

God Is Able (Luke 24:1-43)

Easter is coming near. This week and next week, we will study from Jesus' resurrection, in Luke 24. The title of today's message is "God Is Able."

1. They could not believe it.

1

¹ On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb.

When the women went to the tomb, they had something with them. What did they have? They had spices. Why? It was to apply on the body of Jesus. They knew that Jesus had died. Jesus breathed his last on the cross. His body was laid in a tomb according to Jewish custom. No one can deny the fact that Jesus had died.

2-3

² They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

And they shouted, "Praise the Lord! He has risen!! Hallelujah!!!" The Bible doesn't say that. "They were wondering about this. (v.4)"

They were wondering. They were puzzled. The empty tomb made them puzzled. What they expected was that Jesus body, wrapped in linen cloth, was laid there in the tomb quietly and helplessly. But it wasn't like that. So the situation made them puzzled. Jesus' resurrection was something impossible for them to believe.

The angels said to them that Jesus had risen.

9-10

⁹ When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. ¹⁰ It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles.

And the disciples rejoiced and cried, "Praise the Lord! He has risen!!"

Hallelujah!!!" The Bible doesn't say that.

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¹¹ But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.

They thought what the women told them was nonsense.

Jesus' disciples heard from Jesus, "The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again." (cf. Luke 9:22; 18:33) They heard from the women the tomb was empty. They heard from them that angels told them Jesus had risen. But Jesus' resurrection was something impossible for them to believe.

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¹³ Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem.

They were talking with each other and discussing. About what? About Jesus.

Disciples hoped that Jesus was the one who would rebuild the kingdom of Israel. But, he was crucified and died. And today is the third day since then.

22-24

²² In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning ²³ but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. ²⁴ Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see."

After saying this, they looked at each other and shouted, "Praise the Lord! He has risen!! Hallelujah!!!" The Bible doesn't say that. They were saying this, with their faces downcast (v.17).

They saw that Jesus had authority of God. Evil spirits obeyed Jesus' words. When he rebuked, even the wind became quiet. They heard him say he was to be crucified, and on the third day be raised again. They heard from the women the word of the angels that Jesus had risen. And they also heard that the tomb was empty. But Jesus' resurrection was something impossible for them to

believe.

These two disciples told these to a passer-by. He was actually Jesus himself, but they were kept from recognizing him. They continued to talk with him. While they were together at the dinner table, suddenly their eyes were opened and they recognized Jesus.

33-36

³³ They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together ³⁴ and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." ³⁵ Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread. ³⁶ While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."

Then the disciples jumped with joy and said, "Praise the Lord! He has risen!! Hallelujah!!!" The Bible doesn't say that. "They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. (v.37)"

Instead of rejoicing, they were upset, they lost their control. They thought they saw a ghost, no wonder they lost their control. Jesus' resurrection was something impossible for them to believe.

Jesus said, "Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have. (v.39)"

Finally the disciples jumped with joy and shouted, "Praise the Lord! He has risen!! Hallelujah!!!" The Bible doesn't say that. It says, "And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement... (v.41)"

They not only heard from others, but they themselves saw resurrected Jesus with their own eyes. But they still couldn't believe it. It is nothing but wonder. Jesus' resurrection is something so impossible and so unbelievable.

What is the lesson for us?

2. God can do things which we think is impossible.

As we have seen so far, Jesus' resurrection is something impossible for

humans to believe, something beyond our understanding, something reason cannot explain nor convince. It is a mystery people cannot accept, even though they have seen it with their own eyes.

So can we say Jesus' resurrection is made up story? Is it just a delusion? No, Jesus' resurrection is a certain fact. God can even do things we couldn't believe. He can do things which we think is impossible. God is far beyond our understanding.

God is a creator. We are just dust before Him. God is almighty. What we can do is nothing but powerlessness before God.

So we can trust in God in peace. We can trust in Him and entrust everything to Him. Although we may not understand with our mind, we can obey Him saying "because you said so."

I learned this 22 years ago, in my first year as a pastor, from my senior pastor. "You don't need a reason to obey. If you obey, you will know the reason later." This is a truth. It was an important life lesson for me.

At the wedding in Cana, the wine was gone. Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water." There were six stone water jars, each holding about 100 liters. It is quite a lot of work to fill these jars. In those days, they didn't have a hose, and didn't get water just by turning on a tap. Probably they had to draw water from the well and bring it there. That is a terribly troublesome work!

At the wedding banquet, they were already busy. And the wine was gone and they were in trouble. "Then you tell us to fill the jars with water? What do you mean by talking such nonsense? Explain the reason. If you convince us, we will do it." They didn't say that. They filled the six jars with water as Jesus told them.

"Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." "Oh no, give me a break! This is water! I'll be scolded if I do that. I cannot do it." They didn't say that. They took it, it's not just one person, but some of them or all of them took it to the master of the banquet as Jesus told them to do. Guess what? It was the best wine. Jesus revealed his glory. It was the glory of Jesus which only those who obeyed him knew.

God can do things which we cannot believe. If we know that, even when we cannot understand the situation, we can trust God. Even when the situation may be out of our control, we can trust God. Even when something beyond our understanding happens, we can trust God.

We must remember our limited ability to understand the will and ways of

God. Don't stop believing because you can't understand God.

God can do things which we think is impossible.

3. God can make us believe what we cannot believe.

(1) The word of God

25-27

²⁵ He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

God reveals his will and his promises to us through his word. Moreover, He reveals Himself through the word.

The trap is that we see things from human perspective, rather than God's perspective. We attach more importance to human ideas about God than God's ideas about humans.

"We stop listening to God and reject the authority of Scripture; our beliefs and behavior are shaped by human reasons or social trends. Because we start from man, we are left with man."¹

If we only accept what we think is meaningful, but reject all others based on our individualistic theory, no matter how much we read and study the Bible, God is always limited within our logic and ideas. God will never be God who can do some unbelievable things. Our faith will never grow.

The Bible not only records about Jesus, but the Bible can make us encounter Jesus himself. We must read the Bible, expecting not only to see God's greatness, but also great God himself. Then we start to see the fact that God can do things which we cannot believe.

(2) Signs

God reveals himself through the Word. Not only that, but He will also make us experience His power and faithfulness.

¹ David Watson "Called & Committed" Harold Shaw Publishers, 1982, P.102

When Jesus told disciples about his death on the cross and resurrection, he concretely told how he had to suffer (Luke 9:22; 18:33). Suffering had happened and cross had also happened just as Jesus predicted. So they should expect resurrection would also happen.

Moses sent out 12 men to explore the land of Canaan. When they returned, they reported: "We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! (Num. 13:27)"

Ten out of them said, "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are. (Num. 13:31)" "That night all the people of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, "If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this desert! (Num. 14:1-2)"

But Joshua and Caleb said, "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it. (Num. 13:30)"

Why did they think like that? They thought so because they saw things were just as the Lord had promised to them.

Exodus 3:8

So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey -- the home of the Canaanites, ..."

What they saw was exactly what God had promised them. God promised it *before* he saved them from Egyptians. They experienced God's mighty power to let them cross the Red sea and set them free from Egyptians completely. They saw the land was exactly what God had promised. So they saw God was fulfilling the promise. That's why they said "We can do it as God is with us. (Num. 14:8-9)" But the others, on the other hand, saw that the people there were stronger than them. And they thought they couldn't do it.

It is not about whether our wish will come true, but whether God's word is coming true. We must see the signs which show that God's promise is coming true. And we move forward by faith and will experience His promise is true. As we continually experience these, our faith in God will grow.

(3) The presence of Jesus and the help of the Holy Spirit.

When they arrived at Emmaus, Jesus acted as if he were going further. So the two disciples urged him strongly to stay with them. (v.29) "We want to be with you. We want to know more about you! Please stay with us."

Jesus opened their eyes. They recognized Jesus. And they noticed; "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us? (v.32)" Even before their eyes were opened, their hearts were burning by His word in the presence of Jesus.

1 Cor. 2:9-10

⁹ However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" – ¹⁰ but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit.

Without the work of the Holy Spirit, we cannot understand the Bible, God's will, God himself, nor His greatness. We must humbly ask the Holy Spirit for his help. "Jesus, I want to be with you. I want to know more about you. Dear Holy Spirit, please help me." The Holy Spirit will help us. God can make us believe what we cannot believe.

(4) One step at a time

I have met many people who say like this, "Why doesn't God let me know all his plans for me? I hesitate to go advance because I don't know much about the future. If God let me know all His plans in advance, I can move forward with confidence." Some of you here may also think like that.

How can we live our lives as Christians? By faith. By faith in God. It is not like buying an insurance where all the conditions are shown clearly. As for the insurance, we understand the policy, agree with it and go for it. But for our Christian walk, we will move forward trusting in God.

If anyone thinks he will move forward if he knows the plan, he is trying to do it by his own strength. "Can I do it or not? Can I bear with it? Or may I give it up? Is it suitable for me or not? Do I gain or lose?" That is not faith. Faith says this, "Lord, because you are with me, I will go. I don't know what will happen in the future, but I will move forward step by step as you lead."

It is God's love that he doesn't show all the steps to you. It is God's love for you.

God knows my faith. He knows what I can accept, what I can bear at that time. We cannot bear what will happen in the future with our current faith. If God let us know it now, we will be afraid and we will not move forward. If we don't move forward, our faith will not grow. Because we don't know, we must move forward trusting in God. As we move forward relying in God, our faith will grow. As our faith grow we can keep going, even though we may be in greater trials or more difficult situation.

God truly loves us, treasures us and desires us to grow. He will not let us know about the future. He leads us one step at a time. So our faith in God will grow.

God is able. God can do what we cannot believe. God can make us believe what we cannot believe, by the Word, with signs, in His presence, one step at a time. "Experiencing the Life, Changing lives."

For LifeNet groups and personal reflection

- 1) Do you remember things people couldn't believe but was proved to be true/possible? For example, the geocentric system, or to fly in the sky.
- 2) What was your first reaction when you heard about Jesus' resurrection? Share how you came to believe it with someone in this week.
- 3) Do you have any promise of God that you are waiting for to be fulfilled? Can you see any signs from God that the promise is coming true?
- 4) Do you have any experiences that God gave you a promise and fulfilled it? Share it with someone in this week.