

Foothills Christian Assembly Sermon December 12, 2021  
Acts 1:3 – “Jesus was Seen by Them During Forty Days”

Lk 24:33-53

33 So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, 34 saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" 35 And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.

36 Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you." 37 But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. 38 And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have." 40 When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. 41 But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, "Have you any food here?" 42 So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb.

**43 And He took it and ate in their presence.**

**44 Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me."** 45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. 46 Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 And you are witnesses of these things. 49 Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."

50 And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. 51 Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. 52 And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, 53 and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen.

Acts 1:1-9

1 The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, 2 until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, 3 to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

4 And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; 5 for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." 6 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7 And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. 8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

9 Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

- I. Introduction
  - a. Today's sermon: Acts 1:3 – "Jesus was Seen by Them During Forty Days"
    - 1. Luke's description of Christ's activity during the 40 days: Acts 1:3
    - 2. Luke 24:43 – likely ends Luke's description of Resurrection Day events
      - 1. End of day 1 of the 40 days of Acts 1:3
    - 3. Luke 24:44 – likely begins Luke's description of Ascension Day events
      - 1. Corresponds to day 40 of the 40 days of Acts 1:3
      - 2. Corresponds to Acts 1:4-9 description of Ascension Day events
    - 4. The events of the 40 days
      - 1. Begins with Resurrection Day: day 1 (prior sermons)
      - 2. Thomas believes on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Christian Sabbath – John 20:26-29
      - 3. The disciples go to Galilee as commanded – Matthew 28:16
      - 4. Jesus with seven disciples by Sea of Tiberias - Jn 21:1-23
      - 5. Great Commission: eleven on the mount in Galilee – Mt 28:17-20
      - 6. By over 500 brethren at once – 1 Corinthians 15:6
      - 7. By James, the brother of Jesus – 1 Corinthians 15:7
      - 8. Ascension Day – Lk 24:44-53; Mk 16:14-20; Acts 1:4-11
    - 5. Questions to know, love and obey God
- II. Luke's description of Christ's activity during the 40 days
  - a. "to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."
    - 1. Presented Himself alive by many infallible proofs
    - 2. Speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God
- III. Luke 24:43 – likely ends Luke's description of Resurrection Day (Day 1 of 40)
  - a. The natural flow of Lk 24:33 – 43 show us that Jesus appears in the midst of His disciples (v36) as they were discussing the Emmaus events and Christ's prior appearance to Peter. Hence, verse 43 ends that scene of Christ's appearance at the end of Resurrection Day.
  - b. So, this is the end of day 1 of the 40 days of Acts 1:3
    - 1. "to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."
- IV. Luke 24:44 – likely begins Luke's description of Ascension Day events
  - a. The natural flow of Lk 24:44-53 shows the words of Christ in verses 44-49 closely connected with the ascension description of verses 50-53.
  - b. Corresponds to day 40 of the 40 days of Acts 1:3
    - 1. "to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."
  - c. Corresponds to Acts 1:4-9 description of Ascension Day events
    - 1. And, as we saw last week, the teaching of Christ in Lk 24:44-49 is very similar to the teaching of Christ in Acts 1:4-8

2. Lk 24:44-49 "44 Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." 45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. 46 Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 And you are witnesses of these things. 49 Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."
3. Acts 1:4-8 "4 And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; 5 for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." 6 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7 And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. 8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."
4. Similarities:
  1. Tarry in Jerusalem
  2. Wait for the Promise of the (My) Father
  3. Disciples are His witnesses
  4. Take the Gospel to the whole earth, beginning at Jerusalem
  5. Disciples will receive power from on high when the Spirit falls upon them

d. So, what happens between the end of Luke's Resurrection Day account and the beginning of Luke's Ascension Day account? What does the Bible tell us about "to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."

- V. The events of the 40 days: Thomas believes: the 2<sup>nd</sup> Christian Sabbath – John 20:26-29
- a. "26 And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" 27 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." 28 And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.""
  - b. At the first Christian Sabbath when Jesus appeared to His disciples, Thomas wasn't present (Jn 20:24,25)

1. 24 Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."
- c. Thomas has enough belief to stick around with the disciples. But, he will not go on to full belief until he has been given infallible proofs of Christ's resurrection. He says he will not believe unless 1\*) he sees Christ's nail-scarred hands with his own eyes, and 2\*) touches Christ's nail-scars with his own finger and puts his own hand in Christ's spear-scarred side. Thomas is willing to believe, but he waits on the proof. So what happens?
  1. Jesus stood in their midst before Thomas' eyes
  2. Jesus spoke audible words to them "Peace to you"
  3. Jesus spoke audible words directly to Thomas, inviting Thomas to look at His hands (1\*) and touch His hands with his finger (2\*) and put his hand into Jesus' spear-scarred side (2\*)
  4. While not directly reported, the strong inference is that Thomas saw Christ's cross-scars with his own eyes and touched His cross-scars with his own finger, and with his own hand.
  5. Jesus commands Thomas not to be unbelieving, but rather to believe, in the midst of providing Thomas these infallible proofs of His total bodily resurrection.
  6. Thomas believes: "My Lord and My God!"
  7. Jesus then defines two types of believers:
    1. Those like Thomas: believing because they have seen the resurrected Christ with their own eyes. Personal infallible proofs are necessary for this kind of believer. And, God, in His mercy, condescends to provide the infallible proof for these honest seekers. Applies only to first century believers (who could actually see Christ's resurrection body), but still today there are some who need more proof from God than others. But, note, faith always comes first before we can believe any proofs God condescends to give us..
    2. Those who have not seen Christ's resurrected body, and yet they believe, relying upon the truth of the Gospel message. All Christians who have never seen or touched Christ's resurrected Body.
- VI. The events of the 40 days: The disciples go to Galilee as commanded – Matthew 28:16
  - a. "Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them."
    1. As Jesus had predicted after Last Supper
      1. Mt 26: 30-32"30 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. 31 Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I

will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' 32 But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.'"

2. Mk 14:26-28 "26 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. 27 Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep will be scattered.' 28 "But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."
  2. As commanded by angels and Jesus on Resurrection morning
    1. Mt 28: 1-10 "1 Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. 2 And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. 3 His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. 4 And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men. 5 But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. 6 He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. 7 And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you." 8 So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word. 9 And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, "Rejoice!" So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me."
    2. Mk 16:5-7 "And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. 6 But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. 7 But go, tell His disciples--and Peter--that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you."
    3. So, sometime after that 2<sup>nd</sup> Christian Sabbath meeting with Christ, the disciples decide together to travel to Galilee. They have been told they will see Him there, so they go. They will see Him again, and they will be instructed by Him of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.
- VII. The events of the 40 days: Jesus with seven disciples by Sea of Tiberias - Jn 21:1-23
- a. So, the disciples have made their way to Galilee, and some of them decide to go fishing in the Sea of Galilee (also called Sea of Tiberias). V1 says "after these things" – referencing their prior meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Christian Sabbath when Thomas believed. If the way the sea is named can be a clue, then perhaps the

disciples are near Tiberias, the city of Galilee on the western coast of the sea of Galilee founded by Herod Antipas in AD 18, named after the emperor.

- b. Jesus calls to His disciples from the shore; a great catch; Peter swims to Christ
  1. "1 After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and in this way He showed Himself: 2 Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. 3 Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We are going with you also." They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing. 4 But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. 5 Then Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any food?" They answered Him, "No." 6 And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish. 7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea. 8 But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish."
    1. Peter, James and John had been through this before on the Sea of Galilee, at the beginning of their relationship with Christ. Luke 5:4-11
    2. "When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." 5 But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net." 6 And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. 7 So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. 8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" 9 For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; 10 and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men." 11 So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him."
    3. This time, instead of staying in the boat and tending to the huge catch of fish, Peter jumps in and swims to His Lord.
    4. Not only does Jesus show Himself to them, but He performs a mighty wonder with the fish. A double proof: He's alive as a Man, and He's still Divine.
- c. Breakfast with Jesus

1. "9 Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. 10 Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have just caught." 11 Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken. 12 Jesus said to them, "Come and eat breakfast." Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, "Who are You?"--knowing that it was the Lord. 13 Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish. 14 This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead."
  1. So, Jesus cooks breakfast for these tired and hungry fishermen, fish and bread cooked over a fire of coals. They arrive to the shore, too amazed to speak up, and bring some of the fish to Jesus. 153 large fish. Net still intact. Breakfast with Jesus by the sea. Oh, Jesus is alive! He is encouraging them for the battle ahead. Imagine the power of this memory for these men who went on to suffer so deeply as they took the Gospel to the ends of the earth! They will catch men, and the Holy Spirit's nets never break.
  2. Infallible proofs that pierce the reason and penetrate the heart, teaching them of the things pertaining to Christ's glorious Kingdom, His Kingdom of grace, mercy, peace and joy for all who will repent and believe the Gospel.
- d. Jesus, Peter, 3 questions and Peter's death described
  1. 15 So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs." 16 He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep." 17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep. 18 Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish." 19 This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me."
    1. After the joyful meal by the sea, Jesus addresses Peter directly. Drenched with the waters of the sea, Peter will now be showered with God's grace pressing him to a life of non-denial, to a life of following in Christ's footsteps, a life of love and service to Christ and His sheep, a life that will lead to his execution at the hands of

unbelievers. The Kingdom of God is filled with those who follow Christ, loving His Church, no matter the consequences.

e. Jesus answers about John

1. 20 Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?" 21 Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, "But Lord, what about this man?" 22 Jesus said to him, "If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me." 23 Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, "If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you?"
  1. Peter and John have been close friends and business partners for years, so it's only natural that Peter would ask about John. Yet, Jesus re-directs Peter's focus. Peter and John would not stay together during their earthly ministry of the Gospel. Peter needs to focus on following where Jesus leads him, not on where John might lead him. Jesus has His plan for each of these men, and they each need to focus upon Christ, not one another.
  2. Church tradition holds that John died around 100AD, so it appears he did live until after Christ visited His judgment on Israel.
  3. The Kingdom of God must be sought first, following Christ first, not one another. We love one another deeply and fervently as we follow Christ, and as our paths intersect. But, we follow Christ.

VIII. The events of the 40 days: Great Commission: eleven on the mount in Galilee – Mt 28:17-20

- a. "17 When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen."
- b. So, sometime around their breakfast by the sea with Jesus, the disciples make their way to the un-named mountain (v16) in Galilee. We can only speculate which mountain in Galilee. If the disciples sea-side breakfast meeting with Jesus occurred near Tiberias, we may ask what mountains are nearby? Mount Tabor is about 18 miles southwest of Tiberias, and one stream of church history points to Mount Tabor as the meeting location.
- c. Infallible proofs
  1. Here again Jesus shows Himself to them and speaks to them, proving His bodily, total resurrection.
- d. Things pertaining to the Kingdom of God
  1. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Jesus (Ps 2 fulfilled)
  2. All nations are to submit to Christ's authority

3. The disciples are to go and make disciples of all nations
  4. The church is to baptize all the nations in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Water baptism is in view..
  5. The church is to teach all nations to observe all of Christ's commandments (which include all OT: every jot and tittle, Mt 5)
  6. Christ is with us always, to the end of the age. Holy Spirit outpouring.
- e. Their response: most worshiped Him in faith, but even still, some are still doubting, even after all these infallible proofs. Perhaps this is why Mark reports Jesus later rebuking the disciples for their hardness of heart on Ascension Day? We will look at the Ascension Day texts next week.
1. Note the patience of Christ to deal with each one of His disciples according to their need. He is so patient with all of us His beloved children.
- IX. The events of the 40 days: By over 500 brethren at once – 1 Corinthians 15:6
- a. "3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. 6 After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. 7 After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles."
    1. Jesus gives infallible proof of His resurrection to this meeting of the assembled group of over 500, all at once. Most of these witnesses were still alive when Paul wrote 1 Corinthians about 25 years later, mid 50s.
    2. And, it seems likely Jesus also taught them of the things concerning the Kingdom of God at that meeting. Not clear if this meeting occurs while they are still in Galilee or after they return to Jerusalem prior to the ascension at Bethany on the Mount of Olives.
- X. The events of the 40 days: By James, the brother of Jesus – 1 Corinthians 15:7
- a. "3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. 6 After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. 7 After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles."
  - b. Sometime after Jesus showed Himself to the 500, He shows Himself to James.
    1. John Chrysostom (4<sup>th</sup> century) ""After that, He was seen of James." I suppose, His brother. For the Lord is said to have Himself ordained him and made him Bishop in Jerusalem first."<sup>1</sup>
- XI. The events of the 40 days: Ascension Day – Lk 24:44-53; Mk 16:14-20; Acts 1:4-11

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<sup>1</sup> John Chrysostom. (1889). [Homilies of St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, on the First Epistle of St. Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians](#). In P. Schaff (Ed.), H. K. Cornish, J. Medley, & T. B. Chambers (Trans.), *Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians* (Vol. 12, p. 229). New York: Christian Literature Company.