

Life as Worship (Luke 24:44-53)

Last week, we studied the first half of Luke 24. Jesus' resurrection is the incredible incident for humans. The women who went to the tomb, and two disciples who were on their way to Emmaus. They all thought Jesus' resurrection was impossible. When the eleven disciples saw resurrected Jesus before their very eyes, they thought he was a ghost. But God is able! God can do things man cannot believe. God can enable man to believe what he couldn't believe before.

Today, we will continue to study the following part, v. 44 through 53.

1. The Next Promise

The disciples saw resurrected Jesus and thought he was a ghost. Jesus said, "Do you have anything here to eat?" ⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³ and he took it and ate it in their presence. (Luke 24:41-43)"

The disciples couldn't believe Jesus' resurrection. But now they could finally believe it. Hallelujah, thank you Lord for the happy ending!

Well, that's not the end of the story. Here is the beginning of the new history.

44-46

He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day,

Jesus suffered and died on the cross. And he was resurrected on the third day. And the following was about to start.

47-48

and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.

The repentance that will bring forgiveness of sins. The work of the gospel of God's kingdom that was prepared by John the Baptist and advanced by Jesus (Mark 1:4, 15). That will be continued and expanded and will be brought to all people in all nations. That is the next promise.

This was not the new idea shown by Jesus for the first time. But God's been speaking about this since a very long time ago.

Isaiah 45:22

Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other.

Before the beginning, God was there (Isa. 44:6). He created the whole universe and all human beings (John 1:1-3). God is the God for all.

Isaiah 61:11

For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign Lord will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.

The Jews in those days thought that gentiles were unclean and they were far away from salvation and God's blessing. So for them, this is something unbelievable that will turn their world upside down. Human mind cannot understand how this can be possible. But God can even do things which is unbelievable.

2. Witnesses

Witnesses we are talking about here witness what God has done.

People who met resurrected Jesus, people who came to believe Jesus' resurrection by the Word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit witnessed Jesus' resurrection. They couldn't stop witnessing.

Mary Magdalene and other women were among those witnesses (Luke 24:8-9). The two disciples who were on their way to Emmaus were among those witnesses (Luke 24:33-35).

And the other disciples also talked like this; "God has raised this

Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. (Acts 2:32)"

Before, they couldn't understand it even though they heard it from Jesus himself. They couldn't believe it. No matter how many times they heard about Jesus' resurrection, they couldn't believe it. But now they came to believe it. They experienced how true Jesus' word is. They experienced the work of the Holy Spirit. So they can witness for it. In this sense, all Christians are witnesses to Christ.

49

⁴⁹ I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

The power needed to be a witness will also be given by God.

At this point, the disciples couldn't understand what it means. But God can do great things which are beyond human understanding. Christ suffered, died on the cross and resurrected on the third day. If so, then there is no reason for them not to believe God will fulfill this promise.

3. Joy and Praise

50-53

⁵⁰ When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. ⁵¹ While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. ⁵² Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. ⁵³ And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

Jesus left his disciples and was taken up into heaven. So they could wait, expecting and believing him to fulfill his promise. Disciples can expect three things.

(1) The high priest

Jesus lifted up his hands and blessed them. Here we can see Jesus as the high priest. What will Jesus do after he left his disciples?

Rom 8:34

... Christ Jesus, who died -- more than that, who was raised to life -- is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

Jesus continues to intercede for his disciples as the high priest.

The solo priesthood of Christ is explained like this: "We have someone who stands in for us to do for us and in us what we try to do and fail to do – someone who lives forever to intercede for us (Heb 6:20; 7:25-28; 8:1-6) and who gives us the gift of the Spirit to share in his intercessions."¹ Jesus is our high priest.

(2) The Counselor

On top of this, the fact that Jesus left the disciples also has a great meaning. Prior to this, Jesus had made promises to his disciples. One is that the Counselor would come.

John 16:7

⁷ But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

The fact that Jesus left makes them expect that the Holy Spirit the Counselor would be given.

(3) Everlasting fellowship

Another thing is that he said he would prepare a place for them and would come back.

John 14:3

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

The fact Jesus left means that he went to prepare a place for them. Jesus will surely come back to them. And he will take them to that place. And they will be with the Lord forever.

Jesus left the disciples. So they can wait with expectation and faith

¹ James B. Torrance, "Worship, Community and the Triune God of Grace," IVP Academic, 1996, p.46

in Him. Although they were in the uncertain situation, they were not overwhelmed by fear and anxiety. On the contrary, they had irrepressible joy and praise arising in their heart.

4. Life as Worship

The gospel of Luke starts with the worship in the temple and ends with the worship in the temple. We can see there is very clear contrast.

In Luke 1, Zechariah was doing his special duty as the priest in the temple. The angel said to him that he was going to have a son, John. He would be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth. Many of the people of Israel would he bring back to the Lord their God. And he would make ready a people prepared for the Lord (Luke 1:15-17). But Zechariah couldn't believe it, but it came true.

And now, at the very end of Luke, the disciples met resurrected Jesus. He said, "You are witnesses of God's salvation. Wait what my Father has promised." They were given a special mission. And he was taken up into heaven. "Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.⁵³ And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God. (Luke 24:52-53)"

You cannot separate joy from worship. When we are in God's presence, when there is fellowship with God, we cannot suppress our praise to God.

Mary praised the Lord, "My soul glorifies the Lord⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,⁴⁸ for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed,⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me -- holy is his name. (Luke 1:46-49)" Her worship began here: "I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said. (Luke 1:38)"

Worship is "to offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God (Rom 12:1)"

To be the Lord's witness is to live the life as worship. "Through our attitude, action, thoughts and words, our inner man would respond to God's

everything by the revealed truth of God, with praise."² "Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power. ... ¹⁹ Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? ²⁰ For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body. (1 Cor. 6:14, 19-20, NAS)" Our worship directly relates with resurrection, the Holy Spirit and temple.

"Worship is the gift of grace to participate through the Spirit in the incarnate Son's communion with the Father – the way of joy and peace and confidence."³ Again, joy cannot be separated from worship. The word of God can lead this, and the Holy Spirit can enable this.

5. Power for Life

"The crisis of the church is not at its deepest level a crisis of authority or a crisis of dogmatic theology. It is a crisis of powerlessness in which our sole recourse is to call on the help and inward power of the Holy Spirit."⁴ It is said by James K. Baxter in 1973. Now 43 years later, his word still speaks to us with the same importance.

Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

They believed in God's word. They received the power as they were promised. They became the Lord's witnesses to the ends of the earth, as they were promised. The Lord is speaking the same promise to us too. The Lord will do the same thing to us too.

"We all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes

² John MacArthur, Jr. "The Ultimate Priority" (Japanese translation), Word of Life Press Ministries, 1988, p.194

³ James, p.59

⁴ David Watson, "Called & Committed," Harold Shaw Publishers, 1982, p.81

from the Lord who is the Spirit. (2 Cor. 3:17-18)"⁵ "In him we already have all the love and life, all the power, faith, and wisdom we need. ... Our responsibility is to abide in him, and then trust his Spirit to work in and through us, as we are obedient to his prompting."⁶

This is personal experience, but will be experienced in the fellowship in the family of God. "Through our new relationships in the family of God that the work of Christ and operation of the Spirit effectively work in us."⁷

God never breaks his promise. God still gives the Holy Spirit to those who seek Him. God can do great things which are beyond human understanding. Christ suffered, and died on the cross. And he was resurrected on the third day. The Holy Spirit had transformed the disciples. They used to hide with fear and anxiety, but became witnesses who would even sacrifice their lives to testify Jesus' resurrection. If that is true, then we have no reason not to believe God can fulfill this promise with us as well. He will give us the power of life as witnesses, our lives will become worship, and he will receive all glorify, praise and honor forever.

Now I'd like to invite all of you to declare the Word of God together. We will do this before God, to show our faith in him.

God promised:

"For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants." (Is 44:3)

"Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know." (Jer. 33:3)

"I will bring health and healing to it; I will heal my people and will let them enjoy abundant peace and security." (Jer. 33:6)

⁵ Watson, p.68

⁶ Watson, p.69

⁷ Watson, p.71

"This city will bring me renown, joy, praise and honor before all nations on earth that hear of all the good things I do for it." (Jer. 33:9)

"For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Hab. 2:14)

For Discussion:

- 1) Three challenges the expatriates in Yangon are facing.
- 2) Choose one from the three. How can we use it as the opportunity to share the gospel, the opportunity to show God's power and love? What can we do for this? How can NLIF be a light in the city? What is the strength/uniqueness of NLIF? How can we be the "channel" for the Holy Spirit to work for the city?

For LifeNet groups and personal reflection:

- 1) Do you have any experience that you couldn't help but share something with others? What was that? (For example, you had a wonderful holiday, e.t.c.) Why couldn't you help but share it?
- 2) Those who met with Resurrected Jesus talked about it. Let's think about the reasons why? (Note: It's BEFORE the Pentecost.) And what would be their expectation of how others would respond?
- 3) Now Jesus is at the right hand of God as the High Priest. (See Rom. 8:31-39) What does it mean for you? How does it encourage you?
- 4) We worship without joy sometimes. Why does it happen? How can we avoid it? How can we recover the joy in worship?