

Message #127

Luke 24:44-48

We are living in a world that is filled with religion, most of which is false religion. People seem to think that religion brings so much good to the world, but actually most of it brings what is bad to people. **Religion tends to move people away from truth.** This is a world dominated by Satan and it is filled with proud religious people who strut around and ramble about what they believe.

Just exactly what are we supposed to do in a world like that? How are we supposed to reach it? How do we even begin to make a dent in such a sorry world? How do we truly affect people's lives? Jesus Christ gave His own Apostles clear direction when He was here about that very issue, by what He did with them:

JESUS CHRIST REVIVED THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF HIS PEOPLE BY DIRECTING THEIR FOCUS TO THE SPOKEN AND WRITTEN WORD OF GOD.

This is a very basic, yet important message that every church member, board member and minister needs to realize. **Depressed people will eventually get out of their depression by the clear communication and teaching of the Word of God.**

The people in this room where Jesus actually appeared were anything but stable. They were depressed and confused and thought they were seeing a ghost. They had seven common denominators:

- 1) They were shocked. 24:37a
- 2) They were afraid. 24:37b
- 3) They were troubled. 24:38a
- 4) They were doubters. 24:38b
- 5) They were unbelieving. 24:41a
- 6) They were joyless. 24:41b
- 7) They were amazed. 24:41c

This was His congregation. How would you like a congregation like this?

Eventually these same people will become joyful, stable, dynamic people of God who will upset the entire world (Acts 17:6). What changed them? It was the word of God. Jesus Christ expounded the word of God to His people and it transformed their lives. Don't ever lose sight of this. **It is the word of God that can and will transform people's lives.**

We have tried to follow this pattern in this church for the past 20 plus years. We have so believed that the word of God can transform lives that we have done our best to not only proclaim it here in this church, but we have taken it out to the world.

The power to transform minds, the power to bring people out of depression is the exposition of God's word. It is not cutesy programs or gimmicks. The word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword and it has the power to pierce the soul and spirit and transform lives and minds.

That point is clear from the actions Jesus Christ takes right here. There are four actions:

ACTION #1 – He taught them the word of God. **24:44**

The first thing that Jesus Christ does to bring this group to their senses is to remind them of the written word of God. He lets them know that everything that had happened to Him was exactly what the word of God predicted and it was exactly what He taught them.

It is clear from this verse that Jesus Christ taught them the Law of Moses; the Prophets and the Psalms. He went to the written word and expounded the written word to them.

Now this is a fascinating thing to think through. These people are an emotional wreck and think about the options Jesus has to bring them out of it:

Option #1 - He could have appealed to some spectacular miracle.

He could have said, don't you remember that Lazarus guy? I raised him from the dead.

Option #2 - He could have appealed to some dramatic experience.

He could have said, don't you remember when I walked on water out to your boat. Remember Peter walked on water for a few moments too.

Option #3 - He could have appealed to an intense prayer experience.

He could have said don't you remember how I prayed, sweating as it were great drops of blood.

Option #4 - He could have appealed to music.

He could have said I know what you need, let's play the music and sing some songs.

He could have done all of that. **But instead, to bring them out of their depressed rut, He expounded the written word of God.**

Jesus Christ knew that the way out of depression is to be taught the word of God and that is exactly what He did to His own team.

ACTION #2- He gave them understanding of the word of God. **24:45**

The verb “opened” is one that means to completely open something or to open up something completely (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 110). **What He specifically opened up completely was their minds to be able to understand the Scriptures.**

The infinitive “to understand” is one that refers to one’s ability to reason things accurately in one’s mind. The present tense of the infinitive means this opening and understanding was to be continuous.

In other words, the thing that would keep them from a depressed condition would be a continual accurate understanding of the Scriptures and a continual openness to the Scriptures in one’s mind.

Jesus Christ wanted His people to continually understand the Scriptures with their minds. This is the key to dynamic growth. It is knowledge of the word of God that will keep one stable and joyful.

Notice the emphasis is on the mind, not the emotions. It is not about feeling in the heart; it is about understanding with the mind. So many people rely on feelings when it comes to even the Bible. That is wrong. Careful, accurate understanding of the Scriptures with one’s mind is the key to strong, stable faith.

Understanding the written word of God with one’s mind is not an automatic guarantee for any believer. It is a very special word of God to be able to understand the Bible accurately:

- 1) This was true before Christ came—Ps.119:18—“open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things from Thy law.”
- 2) This was true while Christ was here—Luke 24:45—He does that for them right here.
- 3) This is true after Christ has gone—I Cor. 3:1-3; Heb. 6:3—we go on to maturity if God permits it.

It is interesting that there were scribal Masorites (those who copied the O.T. texts), who could accurately copy and count the chapters, verses, words and letters of the Hebrew manuscripts and could not understand what the passages actually meant.

Let us keep in mind right here that these disciples of Christ had been very close to Him for over three years. They had intensely watched Him and listened to Him teach the word of God, but the bulbs in their minds were not able to get it until right here. Christ opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. Wise are those who ask Him to do it for them.

No shallow, surface level understanding of the Bible will ever produce solid, stable, joyful faith.

No person will ever be powerful for God until they have a mind that is after a careful, accurate understanding of the Word of God.

When people start to understand the word of God, powerful things begin to happen. One more point. As near as I may determine, this is the key to having God shower abundant blessings (Matt. 13:11-12). If we keep growing and learning, God will keep increasing and blessing.

Again we observe that when Jesus does this, these disciples are totally depressed and in a rut. The thing that brings them out of it is a careful, accurate understanding of the Scriptures with their minds.

ACTION #3 – He gave them understanding of the word of God. **24:46-47**

Carefully observe again Jesus' emphasis on what is written. There are two themes He develops about the Scriptures:

Theme #1 - The things that happened to Him were predicted in the written Scriptures. **24:46**

Jesus Christ specifically states that His sufferings and death and resurrection from the dead were clearly written and predicted in the Scriptures.

- 1) His sufferings were clearly predicted in Isaiah 52:14.
- 2) His death was clearly predicted in Isaiah 53:7.
- 3) His burial was clearly predicted in Isaiah 53:9.
- 4) His resurrection was clearly predicted in Psalm 16:10; 49:15/ Acts 13:33-37.

Notice that two things mentioned here are His suffering and His resurrection. **His suffering is what saves us and His resurrection proves He can save us.**

Theme #2 - The things that happened to Him proclaim salvation. **24:47**

Two things need to be proclaimed: 1) Repentance; 2) Forgiveness. But it is not just any repentance or any forgiveness. Do not miss the prepositional phrase “in His name.” Grammatically this phrase goes with both repentance and forgiveness.

The preposition “in” (epi) is one that means upon or on the basis of. The particular case of the noun “name” stresses position.

So what I understand this to be saying is that Jesus is saying that **repentance is to be preached on the basis of the name of Jesus Christ and forgiveness is to be proclaimed on the basis of the name of Jesus Christ.** He is the only name upon which repentance and forgiveness may be proclaimed.

Now the word “repent” (metanoew) is a word that literally means to change your mind or change your thinking. So what specifically needs to be proclaimed is that people need to change their minds and thinking about what will save them. The only thing that can save them is the name of Jesus Christ.

Do you see this? Most people truly believe their own works save them. Most people truly believe their own good name will save them. Most people believe their own religion will save them. Most people really believe they can save themselves by what they do or don't do.

Jesus says what needs to be proclaimed is that only My name can save them. They need to change their perspective and view on this and realize forgiveness is only found in Me.

Jesus says I am the only Person and only Name that can save them and forgive their sins.

That word “forgiveness” (afihmi) means to completely dismiss, release and pardon. It carries with it the idea of all charges and all penalties are gone.

The only Person who can do that is Jesus Christ. It is His name; not our name.

ACTION #4 – He gave them the assignment of witnessing these things. **24:48**

It is the responsibility of those who accurately understand the truth of the word of God to communicate it.

They are the witnesses. They are to testify of the Scriptures. They are to accurately proclaim the word of God and point people to the truth.

Clearly the more we know of the word, the better position we are in to accurately communicate it.

The best church to be in to develop a sound mind, sane faith and stable spirituality is one that carefully and accurately expounds the written word of God. That is exactly what Jesus did with His own disciples.