

Sermon Outline

THE YEAR OF OUR LORD, 2013-2014

A NECESSARY GOOD ENDING

(LUKE 24:13-27)

I. Hope for Life

- A. While the *fear of death* rules our lives, we must also say that *the hope for life* fills our lives.
- B. But is there truly any point to dreaming of life in the first place? Isn't the dream of life really just a medieval fairy tale that's too childish for our scientific age?
 - 1. If the only reality you know is the material world, you really should not have any assurance of life at all.
 - 2. But if your reality is not limited to this world, if your reality is centered upon the God of Israel, who reveals himself as YHWH the Ever-Living One, then not only can you afford to dream of life; but it is now part of your religious obligation to pursue life as well.
 - 3. The Bible, the testimony of Israel's God, says that we can have assurance for life because eternal life will become the overwhelming reality that consumes death once and for all (cf. 1 Cor 15:54).
 - 4. Just as all our fears, whether rational or irrational, have a basis in the reality of death; the longing for life, whether fruitful or purely mythical, also has a basis in reality—the resurrection and the triumph of the Kingdom of God.
- C. Whenever we hear of bad stories, of missing planes, rumors of wars, or senseless murders, we can take heart because there is a God in heaven who has made it necessary for life to triumph in the end.

***Question for reflection:** (1) Why is it a “religious obligation” for Christians to carry hope for life?

II. The End to an Age, the Beginning of the New

- A. Three days after he was crucified, our Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead.
- B. This event, the resurrection, is not just some symbolic metaphor for new life. But the Scripture teaches that Jesus truly rose in the same body in which he was crucified. The resurrection was a bodily event, which took place in space and time.
- C. As Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 15:20, the resurrection of our Lord was intended by God to be the first of many resurrections to follow—the resurrections of those who have put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- D. As we recall the resurrection of our Savior, we are not to understand this particular event as just another miraculous event that God did.
—Both the crucifixion and the resurrection of our Lord Jesus are eschatological events; i.e., they are events that are part of the great salvation by which God would bring about the end of this present evil age and the beginning of the new creation.
- E. In the death and the resurrection of Jesus, God has judged his own people and pronounced them righteous on account of the perfect obedience of Jesus, his Son.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) Why is the death and resurrection of the Lord an eschatological event? What do we mean by that? (2) Read 1 Cor 15:20. How does the resurrection of Jesus relate to the resurrection of believers?

III. Two Disciples Heading out of the City (Luke 24:13)

- A. It was on that first Resurrection Sunday that the event recorded in Luke 24 occurs.
- B. On the same day that the Lord Jesus rose, verse 13 tells us that two of his disciples “were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem [.]”
- C. Why do you think those disciples were heading *out* of Jerusalem?
 - 1. Perhaps they wanted to avoid trouble from the Jewish and Roman authorities.
 - 2. Perhaps they may have felt that there was no point staying. Everything they had hoped for is gone.
 - a. Earlier in the week, the two disciples may have been among those who accompanied Jesus as he came in to Jerusalem as the King of Israel.
 - b. But by the end of the week, the man they had hoped would be the Messiah was violently crucified and buried in a grave.
 - c. These disciples have been on an emotional roller-coaster this past week. They were probably emotionally drained.
 - d. They may have wanted to get as far as they could away from the city that has now come to be associated with their broken hopes and dreams.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) When, in relation to the crucifixion and resurrection of the Lord, do the events of Lk 24:13-27 occur? (2) What are some possible reasons the two disciples were leaving Jerusalem? (Put yourselves in their shoes and try to understand their situation.)

IV. Jesus Drew Near (Luke 24:15)

- A. But as they were “talking and discussing together,” a man comes alongside them and tries to engage them in a conversation: “Jesus himself drew near and went with them” (v 15).
- B. The disciples were not able to recognize Jesus at that point in time, because “their eyes were kept from recognizing him” (v 16).
- C. Jesus begins to carry on a conversation with them: “What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?” (v 17)

***Questions for reflection:** (1) Who comes to the two disciples as they were walking? (2) Why did the disciples not recognize Jesus? (3) How does Jesus start his conversation with them?

V. The Disciples Converse with Jesus (Luke 24:18-25)

- A. At that point, the two disciples “stood still, looking sad.”
- B. Cleopas responds to Jesus: “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?” (v 18)
- C. Jesus responds with a question: “What things?”
- D. The disciples proceed to explain the major events that had happened.
 - 1. They explain that the major event in Jerusalem had to do with a man named Jesus, who was from Nazareth. They acknowledged that Jesus “was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people...”
 - 2. But the “chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him” (vv 19, 20).
- E. Verse 21 tells us why these two disciples were sad; and perhaps it also explains why they were trying to leave Jerusalem: “But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.”
 - 1. This communicates a certain degree of disappointment.

2. These disciples had put their hopes on Jesus. But when they saw him go to the cross, when they saw him breath his last (assuming they were there at the moment of death), they lost all hope.
- F. And then, they go on to say, “Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened” (v 23), almost suggesting that Jesus is as good as gone. The fact that nothing has happened since then is an indicator that there is more hope.
- G. However, they did admit to one thing. Just before they left Jerusalem, they had apparently heard of something unusual that happened at the tomb where Jesus was buried (vv 22-24).
1. These two disciples had heard of the events that took place early on Resurrection Sunday.
 2. Yet, because they did not see Jesus *physically*, they did not want to get their hopes up. They did not want to believe what was told to them.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) According to Cleopas, what major events had transpired in Jerusalem? (2) According to v 21, why were the two disciples sad? (3) According to vv 22-24, what unusual event did the two disciples hear about before they left Jerusalem?

VI. Jesus Rebukes the Disciples for Doubting Scripture (Luke 24:25)

- A. Jesus chides the two disciples: “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!”
- B. It is worth noting that the Lord bases his rebuke on the fact that these disciples were slow to believe, not the miracles, but what the Old Testament prophets had spoken. In other words, he rebuked them for not believing the *Scriptures*.
- C. This is also the rebuke *we* hear from our Lord when we too disregard and choose to disbelieve the words of the prophets.
1. Judging from what our Lord has said, it is simply not true that we need to see Jesus risen before we can believe in him.
 2. It seems that Jesus would want us to believe primarily from Scripture alone.
 3. While the miracles support what the Scriptures have already said, Jesus is of the view that believing what the Bible says about him is enough.
- D. This has implications for how we ourselves develop confidence in our faith and also how we seek to witness in our world, does it not? One of the questions that Christians are often asked concerning Jesus is, *What proof do you have that Jesus is risen from the dead and is Lord?*
1. For one, proving that a certain isolated (and highly unusual!) historical event took place is not quite the same thing as proving a scientific theory.
 - a. One is repeatable under laboratory conditions. The other is not.
 - b. The notion that you have to use scientific means to prove that Jesus rose from the dead itself is a bit problematic, because that is not how we test the accuracy of a historical event that is both isolated and highly unusual.
 2. We test the validity of a historical event—especially one like the resurrection of Jesus by (a) looking at what was written about it and (b) considering the effects of it.
 - a. One reason we know that Jesus most likely did rise from the dead is the fact that Christianity emerged.
 - b. Since the early Christians were a religious minority and were subjected to persecution from their Jewish kinsmen and Roman masters, the question we must ask is, “What would be so inspiring as to cause a people to give up everything that they had—their security, their prestige, their families, and sometimes even their lives—to follow Jesus?”

- c. The most plausible explanation for the (sudden) rise of the Christian Church is the fact that something highly unusual happened to spark its rise.
 - d. Since Christianity revolves around the teachings of *Jesus*—especially the Gospel that he preached, which includes the truth of his own resurrection—the only thing that could have sparked such a movement was if Jesus’ teachings were proven true; that he himself had indeed risen from the dead as he had said.
 - e. The resurrection of Jesus was the cause of the rise of the Christian Faith. And that resurrection was supported by the eyewitness reports of the apostles and the miraculous work Jesus enabled them to do.
3. But in the end, what Jesus is asking us to do is not to believe merely on the basis of evidence that we *can* see directly for ourselves. But Jesus calls us to believe on the basis of what the prophets have already written—*We are to believe that Jesus is who he says he is because that is the teaching of the Scriptures.*
- E. What does Jesus say to his beloved brothers and sisters when they struggle with their faith? He calls Christians to “believe all that the prophets have spoken!”

***Questions for reflection:** (1) How does Jesus respond to the disciples’ doubt? What does he rebuke the disciples for? (2) How does Jesus teach the sufficiency of Scripture? (3) How would you respond to someone who asks for proof for the reality of our Lord’s resurrection and exaltation?

VII. Necessary Suffering, Necessary Glory (Luke 24:26)

- A. After setting out that basic principle of reverence to Scripture, the Lord Jesus begins to unpack the Word of God for the two disciples, and, by extension, for the rest of us believers who receive their testimony.
- B. First of all, Jesus poses this question: “Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?”
 - 1. This question follows Jesus statement about the need to believe all that the prophets had spoken.
 - 2. When Jesus now mentions that it is “necessary” for the Christ to suffer and enter into his glory, he is saying that that was what the prophets themselves had taught.
- C. One of the prophets our Lord had in mind was certainly Isaiah.
 - 1. Isaiah 52:13:

*Behold, my servant shall act wisely;
he shall be high and lifted up,
and shall be exalted.*

- 2. Isaiah 53:10-12:

¹⁰ *Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him;
he has put him to grief;
when his soul makes an offering for guilt,
he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days;
the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.*
¹¹ *Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied;
by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant,
make many to be accounted righteous,
and he shall bear their iniquities.*
¹² *Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many,*

*and he shall divide the spoil with the strong,
because he poured out his soul to death
and was numbered with the transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many,
and makes intercession for the transgressors.*

- D. Just from Isaiah alone, the disciples ought to know that glory will most surely follow the suffering. They ought to know that it was “necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory...”

***Questions for reflection:** (1) How does Jesus teach about the necessity of the resurrection? (2) Which passages in Isaiah speak about the resurrection of the Lord Jesus?

VIII. The Christ-Centered Scriptures (Luke 24:27)

- A. But is it only Isaiah who speaks about Christ? Absolutely not.
- B. Jesus reveals that the entire Old Testament speaks about him: “And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself” (v 27).
- C. The phrase “Moses and all the Prophets” denotes the entire Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament.
1. The prophets that the Lord had in mind are not just the books of major prophets (like Jeremiah and Isaiah) or minor prophets (like Habakkuk and Malachi).
 2. Under the traditional Jewish understanding, the prophets also included the historical books like Joshua, Judges, and First and Second Samuel.
 3. Jesus is saying that the truth concerning him can be found all across these books, not just Isaiah, or a few portions of Zechariah. The Old Testament itself witnesses to Christ and speaks about him!
- D. Some general themes in the Old Testament Scriptures that testify about Christ
1. Christ Jesus at the beginning of creation (Gen 1; Jn 1)
 2. Christ Jesus in Noah’s Ark
 3. Christ Jesus as the Offspring of Abraham with whom God makes a covenant (Gen 12:7; Gal 3:16)
 4. Christ Jesus in the prophet leaders
 5. Christ Jesus in the temple (Jn 2:18-22)
- E. In summary:
1. It is impossible for Jesus to stay dead, precisely because God himself has already promised that the Servant of the Lord would rise from the dead after he has made an offering for sin.
 2. The whole of God’s Word sheds light on the work that the Christ would do.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) According to Jesus, where does the Old Testament Scripture teach about him? (2) What does the phrase “Moses and the prophets” denote? (3) How does Jesus teach about the necessity of the resurrection? (4) How was our Lord Jesus (a) at the beginning of creation (Gen 1; Jn 1); (b) in Noah’s Ark; (c) in the Offspring of Abraham with whom God makes a covenant (Gen 12:7; Gal 3:16); (d) in the prophet leaders, and (e) in the temple (Jn 2:18-22)?

IX. The Beginning and the End

From beginning to end, God has ultimately spoken only one Word—the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Word of God, and the Servant of the Lord. Jesus Christ cannot stay dead because he is at the heart of God’s indestructible Will. All of God’s plans for mankind are contained in Jesus, embodied in him. Colossians 1:16-17 proclaims the all-consuming greatness of our Lord Jesus: “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created *by* him, and *for* him: And he is *before* all things, and *by* him all things consist.” Why is it impossible for the Son of God to stay dead forever? Why is it impossible for evil and death to have the last word in the human story? It is because the very logic of history is pointed toward life. The very logic of history is none other than Jesus Christ: If Jesus Christ was the beginning of history, then history will conclude in him as well.

- A. The resurrection of the Lord is an invitation to see what God is doing in the world and to walk in it.
- B. While the crucifixion of Jesus marks the end of the present evil age, the resurrection of Jesus marks the beginning of a new age—an age where God is King and mankind is his image once again.
- C. Will we be part of God’s new age? Or will we end up on the cutting room floor? If we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and place ourselves under his rule, we will.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) So, why is it impossible for the Son of God to stay under the power of death? (2) What does Colossians 1:16-17 say about our Lord’s place in history? (3) How is Jesus the logic of history? (4) How do we come into God’s new age?

*Lord Jesus Christ,
you are God’s gift of life and love to your people.
You are the Beginning.
You are also the End.
By you, all things were made.
In you, all things consist.
Bring us under the rule of your holy power and indestructible life.
Purify us from all that is of death.
Defend us from all that is from death.
Save us for yourself, Lord Jesus Christ.
And keep us in your holy love.
Amen.*