the women were telling them "seemed to them like an idle tale" (verse 11) and they "did not believe them" (verse 11). So, Peter went to check things out on their own. This is so typical of men. We need to have it proven in our own eyes. When Peter arrived at the tomb, he saw everything that the women had said. Luke doesn't say here that Peter believed, simply that he "marveled." He (and the rest of the disciples) were still trying to figure things out.

Then the scene switches. It's the same day, but different locations.

Luke 24:13-17

That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad.

Here we see Jesus speak his first words in the gospel of Luke after risen from the dead. Somehow, these disciples were prevented from recognizing Jesus. I don't think that it's because Jesus had on a ball cap on and some dark sunglasses. I think that it was supernatural. Jesus had something to teach these disciples.

These words, "What is this conversation?" were meant to draw out the disciples. Jesus knew what conversation they were having. He wanted them to talk. And they did.

Luke 24:18-19a

Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" And he said to them, "What things?"

Again, Jesus was drawing them out.

Luke 24:19b-27

And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

Here come the first substantial words of Jesus to these disciples after the cross. First of all, he addresses their unbelief. He calls them fools. He calls the "slow to heart to believe" (verse 25). Then, Jesus opens up the Scripture to them. "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" (verse 27). This is my first point this morning.

1. Jesus Opened the Scriptures (verses 1-27).

So, picture the scene. Jesus and these two disciples are walking along the road to Emmaus. Without Bible in hand, he begins to simply explain from the Old Testament Scriptures about the Christ. Now, I don't think that Jesus lectured them the entire time, but had a dialogue with them, showing them how it was necessary for the Christ to suffer first, before entering into his glory.

Jesus may have said something to this effect. [U](#)

Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer? This is clear from the law of Moses. The first promise of a Messiah came in Genesis 3:15. It came in the form of a curse to the serpent:

Genesis 3:15

I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel.

The promise is one of ultimate defeat to the serpent. He will be bruised on the head (i.e. the ultimate death wound). Yet, the Messiah will be bruised on the heel. Indeed, this denotes some suffering. And since this verse prophesies of the ultimate death of the serpent, surely this can represent a temporary death to the Messiah.

Going further into the law of Moses, Moses, himself, promised that God would raise up a prophet like him.

Deuteronomy 18:18

I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.

So, how well do you think they would listen to this prophet? About as well as the people listened to Moses. He suffered through the complaints of the people. Is it surprising at all that the Messiah would be rejected as well?

Now, what about the Psalms? Do you remember Psalm 2?

Psalms 2:1-2

Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain?
The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers take counsel together,
against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying,
"Let us burst their bonds apart
and cast away their cords from us."

This shows how much the nations would hate the Messiah (i.e. the "Anointed"). They rage against him. They want to kill

him!

Do you remember Psalm 22? This Psalm describes in detail the events of the cross from a few days ago.

Psalm 22:6-8, 14-18

But I am a worm and not a man,
scorned by mankind and despised by the people.
All who see me mock me;
they make mouths at me;
they wag their heads;
"He trusts in the Lord;
let him deliver him;
let him rescue him,
for he delights in him!"

I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint;
my heart is like wax;
it is melted within my breast;
my strength is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue sticks to my jaws;
you lay me in the dust of death.

For dogs encompass me;
a company of evildoers encircles me;
they have pierced my hands and feet
—I can count all my bones—
they stare and gloat over me;

they divide my garments among them,
and for my clothing they cast lots.

All of these things happened to Jesus upon the cross. Those on the ground mocked Jesus with these very words! His bones were put out of joint. His mouth was parched dry. Evildoers surrounded him. His hands and his feet were pierced. Yet, his legs were not broken (as were those of the other criminals upon the cross). The soldiers cast lots for his clothing. Such was to be the lot of the Messiah.

Further, do you remember one of the last things that Jesus said upon the cross?

Psalm 22:1

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

It was prophesied of the Messiah that he would suffer such things. And indeed, they happened here in Jerusalem, but a few days ago.

Do you remember Psalm 118? It speaks about the stone being rejected before becoming the cornerstone.

Psalm 118:22

The stone that the builders rejected Has become the cornerstone.

This Psalm prophesies of the rejection of the Messiah. Surely this involved some suffering, and even death like we saw in Jerusalem.

How about the Prophets? Isaiah prophesied of the "suffering servant" on several occasions. This shows that the Messiah would suffer first before entering into his glory. Consider a few of the verses of chapter 53.

Isaiah 53:3-5

He was despised and rejected by men,
a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief;
and as one from whom men hide their faces
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.
Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.
But he was pierced for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his wounds we are healed.

This prophesies of the Messiah being rejected and despised. It tells of the Messiah being stricken, smitten, and afflicted. It

describes him being pierced and crushed. The Messiah had to suffer! Isaiah 50 tells the same story, of suffering and disgrace.

Isaiah 50:5-6

The Lord GOD has opened my ear,
and I was not rebellious;
I turned not backward.
I gave my back to those who strike,
and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard;
I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting.

Isaiah wasn't the only prophet that foretold of the suffering of the Messiah. Daniel also prophesied of the time of the coming of the Messiah. In his coming, he mentions the suffering that will come as well.

Daniel 9:26

And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off and shall have nothing.

When the messiah comes, he will be "cut off and shall have nothing." This clearly indicates suffering, and perhaps even the death of the Messiah. Zechariah also speaks of the Messiah being "pierced."

Zechariah 12:10

When they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.

This indicates suffering to a great degree. One doesn't weep over an injury, but over a death. Zechariah prophesied of the death of the Messiah, which Israel will only later realize what they have done. All of these things must have happened first, before the Christ would enter into his glory.

You disciples may have your minds and hearts placed upon the glories of the Messiah! and they are many! He will sit on the throne of David! (2 Samuel 7) Of his kingdom, there will be no end! (Isaiah 9:6-7) And through him, all the nations will be blessed (Gen 12:3) as he will rule the world in peace (Isaiah 9:6-7).

But you didn't embrace the sufferings of the Messiah! He was going to save like the Passover Lamb, who gave his life for the sins of Israel. He was going to be like every other prophet, hated and despised by the people of Israel, for which of the prophets ever lived without being persecuted?

About the time when Jesus was finished opening the Scriptures, they arrived at their destination.

Luke 24:28-29

So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them.

These two disciples invited Jesus into their house. Jesus complied with their request and spent the evening with them.

Luke 24:30-31

When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him.

Now, we don't know exactly what Jesus did, nor exactly what he said, But with his words after the cross, we see my second point this morning.

2. Jesus Opened their Eyes (verses 28-35).

They began to see the realities of the resurrection! I wouldn't doubt that Jesus reenacted what he did on the night of the Passover with this twelve disciples. Jesus may have took bread and broke it saying, "This is my body, broken for you, do this in remembrance of me." He also may have lifted the cup and said, "This cup is the New Covenant in my blood, do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me."

There was something in the manner of how he broke the bread that opened their eyes to the reality of who it was that was sitting before them! It was Jesus! And this veil that came upon their eyes not to recognize him on the way (verse 16), was suddenly lifted, "And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him" (verse 31).

Note the passive tense. "Their eyes were opened." That is, it wasn't that they finally opened their eyes to who Jesus was. It was that their eyes were opened for them. I would contend that it was Jesus who opened their eyes.

Can you imagine everything going through their minds when they came to understand that Jesus was seated right next to them? They had seen Jesus crucified. They envisioned him as dead in the tomb, but had heard rumors of the empty tomb. And now, Jesus, himself was sitting before them! He was supposed to be in Jerusalem. Yet, he was on the road! and he had spoken with them! and he had opened the Scriptures to them! But now, "their eyes were opened, and they recognized him" (verse 31).

And then ...

Luke 24:31

He vanished from their sight.

After Jesus vanished, they began to process everything that had happened.

Luke 24:32

They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?"

They began to process what happened to them on the road. and when Jesus was opening the Scriptures with them. their hearts were "burning." What an interesting word! Something was stirring within them, a warmth and delight of beginning to see what they didn't quite believe. a conviction that it all may indeed be true! that yes, indeed, that the angels who spoke with the women were indeed true (verse 23). Jesus was alive! and then, their eyes were opened to recognize that it was Jesus before them!

So, they got up and made the return trip to Jerusalem. We read about this in verse 33, 33

Luke 24:33-35

And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Evidence was mounting that Jesus was truly alive! Not only did Jesus appear to the two on the road to Emmaus, but he had also appeared to Simon Peter! Their eyes were being opened!

Then, in verse 36, as if to remove all doubt, Jesus appeared to all of the disciples together.

Luke 24:36

As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you!"

As quickly as Jesus had "vanished from their sight" (in verse 31), so also now does he appear before them. He first speaks a word of peace, "Peace to you." This was the common greeting of the Jews in the day. "Shalom" "Shalom Lehack." "Hello" "Greetings to you." Verse 37 tells us their response.

Luke 24:37

But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit.

Rightly so they were "startled and frightened"! it's not often that a crucified-risen man just appears before you! They had troubles grasping what was taking place. They thought that he was a spirit! So, Jesus tries to calm their troubled hearts by showing that he was indeed flesh and blood.

Luke 24:38-43

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.

Catch the wonders of the moment! Jesus invited them to enter into the reality of the resurrection in a way that we will never know. He said, "Touch me and see!" These disciples were able to lay their hands upon the flesh of Jesus to confirm in their own hearts and minds, that Jesus was indeed, risen from the dead! Further, they were able to watch him eat! I don't think that Jesus ate the fish because he was hungry. I think that he ate the fish to demonstrate that he was indeed alive, in flesh and blood, able to eat! And then, Jesus goes back to the Scriptures.

Luke 24:44-45

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." Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,

It's here that we get our last point this morning. We have seen Jesus open the Scriptures to the disciples (verses 1-27). We have seen Jesus open the eyes of the disciples to recognize him (verses 28-35). And now, our third point.

3. Jesus Opened their Minds (verses 36-53).

You see that there in verse 45.

Luke 24:45

Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,

Jesus opened their minds with the words he spoke after the cross, "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" (Luke 24:44). Jesus had been clear with the disciples, long before his death, that he would suffer and then rise again!

Luke 9:22

"The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised."

Luke 18:31-33

And taking the twelve, he said to them, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. For he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. And after flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise."

As clear as Jesus spoke, it was equally unclear in the minds of the disciples. Luke comments on their unbelief with these words explaining why.

Luke 18:34

But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.

During his life, indeed, these things were hidden from the disciples. But now, after the resurrection, Jesus opened their minds to know and understand not only what he had been telling them, but that this is exactly what the Scriptures had foretold.

Everything about Jesus that was written in the Scriptures had to be fulfilled. From his birth in Bethlehem, to his betrayal in Jerusalem. From his miracles in Galilee to his mistreatment by the Romans. From his teachings to the crowds to his trial before Pilate. From his dealings with the Pharisees to his death on the cross. From his righteous life to the resurrection from the dead. All of his had to be fulfilled! And indeed it was! All of it!

I find it interesting, and greatly encouraging, that Jesus would go back to the Scriptures as his proof for what happened! Sure, the disciples got to see Jesus and touch Jesus and eat with Jesus. Things that we haven't done and won't ever be able to do. But the ultimate proof of his resurrection is that it was confirmed in the Scriptures, which we have! which we can read! We can read the law of Moses. We can read the prophets. We can read the Psalms.

That's why I have encouraged all of you to be Bible readers! Be consistently reading through the Scriptures to see these things. We have several small groups in this church of those who are reading through the Bible and talking about it together on a weekly basis. I would encourage you to be involved in one of these groups, were we read all of the law of Moses, all of the prophets and all of the Psalms.

Getting to the main application of my message: have your eyes been opened? Is your mind opened to the resurrection? Do you believe these things? Forgiveness of sins is the result! If you believe that Jesus rose from the dead, you will be saved! (Romans 10:9-10). You will be forgiven! You will enjoy eternal fellowship with the Lord. And this message is to be proclaimed.

Luke 24:46-49

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 from 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."

This is what he calls all of us to do. Embrace the risen Christ. Go out and proclaim to others to "repent that you might be forgiven!"

I trust that these words seem familiar to many of you, as we have recently finished preaching through the book of Acts. In the first chapter of Acts (which Luke also wrote), we read of how Jesus told his disciples to wait in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit would come upon the disciples. Then, they would be witnesses of Jesus to the nations beginning in Jerusalem. We find this in Acts 1:8.

Acts 1:8

"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 to the end of the earth."

This is God's call to all of us, to be his witnesses! To tell others to repent and experience the forgiveness of sins through Christ!

This chapter (and the book of Luke) finishes with these words:

Luke 24:50-53

And he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God.

I can think of no better application to us this Easter morning than a word of joy. The resurrection of Christ should fill our hearts and our minds with joy! We serve a risen savior. Since he lives, we too will live forever with him! May we also continue to be blessing God together!

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on April 9, 2023 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rockvalleybiblechurch.org.

[1] Of course, Jesus wouldn't have used the chapters and verses from the Bible in his references, as these didn't come until the 13th century (more than a thousand years after Jesus came). See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chapters_and_verses_of_the_Bible. Yet, I use them here for easy reference and study.