

Preached in His Name among All Nations

Luke 24:44-53

When it comes to the question of evil – real, virile, personal evil – how will you answer that question? You know some of the evil of your own heart, but the hidden evil can be much worse. How is this evil to be dealt with – to be fully and finally judged? Where and how could there be forgiveness? How could a Holy God grant forgiveness, full and free to people who are plagued by this very real evil? And where could we find an answer that is unchanging and eternal?

As you can see, this question is relevant to all of us and brings us up to the moment on the most important matters of life. As a preacher, I am very much aware that there will be those who think that this introduction makes too much of evil and its awful consequences. But I would remind you that the Greek philosopher, Sophocles (who was no Gospel preacher) put it this way: “Sophocles, in the golden age of Greece some five centuries before Christ, wrote: ‘Not to be born at all—that is by far the best fate. The second best is as soon as one is born with all speed to return thither whence one has come.’”ⁱ Even the greatest Greek philosophers testified about the awful reality of virile, personal evil. Where can we find an answer to this terrible problem? Today’s text gives us answers to these problems that are powerful and precious.

“And He said unto them, ‘These *are* the words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.’” (Luke 24:44-49)

To all the nations, we can faithfully preach the finished work of Jesus Christ as the Scriptural basis for repentance from and forgiveness for evil.

Herbert Simon once wrote, “A wealth of information creates a poverty of attention.”ⁱⁱ He was commenting on the information produced and distributed by today’s technology, especially the internet. How are we to pick and choose among all the bits of information available to each one of us? In Luke 24, Jesus showed us exactly how to pay attention to what is most important. What is most important in this world, and what is most important in God’s Word?

I. Faithful Words that Must Be Fulfilled, 44

God’s authentic message will achieve His precise purpose.

“And He said unto them, These *are* the words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me” (Luke 24:44)

Verse 44 firmly establishes the Scriptural basis for our preaching.

A. Faithful Words

In this verse, Jesus described the three main sections of the Old Testament: The Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms (the Wisdom section). Throughout His earthly ministry, it had been apparent that Jesus was fulfilling the Old Testament Scriptures. For instance, Philip told Nathaniel, **“We have**

found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph” (John 1:45). Many people in Israel recognized this after the feeding of the 5,000 as we can see in John 6:14: **“Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world;”** speaking of “that prophet” is a reference to Deuteronomy 18:15-18. Moses had predicted that “that Prophet” would come. In the Upper Room Discourse, Jesus taught His disciples, **“that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, ‘They hated me without a cause’”** (John 15:25). In this verse, Jesus was apparently including all the Old Testament in the word “law” for this a reference to a few places in the Psalms, including Psalm 69:4.

B. That Must Be Fulfilled

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, **“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled”** (Matthew 5:17-18). Jesus was saying that the Law must be fulfilled and that He would be the One to fulfill it.

To those who opposed Him, Jesus said, **“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life”** (John 5:39-40). From these verses, we can see that Christ came to fulfill the commands, promises and prophecies of the Old Testament. We can also see that placing one’s faith in Jesus Christ, the fulfillment of the Scriptures, is the essential key to eternal life. This is why, to all the nations, we must faithfully preach the finished work of Jesus Christ as the Scriptural basis for repentance from and forgiveness for evil.

As the great Michelangelo faced his imminent death, he thought deeply about the matters of personal evil, and of life, death and eternity. He realized that all his artwork, all his sculptures meant very little to one who was facing eternity. He wrote:

*Those amorous thoughts which were so lightly dressed,
What are they when the double death is nigh?
The one I know for sure, the other dread.
Painting nor sculpture now can lull to rest
My soul that turns to His great love on high,
Whose arms to clasp us on the cross were spread.ⁱⁱⁱ*

II. Faithful Words Fulfilled by the Finished Work of Jesus Christ. 45-46

God’s Word is consummated in the Gospel of Christ.

“Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:” (Luke 24:45-46).

Jesus opened the understanding of His disciples by explaining the Scriptures to them. And this is especially important: He explained His central place in the Scriptures to open their understanding. Even today, this is the right way for us to help others understand: carefully explain the Scriptures.

Note what He said, **“Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day.”** The most important emphasis of the Scriptures is this: it was essential for Christ to suffer (and by implication to die) and rise from the dead the third day. (In John 5, this is why Jesus said, **“Search the Scriptures.”**) When you consider the emphasis of verses 45-46 you can see why Paul

later wrote, **“Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures”** (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

When Peter wrote about the centrality of the Savior in the Scriptures, he connected this to the salvation of our souls. Listen to Peter’s words in 1 Peter 1:9-11, **“Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.”** The ultimate, unchanging salvation of your soul is based on the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. Those Old Testament prophets “prophesied of the grace that should come.” Here, Peter pointedly applied what Jesus told His disciples in Luke 24. Christ fulfilled the promises in the Old Testament (2 Corinthians 1:19-20).

We refer to the death, burial and resurrection of Christ as His finished work. His finished work is the basis for the Gospel. Today, we can faithfully preach the finished work of Jesus Christ as the Scriptural basis for repentance from and forgiveness for evil. We pray, “Lord, deliver us from evil.” How does the Lord deliver anyone from evil?

III. Faithful Words Must Be Preached by Christ’s Followers in the Power of the Spirit. 47-49
“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:47-49)

Don’t miss the connection between the “Thus it is written...” (v. 46) and these verses. One author noted, “The commission found in this and the next two verses is also seen as having taken place to fulfill “what is written” (Luke 24:46).^{iv} We could say it this way: It is written that Christ would fulfill His prophesied work and that Christians would preach to the nations in the authority of Christ. This is a powerful encouragement to each and every believer. The Sovereign God who gave us the Scriptures prophesied that we would proclaim the Gospel to the nations. Think about that the next time you are wondering if you should share Christ’s Good News with someone.

A. What Should Be Preached?

“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name...”

In the authority of Jesus Christ and His finished work, we proclaim that each sinner must repent. And as part of that, we preach that Christ’s work is fully sufficient to pardon sinners to grant them forgiveness of sins.

Here is God’s answer to the question of real, virile, personal evil that we raised in the introduction of this message. Your conscience tells you that your evil is present; Christ tells you that your evil can be pardoned! Will you repent? Will you turn from your evil through the authority of Christ? Embrace Him with your personal faith as the only alternative to your personal evil. And proclaim this to others – not in the weakness of your opinion, but in the authority of the Overcomer, Jesus Christ. His finished work is sufficient to save you from your sins.

B. Where Should It Be Preached?

“... among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” This highlights the theme for our missions conference: **“Preached in His Name among All Nations.”** During this conference, we will have the opportunity to hear from missionaries to the native peoples of Mexico, missionaries to Ukraine and Laos, missionaries to Indonesia, and a team that represents a Bible college dedicated to training

servants who serve across the world. In Christ, we have the mandate – the universal authority – to preach the Gospel universally, among all nations. And we have many other missionaries preaching the Gospel all over the world this morning.

C. How Should This Be Preached?

- First, it was preached by eyewitnesses on whom we can rely. (See 1 John 1:1-4).
“You are witnesses of these things.” The apostles were eyewitnesses who testified about the death and resurrection of Christ.
- Second, it was preached at Jerusalem first (where Christ was put to death, buried and rose again).
- Third, it is to be preached in the power of the Holy Spirit. You can see this in verse 49, **“And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high”** And at Pentecost, God fulfilled that promise to send His Spirit in power.

Today, we can preach in the authority of Jesus Christ and we are enabled to preach by the Spirit of Christ. We are blessed to be able to use our talents and our treasures to help our missionaries to proclaim this good news around the world.

According to Acts chapter 3, here is how Peter preached: **“But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord”** (Acts 3:18-19). This is exactly how we can preach the Gospel today. And God will bless those who hear us with the blessing that God promised to Abraham: **“... saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds [families] of the earth be blessed. Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities”** (Acts 3:25-26)

God blesses those who hear the Gospel. Will you bless them with the Gospel? He has blessed us in turning us away from our iniquities!” Because Christ suffered, died and rose again, we can repent and be converted. To all the nations, we can faithfully preach the finished work of Jesus Christ as the Scriptural basis for repentance from and forgiveness for evil. Today, you have heard God’s only answer for real, virile, personal evil. He offers you His Son as your Savior. Will you embrace Him by faith and turn from your evil?

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ⁱ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 985.

ⁱⁱ Hal R. Varian, *The Information Economy*, accessed at <https://people.ischool.berkeley.edu/~hal/pages/sciam.html#:~:text=Simon%20puts%20it%3A%20%60%60What,sources%20that%20might%20consume%20it.>

ⁱⁱⁱ Michelangelo Buonarroti, *On the Brink of Death*, translated by John Addington Symonds (1840-1893).

^{iv} Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, vol. 24, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 620.