

“With Jesus in the Upper Room (Again) - You’re Saved, Sent, and Blessed”

Scripture: Luke 24:36-53

Graphics: last supper table, Jesus, fish

Big Truth: The last moments of Jesus’ earthly relationship with the disciples were in the Upper Room around a table, eating a meal together. Those last moments were Jesus’ opportunity to give the most important lessons he wanted them to know and follow. The people of the Panama UMC are called to sit with Jesus and learn the lessons he taught in order to be the disciples Jesus wants us to be. Jesus even came back to that Room after He rose from the grave. He had one more lesson.

Focus Phrase: Because Jesus is Alive, I’m saved, sent, and blessed.

1. Introduction

A. PRAY!

- B. Well, I don’t know about you, but I’m still fired UP about our Easter celebration last weekend! I want to thank everyone who came, served, worshipped, baked, ate, and lifted up the name of Jesus! He’s ALIVE!
- C. In two worship services, we had 167 people in-house, with another 100+ online! Jesus is alive and well at the Panama UMC!
- D. Of course, as part of the Christian Church, we’ve, collectively, had over 2,000 years to process the events of the last week of Jesus’ life. That’s what makes it so incredibly exciting every year to celebrate that day!
- E. But, for the first disciples, they weren’t quite sure what to do on the day Jesus walked out of His own grave under His own power.
- F. If we think about Jesus’ last week, the disciples were part of the crowd that welcomed Jesus into the city of Jerusalem with palm branches waving with shouts of “Hosanna!”
- G. They celebrated that Passover feast with Jesus around a table in, what we now know as, the Upper Room. There He taught them the final and most important lessons that He needed them and us to know.
- H. But, then, Jesus was arrested, mocked, beaten, tried, sentenced to death, nailed to a wooden cross, died, and was sealed in a tomb.
- I. On the third day, Sunday, the women and disciples went to the tomb and found it EMPTY! The stone was chucked, the grave clothes were still there, and no body! AND...AND...Jesus appeared to Mary, who was told to go tell the disciples that He was ALIVE!
- J. That all happened in a matter of hours...and then, later that day, the disciples were sort of wondering what to do now.
 - i. Back in 1996, I remember waiting and waiting for our son Ben to be born. There was a flurry of activity on the day he came into the world. We ran here and there and got to the hospital in the middle of the night in an ice

storm. He was born, we were at the hospital for 2 days...and then we brought him home.

- K. And, it was then that I was walking around the house, scared to death, with no idea what to do next. So - and you can ask Stacy this - I spent hours, standing over Ben's tiny little crib and even smaller body, **staring at him**. Just staring at him. I'm not sure what I was waiting for - maybe for him to want to play catch or go to college or something. But, it was a weird time.
- L. The disciples KNEW that Jesus was alive, but they weren't exactly sure what that meant. They weren't exactly sure what to DO.
- M. In our scripture reading for today, Jesus came BACK to the Upper Room (or at least we think it might have been the Upper Room). Jesus appeared to the disciples late in the evening on that first Easter Sunday. They'd been together all day, probably having a debate about what in the world they should do now that they knew Jesus was alive.
- N. What Jesus said to them - this FINAL lesson for them - changed their lives. And, it'll change yours today too if you listen to Him and let it. Jesus told the disciples - tells you and me - that because He's alive, you are **saved, sent, and blessed**. That's the title of this message.
- O. So let's turn to Luke chapter 24...and let's pick up the story on the evening of the first Easter...
- P. Before we dive in, the section just prior to our passage this morning is a story about two followers of Jesus who were going from Jerusalem, where they'd seen Jesus die, to Emmaus where they lived. They DID hear that his body wasn't in the tomb, but weren't sure what was going on. On the road, those two disciples had an encounter with the risen Jesus, and then ran back to Jerusalem to tell the other disciples. We pick up the story there...verse 36...

2. Scripture

A. READ Luke 24:36-53

- B. While the 11 disciples, and probably others, were in varied levels of stunned silence, after hearing the news that two of their own had seen Jesus on the road to Emmaus, Jesus appeared - literally **appeared** out of **nothing** - and stood among them.
- C. They were probably thinking, "This day just couldn't GET any more strange!"
- D. As you can imagine, the disciples were a little freaked out...they were a little scared...is this some kind of ghost?
- E. But similar to what he said to Mary earlier that day at the tomb, Jesus said, "Why are you troubled? Why do you doubt?"

- F. “All you need to do is look at my hands and my feet.” But, why would they need to look at his hands and his feet? Well...remember where the soldier pounded nails 3 days ago to hold him on that cross - his hands...his feet.
- G. I love that, in his risen and glorified body, Jesus chose to keep **four souvenirs** from his ordeal. Souvenirs are things that we buy on a journey that remind us - or help us remember - the trip. Jesus kept a hole in one hand, a hole in the other hand, holes in each foot, and (we know from John’s gospel) a hole, also, in his side where He was pierced by a spear to prove He was dead.
- H. And these morbid souvenirs were not for Jesus’ benefit, as if he’d forget the crucifixion. Those holes were for the disciples and for everyone who saw the risen body of Jesus. To **PROVE** that everything they had witnessed...and everything Jesus said...was true. 100% true!
- i. I think that even the most skeptical person alive has a little question mark in their gut that asks, “What if it’s true? What if Jesus really DID rise from the grave?”
 - ii. Because, if that’s true, which the disciples now **KNEW** was 100% true, then everything **ELSE** is true...and Jesus really **IS** the Son of God.
- I. Jesus even asked them to touch the holes. No one did. But Jesus wasn’t done...seeing that the disciples were still a little skeptical.
- J. Then Jesus finally asked, “Hey, do you have anything to eat?”
- i. Now, that’s a question I like to ask whenever I’m at a family member’s house...but I’m human. Jesus was God...so why did He need to eat?
 - ii. Well, Jesus needed to eat for the same reason **WE** need to eat...AND, if he ate something and it didn’t fall to the ground like Casper the Ghost, then the disciples would know **FOR SURE** that Jesus was not only NOT a ghost, but that He had **physically risen from the dead...in bodily form**.
 - iii. Can I get an “AMEN!?!?” Church, Jesus is alive in bodily form today!
- K. Once they **GOT** it, Jesus said to the disciples, “I told you all about this...I told you about these things that have been written about me for thousands of years - in the Law of Moses...in the books of the prophets like Daniel and Isaiah... and in the book of Psalms...it’s all true! **I AM TRUE!**”
- L. And then just like Jesus did for the two disciples on the road to Emmaus - opening their eyes and minds to understand it **ALL** - Jesus opened the minds of the disciples to understand everything...”
- M. And I have no idea how that felt, but it’s probably the experience you get when your oldest child turns 25 like ours did this week. When he was born, I had **NO** idea what to do...now, he’s 25 and I **KNOW** I have no idea...No, wait - I know so much more about him, who he is, what he needs, and how to parent...

- N. Jesus, in that Upper Room, with the disciples, went BACK OVER the lessons...that The Christ would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day.
- O. But then Jesus got into some forecasting...He said that not only would He die and rise again, but BECAUSE He died and rose again, REPENTANCE and FORGIVENESS will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning right there...in Jerusalem. The CHURCH will PREACH!
- P. “YOU (disciples standing here with me right now),” Jesus said, “are witnesses of these things.”
- Q. But remember what Jesus said around that table on Thursday night. Jesus would not leave them orphaned...he was going to send them the Paraclete - the Called Alongside One - just as he promised...to help them and guide them and show them how to raise this metaphorical baby that would become the church.
- R. In a few weeks, we’ll get to the part where the Holy Spirit descends on the disciples and the church is born in a fiery, tongue-fest of wind. But until then, Jesus wanted the disciples to stay put...to begin building the church and the offering salvation to everyone around them in Jerusalem.
- S. The last part of this scene today is pretty cool. Once Jesus had said those things to the disciples...he took them out to Bethany, which was the hometown of Mary and Martha and Jesus’ good friend Lazarus...and while they was out there, Jesus blessed them...and then he ascended into heaven.
- T. As he went, the disciples worshiped him. Then, they went back to Jerusalem to start planning what to do...how to pray...where to go...who to talk to...and what to say.
- U. And, after days of grief...and anger...and confusion...and fear, the disciples felt something that they hadn’t in a long time. They felt joy...GREAT joy.
- V. And they stayed in the Temple and worshiped and prepared their hearts for what was coming.
- W. The disciples were saved...they were sent...and they were blessed.

3. Application

- A. Church, we know that Jesus is alive. And it’s not that he rose from the dead and WAS alive. He IS ALIVE!
- B. In fact, we have the gospel accounts of Jesus’ resurrection. We have Paul’s letters to the first century churches. We have an account of the life of the early church in Acts. We have the entire Old Testament that points to Jesus.
- C. And, most importantly, we have the eye witness accounts - many accounts - of the fact that Jesus INDEED walked out of his own grave on that Sunday morning.

- D. Salvation from the punishment for your sin comes into your life as you believe that the eye witness accounts are true - that Jesus died on that cross because of that sin. And that Jesus rose again and appeared to many.
- i. If Mary and the disciples and the two men on the road to Emmaus were all telling lies, then none of this is true. But like I said, there's a kernel in each of our hearts, put there by the One who made all things, that says, "I think it's true. I think Jesus DID rise again."
 - ii. If you DO believe that, then you're saved. Hallelujah!
 - iii. We had two funerals this week for two women who were living testimonies to the power of salvation in Jesus Christ. Both were saved and KNEW it deep down in their hearts.
 - iv. If this is the first time you're hearing this type of witness...or maybe you've heard it before and the Holy Spirit is stirring something in you now, then believe it! Come to Jesus, by faith, and stop running in circles around the truth that you know God planted in your heart.
 - v. You can be SAVED. Because of Jesus' resurrection, the disciples finally knew they could be saved. When they saw the holes in Jesus' body they knew it was all true...especially the part where Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."
 - vi. Church, that's what we believe. That's not meant to keep people out of the Kingdom of God, but to proclaim our intentional and voluntary belief that Jesus IS the way to salvation.
- E. But Jesus didn't stop there. Jesus gave them a commission. He SENT them.
- i. Now, we'll get to the Great Commission next week, but Jesus said, because you can see my hands and feet...because I've eaten some food in your presence to prove I'm alive, physically, it's **time to walk out of this Upper Room and start preaching...**
 - ii. And he gave them two things to preach. And these are the same two things that are the doorway to the life of salvation - repentance and forgiveness.
 - a. Repentance is soberly examining your life, by the power of the Holy Spirit, and then allowing God to find EVERY sin in your life - He already sees them...but He wants YOU to see them - and then, turning FROM those sins, and turning TOWARD God.
 - b. Repentance isn't just being sorry for the things you do that break God's heart because of your own rebellion. Repentance is allowing God to cast those sins away AND NOT go looking for those sins again.
 - c. And repentance is followed by the assurance of forgiveness.

- d. Because Jesus is alive after having been sacrificed on the cross, you can be forgiven (God WANTS to forgive you) by repenting of your sin and accepting the forgiveness.
 - e. But in order for that forgiveness to come, faith in the Risen One is the pathway...the WAY, the TRUTH, and the LIFE.
 - f. When forgiveness is yours, then you are sent out to preach that gift into the lives of others.
 - g. Our world is DESPERATE (DESPERATE!!) for forgiveness through repentance by faith in Jesus.
 - h. People try to fill their lives with EVERYTHING and ANYTHING others than the hope that comes through a sense of peace, KNOWING that they are forgiven and free from their sin.
 - i. Instead, they (we?) put band-aids of stuff and pursuits and money and hobbies and distraction after distraction. What we really need is Jesus' love which offers forgiveness and new life.
 - j. Disciple, you are sent out into the world to preach - from your own experience I pray - that God wants to forgive it all because of Jesus.
- iii. Then, and I love this part, you are blessed.
- a. Because Jesus rose from the dead and rose again, He wants to bless you.
 - b. A blessing is a kind of prayer that invokes God's protection over you.
 - c. At first glance, it's easy to think that it's some kind of incantation or magic spell that gets cast over a person. Not true.
 - d. In the Old Testament, God would bless those He wanted to use for His purposes - those who were holy.
 - e. Blessings would be offered - symbolized by the use of oil - to those who were being prepared for a task. Jesus was blessed with oil by Mary when she poured it on Him as he prepared for His final week...that would end in His death and resurrection.
 - f. At the end of my emails, I always sign them, "Blessings, Pastor Steve" I want people to know that I am sending a prayer of God's favor and protections into their lives.
 - g. You are blessed. Because of Jesus death and resurrection, because you are saved and sent, you NEED a blessing.
 - h. It's a crazy world out there. There are people and systems and antagonists that you don't yet know. And SOME of them are not of this physical world. Satan prowls out there to stop you from living a saved and sent life.

- i. You NEED a blessing...you NEED God's favor and protection, just like the disciples did.
- F. Because Jesus is alive, salvation is yours. Because Jesus is alive, you are being sent out to proclaim repentance and forgiveness. Because Jesus is alive, you are blessed.

4. Conclusion

- A. Church, it's time that we lived more fully into the knowledge that because of Jesus' death and resurrection, we are saved, sent, and blessed.
- B. In the afterglow of the resurrection, with Jesus standing in front of you, what's your next move.
- C. It's more than just living your current life without regard to Jesus standing next to you saying, "Peace be with you."
- D. It's more than just coming to church and worshiping, although that's the place to start.
- E. It's more than being saved by God's grace through faith in Jesus.
- F. It's more than being sent out to proclaim the fact that Jesus wants to forgive EVERY person on this planet.
- G. It's more than living in God blessed favor and protection.
- H. It's turning it ALL over to Jesus and saying, "Jesus, I'm yours. Take everything I have and am and use it for your glory."
- I. You are saved, sent, and blessed. That's a dangerous combination, but right where God wants you to be.
- J. Will you give yourself to Him today? Will you give your LIFE to Him today?
- K. He gave His for you...
- L. Let's pray...
- M. Pray!**