



**BELIEVERS CHAPEL**

6420 Churchill Way | Dallas, Texas | 75230 | t 972.239.5371 | believerschapeldallas.org

The Sermons of Mark Newman

Luke 24: 36-53

Spring 2026

"The Resurrected Christ Ascended"

TRANSCRIPT

That's a great prayer, Warren. Thank you.

We are going to finish, (unless I have a heart attack...or something), we are going to finish our study in the Gospel of Luke, so please turn to Luke 24.

These four Gospels together give us a detailed account of the incarnation of the Son of God—and Luke's is an excellent specimen of it, contributing his own particular history of it.

Were we to go back to the beginning, (if you can think that far *back*...it's been a little while), Luke began in the Temple in Jerusalem, with Zacharias, the priest, and his wife, Elizabeth...and the angel who appeared to him in there, alone, in the Holy of Holies, to tell him that 'he was going to have a son', (for they had not been able to have a child), and that 'he was going to name that son, "John", (and become John the Baptist). And this John would be 'a forerunner to the Messiah'. (*Luke 1: 8-17*)

And soon there would be more angels there, (at the beginning of Luke's book), greeting the shepherds, 'who were keeping watch over their sheep by night, announcing the birth of the Savior', (Luke said), "...who is Christ the Lord." (*Luke 2:9-11*).

And now, at the end, we have seen angels again announcing the glory of the resurrected Christ. If you look down to the last verse of the Gospel, verse 53, we find his worshipping disciples again "in the temple praising God." (*ibid.*).

In between, Luke has portrayed Jesus in His life and ministry—putting on display His power, authority, and sinless perfection. His teaching, and His miraculous combination of power and compassion, have made Him an irresistible Messiah figure—but also One, to the outside observer, reluctant to press His advantage...and who, in the end, (in the final chapters starting with chapter 22), seemingly, voluntarily yielded Himself to an unlawful arrest, illegal trials, and then the suffering and agony of the crucifixion and death on the cross.

But then in this final chapter, 24, Luke has narrated for us His miraculous resurrection from the dead, and a partial report of His appearances. (I say *partial* because Luke doesn't record that many of the appearances, but He also appeared, you know, to Mary Magdalene and to Simon Peter.)

And as we studied in our last lesson of the amazing visit with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, and how He explained to them the Scriptures...and then, in the end, revealed Himself to them—and then disappeared.

Now today, as our passage unfolds He suddenly appears again in the midst of the ten apostles and their company. So let's read at the beginning in verse 36. (And there are a few verses, so I'll get right to it.)

<sup>36</sup> While they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be to you." *[I want to just tell you here, some of the manuscripts have Luke saying at this point, "And He said to them, 'Peace be with you.' " Whether that was original to Luke or not, John records it in John 20:19, that Jesus appeared and He said, "Peace be with you."]*

<sup>37</sup> But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit. <sup>38</sup> And He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? <sup>39</sup> See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." <sup>40</sup> And when He had said

this, He showed them His hands and His feet. <sup>41</sup> While they still could not believe *it* because of their joy and amazement, He said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" <sup>42</sup> They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish; <sup>43</sup> and He took it and ate *it* before them. *(And then there's a break here in verse 44)*

<sup>44</sup> Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." <sup>45</sup> Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, <sup>46</sup> and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, <sup>47</sup> and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup> You are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup> And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

<sup>50</sup> And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. <sup>51</sup> While He was blessing them, He parted from them and was carried up into heaven. <sup>52</sup> And they, after worshiping Him, returned to Jerusalem with great joy, <sup>53</sup> and were continually in the temple praising God.

Luke 24: 36-53

*(Message)* Kent Hughes, (the well-known former pastor of College Church in Wheaton, Illinois, and whose volume of expository sermons have benefited us greatly in our study), likened this final chapter of the Gospel to what is known in the world of art as 'a *trptych*.' (Some of you are artists, and know that 'a triptych is a three-paneled painting or a series of prints that depict three parallel scenes.)

Quoting Kent Hughes,

"For Luke, the first panel would be a painting of the women in conversation with the angels at the empty tomb, "He had risen, as He said."

The second scene would be of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, (*I mentioned that*), 'their hearts burning within them as the risen Christ explained the Scriptures to them....' (*vs32*), that 'it was necessary for the Christ to suffer the things He suffered and then enter into His glory.'

The third panel would be a painting of Jesus suddenly standing in the midst of His startled disciples on the evening of that Resurrection Sunday, convincing them that it was really He, illumining their minds to the Scriptures, which testified of Him, and then commanding them to bear witness to what they had seen and heard."

And this is the scene that we have just 'viewed' in our reading.

Cleopas was the name of one of those two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Cleopas and his companion had rushed back the seven miles to Jerusalem after Jesus had departed from them...(the Emmaus road was well-trodden that day!)

They had burst into the room where the 11, (minus Thomas), were waiting, excitedly ready to report their amazing experience to the apostles...but the apostles beat them to it; "The Lord has really risen...", they told them, "...and has appeared to Simon." (*vs34*).

We can imagine these Jewish men and women gesturing and talking over each other like figures on a morning talk show. (I don't know if you've ever noticed that or not, 'Blah, blah, blah, blah...', they're talking on top of each other!)

After a long, drawn-out day, the new energy in the room must have been palpable. The doors were closed and locked, according to John's version of things in John 20, (*vs19*), as the same enemies who had committed evil against Jesus were likely looking for His friends also...when suddenly, He appeared right in their midst! And John reports that Jesus greeted them, (as I said), saying, "Peace be with you."...

*"Peace be with you"*...and it's difficult to believe that He intended that greeting as merely a casual hello. A great battle had been fought and won! The prince of this world had been defeated—and in His victory over death, peace with God had been extended to Christ's followers.

Bishop Ryle noted a pervasiveness of *peace* in this Gospel—that *peace* was the last word in the 'Prophetical Hymn of Zacharias'. (*Luk 1:68-71*). 'Peace on earth...', that it was part of the Good News proclaimed by angels when Christ was born. (*Luk 2:14*). "Peace", the proclamation which the 70 disciples were ordered to make at every house in which they visited. (*Luk 10:5*). "Peace", the legacy which our Lord left and gave to the apostles on the night before He was crucified. (*Luk 14:27*).

And now "Peace" was the first word which He spoke when He appeared among them again after His resurrection. (vs36).

The Lord may have also said it because of the state the disciples were in. According to verse 37, "...they were so startled and frightened..." that they thought they were 'seeing a ghost'. We might wonder why they responded that way when Simon Peter had already told them he had seen the risen Christ...and now here the two disciples from Emmaus saying, 'They had walked with Him and felt their hearts burning.'

But now if you think about it, on the road to Emmaus He had kind of eased into His conversation with them...so that by the time He revealed Himself they were familiar with Him. And if you think about Mary Magdalene, when He appeared to her, she was veiled from seeing who He was; she thought He was "the gardener". (*Jhn 20:15*). But in a room with doors shut and locked, there hadn't even been a knock on the door.

Luke had opened his Gospel in the first chapter with that frightened Zacharias before an unexpected visit from an angel...the angel had made him afraid. (*Luk 1:12*). How much more terrified then, were these disciples now at the unexpected visit from the risen Lord Jesus Christ? It was incomprehensible.

The New Testament scholar, R.C.H. Lenski, attempted to explain it, (and I like this), "In His glorified state—time, space, the rock of the tomb, the walls and doors of buildings no longer hampered the body of Jesus. He appears where He desires to appear, and His visible presence disappears when He desires it to. It is wholly supernatural. 'He Himself stood in their midst', (vs36), is all that human thought and language can say, 'He Himself stood in their midst.'...He did not walk through anything."

The disciples did not see Him 'take so many steps from the door' or 'from the wall into their midst...He was there, and that was all. It was so unexpected and unexplainable that His greeting of "Peace" to them was swallowed up in their panic.

So much so that Jesus' next words to them were in the form of a reassuring reproof, "Why are you troubled?" (vs38), (even better may be "*alarmed*"), "Why are you alarmed, and why did doubts arise in your hearts?" (ibid.).

He knew these men and was accustomed to their questioning ways, and so with gentle condescension, He invited them to conduct a kind of confirming experiment in verse 39; "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." And His hands and His feet would have still had the scars from the cross where they had nailed Him to that tree. (I quote from John's Gospel a bit here.)

But later John's Gospel confirms the description of His appearance to the disciples when Thomas was present with them. And you'll remember this—He insisted to 'the doubting Thomas' that he take his hand and put it in the scars of His hand, and then put it into the wound in His side.' (*Jhn 20:27*). So He says to them, 'Touch me. See for yourself.' (vs39).

But in our passage, the disciples' puzzlement persists. In verse 41, "While they still could not believe *it* because of their joy and amazement..." (now that may sound like a strange combination, "joy and amazement", 'unbelief and joy').

[*'Amazement and belief'*, we understand...one might lead to the other. But 'joy' seems an odd companion to 'unbelief'. You get what I'm saying? We don't normally associate joy with unbelief—that is unless we consider our own experience. I think what Luke was describing was something like the feeling we get when we think something must be 'too good to be true'.

Like when you go to your favorite sports team's big game with the big rival and, you say, 'No, we don't have a chance.' But you go anyway because you're a sports fan.

You love your team... 'But we don't have a chance!' The other team is favored by 30-something points, and all the sports prognosticators are picking the other team.

It's in the paper...there's all the games and all the sports writers at the top. (Don't you do this? I do.) You go game-by-game...and then there's your game, the one that you're so excited about. And you go across the columns of the sports writers picks...and, Oklahoma...Oklahoma...Oklahoma...Oklahoma...Oklahoma!

But then the game begins and you can't believe it, you can't believe what you're seeing. The unthinkable begins to unfold and you refuse to let yourself believe it...you won't until the game is actually over. And then, even when it's over and your team has won, 'You **still** can't believe it!' There is this feeling of shock...but also joy. 'I can't believe it!']

So, the ever-patient Jesus moves to dispel any remaining doubts among them by asking for something to eat. And when they gave Him a piece of broiled fish, He ate it before their eyes...He was plainly not a ghost, it was really Him. (*vs41-43*).

The Apostle Peter would later bear witness to that in Acts chapter 10, in the home of the Gentile, Cornelius. Remember? Cornelius called all his family, all his friends, he wanted them all to hear everything that Peter had to say about Jesus...everything that he had to say about the Gospel. And Peter spoke of how God had raised the crucified Jesus from the dead, "...on the third day, and granted that He become visible... to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, *that is...*" Peter said, "...to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead." (*Acts 10:40-41*).

'That was the clincher', so we might insert here, 'Now that He had their attention...**now** that He had their attention, none of those gathered there would ever again doubt the truth that God had raised Jesus from the dead!'

And now He could focus their minds on the important tasks that were ahead for them.

[Before we undertake that, (I hesitate to do this), I just want to make a short little editorial observation, and I'll do a very quickly, rapid-speak.

Somewhere here, in the remainder of the Gospel, there is a necessary break that's not readily evident. Notice at verse 50, look at it please, verse 50 reads as if it falls immediately after this next section that we're about to read, verses 44 through 49, "And He led them out.", (vs50). Except that the scene we have just studied, in verses 36 through 43, takes place still in the late evening of what we call Easter Sunday. In Luke's second volume, (the Book of Acts chapter 1, verse 3), he mentions how Jesus had, "...presented Himself alive...", (to His apostles), "...after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over *a period of 40 days*..."

Also, the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:6, claims that the risen Christ, in addition to appearing before the 11, had also appeared before 500 people "at one time."

So, only after we take into account those two facts can we logically arrive at Christ's ascension described by Luke in the final four verses of his Gospel.

All of this, to make a simple point, is that we have a break here, I think. That what follows from our verse 44-on, may have taken place sometime later than His appearance we have just discussed.]

But now that the Lord had His disciples' attention, He must revert to the very important subject that is of primary importance to Him—and that is the Scriptures...their relationship to Him and the command they held over His disciples, (as a distinct body), in relation to **mission**.

The title of a book written years ago by Francis Schaeffer frequently comes to my mind, I quote from it often, at least the title, *He Is There and He Is Not Silent*.

It is a very profound thought: God exists. Not only does He exist, but He has set out the knowledge of Himself and of His grand purpose in these ancient writings.

And human history is the record of Him unfolding that purpose.

And so now Jesus undertakes to remind His disciples of what He actually had previously told them during His earthly ministry: That the Christ's destiny, the Messiah's destiny embedded in these Scriptures, had to be fulfilled! (It had to be fulfilled!) And that both the current and the future body of believers had to receive *enablement* before they could understand them.

So this section, verses 44 through 49, whether given in the room there on that Sunday evening, or sometime later during the 40-day period, takes on much the same complexion as was the experience of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

He states it a little differently in verse 44;

"These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

Note that that formula, "the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms", was one of the ways that Jews in Jesus' time referred to 'the Scriptures'...it referred to the threefold division of the Hebrew Scriptures. In other words, the Lord was saying, 'You can now see, actually fulfilled, the words which I so often spoke to you out of every portion of the Word of God...out of every portion of the Scriptures.'

It was what He had upbraided the Pharisees about...I mentioned this in our last lesson, in John 5, (vs39), 'You searched the Scriptures,' He said to the Pharisees, 'because in them, you think you have eternal life, but the Scriptures speak about Me;'

'The Scriptures speak about Me.'...What a bold statement!

Don Carson was right, (I quoted him in our last lesson), "This (*statement of Christ's*) is the hermeneutical key to the Old Testament. This is how we interpret the Old Testament; the Scriptures testify about Christ."

But alas, that takes divine enablement in order to grasp it. We're blind until He opens our eyes. God, through His Spirit, must illumine us before we can see it and understand it.

And that had happened with the Emmaus disciples in verse 31, "Then their eyes were opened..." And here, with the greater body of disciples, in verse 45 Jesus, "...opened their minds to understand the Scriptures..."

Now, there's an application that we need to make here:

**'Open my mind Lord'.**

That should be our own constant and daily prayer as we seek out to live the Christian life...each one of us, individually.

After establishing a pattern of exposure to the Word of God,  
Through daily study of it,  
Through the ministry of the Word in churches and other venues,  
Through the ordinances of the church...

We can **discipline** ourselves to do those things:

Bible study,

Quiet Time, *(or whatever you want to call it)*,

Attending church and hearing the Word of God...

We can **discipline** ourselves to do that.

**But**

We must enter into each of those **disciplines** with that underlying prayer,

**'Open my mind, Lord'.**

When you sit, wherever you sit, to read your Bible, 'Open my mind, Lord, to understand what I'm reading...what I'm hearing', (in this blog or all the different things that we use to hear the Word of God). We want to be like the Emmaus disciples and the apostles.

We want to be like Lydia of Philippi, who with good intent, was at a riverside gathering of women. It was a gathering of prayer along the river with a bunch of women,

but upon whom, when she heard the Apostle Paul preaching the Gospel, the Lord "opened her heart" to respond to what he was saying. (*Acts 16:14*).

Without the illumination of the Spirit of God, our disciplined, (or as the case may be 'undisciplined'), exercises in Bible piety will be sadly futile.

So we hunger, and we thirst, and yearn for the opening of our minds as here with the disciples and the risen Lord so that we're given grace to have the Scriptures confront us and convict us.

And now, beginning with verse 46, with the disciples' minds now open to understand the teaching, the Lord proceeds once more to lay out the essentials of this pure Gospel message. Here is the natural progression of the Gospel.

First, the news itself:

'That the Christ would suffer and be killed according to the Scriptures,  
That He would be raised, according to the Scriptures,  
And then the consequences of it...repentance and the forgiveness of sins for us,  
Proclaimed in His name to all the nations.' (*vs46-47*).'

In other words:

The resulting deliverance from sins flows directly out of who Jesus really is and what He has accomplished through His suffering.

But God designs it to take effect through the ongoing witness of Jesus' followers. See there..."You are witnesses of these things." He says. (*vs48*).

And it's a worldwide mission intended to extend to all the nations beginning from Jerusalem, beginning from the place where they were sitting/standing right at that moment, "beginning in Jerusalem". (*vs47b*).

And even the mission itself, 'that mission', (notice), is also traced to the prophecies of Scripture. So, "Thus it is written...", (*vs46*), that the Gospel, "...would be proclaimed...to all the nations...". (*vs47*).

And I'm going to give you some examples:

First from the Book of Genesis, where we find God blessing Abraham with the promise of a descendant, one of his future descendants, from whom, "all the nations of the world would be blessed." He told him. (*Gen 22:18*).

To King Solomon's great prayer of dedication of the Temple in 1 Kings 8, (*vs60*), in which Solomon prays that, 'All the peoples of the earth might know God's name.'

Then, there is the LORD's call to the nations in Isaiah 45:22;

"Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth;

For I am God, and there is no other."

Also, Isaiah 49, (that second Servant Song of Isaiah), reads like this,

"He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant

To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel;

I will also make You a light of the nations

So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth.' " (*Isa 49:6*)

All the way back to the last book of the Old Testament, in Malachi 1, verse 11;

"For from the rising of the sun even to its setting, My name *will be* great among the nations, and in every place incense is going to be offered to My name."

[It's amazing!...Here we are in Dallas, Texas; they're over there in France...there's believers in France, Germany, Japan, China...all over the world!]

But, we've already established that simply citing lines of Scriptures like these is not a sufficient means of *witness*. There must be a power more effective than us simply reading—because the minds of sinful people, like all of us, are unable to understand spiritual truth. In and of ourselves, by ourselves, we cannot understand spiritual truth.

And so finally, the Lord holds out the promise of the difference-maker; "And behold...", He says in verse 49, "...I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

Now Jesus had already issued that promise in His previous ministry with the disciples. It's 'The Upper Room Discourse'...those beautiful chapters in the Gospel of John.

This one, in John 14, He comforted them at the news of His coming departure. He said to them, "I will ask the Father and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him; *but* you know Him because He abides in you and will be in you." (*Jn 14:16-17*).

Again, after that, upon the occasion of the ascension as Luke will present it in Acts 1:8, He promises, "...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest parts of the earth."

But until then, as Jesus outlines in our verse 49b, they, "...are to stay in the city..." (*Jerusalem*), "...until clothed with that power from on high." In other words, the disciples are not to attempt the task of evangelism, (and this is very interesting), with their own meager resources, but to await the coming of the Holy Spirit—the Great "Helper".

And that promise, as we know, would soon be fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost, the 50th day after our Lord's resurrection. And the aftermath of it would alter the course of history...it would explain why we are all here today.

As I say, this would be the natural progress of the Gospel. First, the message itself...then the consequences of it—repentance, and forgiveness, and salvation, brought about through the witness of Christ's followers in the power of God's Holy Spirit.

In the final verses, Luke concludes his Gospel with the account of the actual ascension of our Lord into Heaven. It's brief, and anticipates a fuller description in the first chapter of Acts.

Since it is brief, I'm going to read it again; this is verse 50,

"And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. While He was blessing them, He parted from them and was carried up into heaven. And they, after worshipping Him, returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising God." (Luke 24: 50-53).

It would have been natural for Jesus and the disciples to be in Bethany; that was a city they frequented, and that's where Martha, and Mary, and Lazarus lived. (Acts 1:12 describes His disciples departing from the Mount of Olives, but Bethany was on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, so those two terms were interchangeable.)

Luke describes Jesus lifting up His hands and blessing them. This would not have been some rote recitation of a blessing, coming as it did from the mouth of the Lord.

At the beginning of the Gospel, (we go back again to Zacharias), he was to pronounce the priestly blessing...and he was unable to because he doubted the angel and he was rendered mute. Elizabeth, his wife, felt her baby leap in her womb when Mary came in pregnant with our Lord, and she blessed Mary and her child. And then, Zacharias again, when he insisted on naming the child according to the commandment, naming him John, his speech returned and he blessed God in song. Simeon blessed the Christ child in the temple upon seeing Him. With the disciples in Emmaus, Christ blessed the bread, and when they saw His hands, they believed in Him, they recognized Him. If anyone ever had the authority to bless, it was the risen Messiah.

After His blessing, Luke describes His ascension quite simply, "He parted from them...", (*vs51b*). And unlike His disappearance to the two disciples in Emmaus, there was this air of finality, (I don't know if you can feel it), about this departure..."He parted from them". It was the consummation of His wonderful mission, and they would see Him no more in the familiar way they had.

And they were 'moved to worship'. That line struck me, 'They were moved to worship.' Verse 52. There is no indication what that worship looked like, but it is the first

time, believe it or not, that Luke has explicitly recorded the act of worship directed toward the man, Jesus—suggesting, perhaps, that after the events of recent days, they were now fully convinced that He could be nothing less than fully God.

They had known Him as a unique man and amazed at His mighty works. Remember, (*Luke 8:25*), "Who then is this, that He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him?"

"Who then is this?" Well, now they were convinced they knew the answer and they worshipped Him. Then in obedience, they, "...returned to Jerusalem with great joy." (*vs52b*).

We don't talk about joy a lot, but the Scriptures do. Joy had surrounded the angels' announcement to the shepherds at the birth of Christ, the beginning of His incarnation—and now joy was the feeling that overwhelmed His disciples at the completion His ministry.

There was good reason for joy; the ascension of Christ doesn't garner the attention it is worthy of, but it is a most significant event, the ascension—Jesus departing earth, going up into the heavens. Let me give you a list.

First, as we have acknowledged already, it indicated that Christ had fully accomplished the work He came to fulfil.

Second, it marked the return of His heavenly glory and His exaltation by the Father. As Paul wrote, "He is seated at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named." That is *Ephesians 1, verses 20&21*.

Third, it led to the sending of the Holy Spirit to indwell us, to sanctify us, to guide us in our daily living.

Fourth, it opened up Heaven to you and me. That's a glorious thought...we recently experienced our sister in the Lord, Margaret Smith, passing from this earth...but we know where she went, she went into heaven. And we know it because of this

ascension. He had said that He was going, "to prepare a place" for us so that, 'where He is, there we may be also.' (*Jhn 14:2-3*)

The author of Hebrews wrote in Hebrews 2, (*verses 9-10*), because of, 'His glorious death, He tasted death for everyone, and thereby brought many sons and daughters to glory.' The ascension was the proof that we believers will be accepted into heaven.

Also, the ascension inaugurated His new work as 'a great high priest' and the mediator of a New Covenant, who has 'passed through the heavens', according to Hebrews 4, (*vs14*). Think about that... 'He passed through the heavens to the right hand of the Father on high, where He continues right now, today, never ending His priestly work, never ceasing to make intercession for you and for me!'

Finally, it set the pattern for His return. Luke will go on in the Book of Acts, (*1:11*), to expand on this scene of the ascension, relating how two angels appeared as the disciples stared up into the sky, to reassure them. They said, "This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."

Well, we need to conclude. The ascension of Christ is God's announcement to us that His Son accomplished all He intended. As the theologian, Louis Berkhof, wrote, "It was the necessary completion of the resurrection, and the proof that He accomplished all that was necessary to provide for His people and arm them to be a man or woman in full—chosen, forgiven, equipped, put to task." ...That's who we are.

As we conclude our study of the Gospel of Luke, the beloved physician, the brilliant historian, we are reminded of a simple truth attributed to a little-known biographer who wrote this: "History is lived forwards, but is written in retrospect. We know the end before we consider the beginning, and we can never wholly recapture what it was to know the beginning only."

But, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Luke has helped much the serious student to recapture it all...from the start to this final episode, 'Good wins no final victory, except out of the depths of apparent defeat.'

"By every human standard of reckoning, the cross was a waste." J.I. Packer wrote. The waste of a young life, the waste of a prophet's influence, of a leader's potential.

But we know the secret of its meaning and achievement only from God's own statements, statements that Luke has brought to life for us:

We have God's blessing.

We have His blessing and, with thankful hearts, we live our lives with joy and in joyful service to Him who will come in just the same way as those disciples watched Him ascend.

We pray the Lord's blessing and grace and strength to do that. Let me close us.

*(Closing prayer)* Father, thank You for Your Scriptures...we are so grateful for them. Specifically now, we think of this Gospel of Luke and the life that Luke lived. We read about him in the Book of Acts, we read about him in Paul's epistles—and he was a faithful servant of You. He cared deeply about Jesus Christ and the Gospel message, and the circuit it was making through those early regions...ultimately, 'to the ends of the earth'. He cared deeply about that, and he was faithful.

And under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, LORD, we give You so much thanks that You gave us this Gospel, that You give us the Scriptures, and we know they testify about Your Son, our Savior, the Lord Jesus.

LORD, of course our prayer is that we'll be more faithful witnesses ourselves. That is the last thing He told His disciples before He ascended, "You shall be My witnesses", *(Acts 1:8)*, and we are to go and do that.

Help us to be courageous and faithful in that,

For His sake.

Amen.

*(End of Audio)*