

Luke 24:44-49; Joel 2:28-32; Proclaiming the Good News I. The Call to Proclaim II. The Messengers who Proclaim III. The Power to Proclaim

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, what is the connection between the Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord- and the missional work of the church? Is there a link or connection between the work of Jesus on earth back then and the work of the church today? As we approach the end of our study in Luke 24, we come to Luke's Great Commission. Although we may be more familiar with Matthew's version of the Great Commission- Luke's version is no less stirring. Today we see the call to proclaim the good news to all nations. But what is this good news? Why should we share it with others? Children, have you ever had a secret kept from you? Perhaps you know your friends are talking about something- but they suddenly stop talking when you walk up. No one wants to be left out- it does not feel good to have secrets kept from us does it. Well, today we find that Jesus has a message that is not a secret all! We have a message from Jesus that is meant to be shared with everyone! So we consider this theme: Jesus Christ sends His disciples into the world with a good news message that needs to be proclaimed.

### **I. The Call to Proclaim**

In our first point we consider the call to proclaim which is here given by Jesus. In v. 45 Jesus had opened their minds to see clearly- to understand what the OT Scriptures had to say about Him. As we considered a few weeks back, Jesus is clearly revealed in the book of the Law of Moses, the prophets and Psalm of the OT. Jesus and His work- the necessity of His coming, His death and even His resurrection, can be clearly seen on the pages of the OT Scriptures. As v. 46 continues- Christ has to suffer and on the third day, rise again from the dead. We already considered this 2 weeks ago- so we are going to continue by looking at v. 47. Here we note an important fact- Jesus does not end His sermon by only pointing to His own person and work. He surely does reveal how His person and work are present on the pages of the OT- but that is not all that Jesus! So He continues in v. 47- and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to the nations! Did you catch that! The sermon that we started 2 weeks ago continues here- Jesus continues to

open their mind- to see on the pages of the OT- that repentance and forgiveness of sins needs to be proclaimed to the nations! In other words- the OT not only reveals Jesus Christ- the OT also reveals the benefit of Christ's work and the need for missions! Already in the OT God was speaking of His love for the lost- not just among the Jews- but the lost in the nations! He desires to save people from every land! The forgiveness of sins is for them- for us as well! Jesus opens the OT to His disciples to prove the need for missions and evangelism!

Where would Jesus go to prove this? Well, remember that the OT was divided into 3 parts- the books of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms as we read back in v. 44. So let's start with the books of Moses- do we read anything about mission in the book of Genesis? Well, consider what the Lord says to Abraham in Gen. 12:3- I will make you a blessing to the nations. All nations will be blessed through your seed. How about the prophets? Isaiah 12:4- to make known the deeds of the Lord among the people. Let the nations know what God has done. And in Amos 9:12- I will raise up a people to rebuild. From all the nations who are called by my name. Or as we read in Joel 2- the Spirit will be poured out on all flesh- and everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. And from the Psalms- as we sang in Psalm 67- let the nations be glad and sing. Let all the peoples praise you- the ends of the earth shall fear Him! Even the enfolding of Ruth and Rahab into the nation of Israel proves that God has always had an eye towards the Gentiles as well. The gospel to go out to all nations- all ethnos- every ethnicity v. 47 says! No one is to be excluded! Every nation is in view! So Jesus opens up the minds of the disciples to see that the nations are to receive the gospel- as God already revealed in the OT. And what is the content? What needs to be proclaimed to all people? As v. 47 says- repentance and forgiveness of sins is possible because Jesus has come! Let us not forget- this is good news! Great news! Your sins can be forgiven in His name! The message that is to be proclaimed is this- that Jesus came and died on the cross for the forgiveness of your sins. If you repent and believe in His name, you will be saved! Jesus Christ- and Him crucified- by His death your iniquity can be covered. So repent- turn away from your sins- cast off your transgressions- and embrace the Son of God- and you will be forgiven, pardoned and received in His grace! The merit of forgiveness is in Christ- He suffered and died and rose again so that you

might be forgiven- justified- and spared by His kindness! Forgiveness in Jesus name! That is the content of the good news that needs to go out to all people- as Acts 1:8 puts it- starting in Jerusalem to Judea, to Samaria to the ends of the world! The fact is, since Jesus has been raised, we now have good news to share! If He remained dead, what would be the good news? And having ascended on high, He has given us His Spirit so that we might have the power and strength to go where He sends as we will see in our third point!

## **II. The Messengers who Proclaim**

Now that we have seen how the OT message of missions is clear- and the content of the message is Jesus Christ and the forgiveness we can receive in His name- in our second point we consider who it is that is to bring this message of reconciliation. As Jesus said in v. 47- this gospel message- about repentance and forgiveness of sins- should be proclaimed to all nations. In the Greek the tense of this verb indicates a continuous, desired task that is ongoing. Should be continually proclaimed. Well, if this message should be proclaimed, who will do it? Who is the one to carry this message to all ethnicities? V. 48 answers this question- You! You, my disciples, you who have witnessed these things! You have seen all that I have done- heard all that I have said. I have opened your eyes to see and your minds to comprehend. You therefore- must be the ones who go out! You are my witnesses- you have the first-hand account. We are a part of the apostolic church- what we know and believe has been recorded for us and based upon the first-hand account of these men! The disciples were the first followers of Jesus during His ministry- now they are becoming apostles. The learners are becoming the sent-out ones. As Luke introduced himself back in Luke 1:2- I have compiled a narrative of all that has been accomplished among us- just as those who were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered to us. Or consider what Rom. 10 says, how will they call on Him whom they have not believed. And how will they hear unless someone preach to them. And how will they preach unless someone is sent. The disciples were being sent out into the world as Mt. 28 puts it- to go out and make disciples by teaching and baptizing in the name of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. So they were being sent out to be preachers- fishers of men if you will. But their identity was that of a witness. As Jesus said in

Mark 16, Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. They had seen-they knew the truth- and now they must share what they saw and heard with others. To pass on the teaching of Christ to others who will then pass it on. Or as II Tim. 2:2 puts it, what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others. But not only pastors and preachers, any one who has heard and seen what Jesus has done can be a faithful witness. Prov. 14 says, a truthful witness saves lives, but one who breathes out lies is deceitful. Not only is it a sin to be a false witness as Ex. 20 says, we are all called to be salt and light- to shine- to give a defence of the hope within. Positively we are to love the truth and speak it openly! As prophets who share in the anointing of Christ, we are all called to speak and defend the truth. So we can all share the good news of Jesus Christ with others, but the apostolic witness is a unique, first hand testimony that has been recorded for us in Scripture so that we might know and believe in Jesus name.

### **III. The Power to Proclaim**

But how is it that these disciples were willing and able to be faithful witnesses? Remember that we find them hiding in an inner room in our context! Why were they hiding in secret? Because they were afraid of the Jews! So what would change? What would account for the fact that these men who had run away, hidden, denied and doubted would turn into faithful witnesses that preach the gospel to the end of the world? That they would be found in the temple- boldly proclaiming the truth? Well, Jesus was not going to leave them without power? No, as He said in v. 49- I am sending you the promise of my Father and you will be clothed with power from on High. Let's read from Acts 1:6- 8. So what or who is this promise of the Father and the Power from on High? Well, that promise is the promise of the Spirit being poured out and that power is the presence of the Holy Spirit to make them bold witnesses. You see, Jesus is going to ascend to His Father, and from the Father's side Jesus is going to pour out His Spirit on His disciples. The promise will be kept! As we read earlier from Joel 2- the Spirit will be poured out on all flesh! And the power for witnessing and preaching- indeed the power of God for salvation- will be received as the Spirit falls upon them. So what then

will the Spirit enable them to do? Well, the Spirit will enable them to remember all that Jesus said and did as Jesus promised in John 14. The Spirit will make these apostles faithful and true witnesses! The Spirit will also be the power from on High to change hearts, to give boldness to preach, and to send workers into the gospel field. The Spirit will take that proclaimed word and plant it in the soul of man's heart- causing it to grow. To bring this whole picture together- what Jesus promised back in v. 47- that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed- the work of convicting of sins, changing hearts and assuring of forgiveness is exactly what the Spirit is going to do. So that as the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son- He goes forth into this world as He uses faithful preaching and teaching to change hearts and lives. He not only enables these first-generation apostles to remember and record all that needed to be passed on, the Spirit uses that same message to make disciples of Jesus Christ today! And this Spirit is what has been promised to little Benjamin this morning. The promise spoken to Benjamin at baptism is this- the promise of the Holy Spirit and the forgiveness of sins! The blessed truth is that we and our children are the recipients of this good news and the Spirit today as well! Not only does Jesus reveal His desire for the gospel to go to all nations, He provides the necessary equipment in the sending of the Spirit to make that desire realized! Anyone who has the Spirit can and will be a witness to the truth!

To conclude, in Acts 5:32 we find the disciples say, we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him. Our God has always had the nations on His mind- He desires that the gospel goes out to all ethnicities! Jesus Christ sends His disciples into the world with a good news message that needs to be proclaimed. Not only was the person and work of Jesus promised in the OT- so was the sending of the Holy Spirit and the gathering of the nations! On that last day, people from every nation will be gathered before the throne, singing the song of the Lamb! So may we all be faithful witnesses to the truth as we continue to pray for and work towards the gathering of the nations in the strength and power of the Spirit! So that all might know that repentance and forgiveness of sins is possible through the name of Jesus Christ!