

Bible Study Guide: Week of 4-12-2021

1. Read through the passage below
2. Read my notes and commentary
3. Read the questions at the end and ponder or discuss with others

Pastor Andrew

Luke 24:36b-48

^{36b}Jesus himself stood among [the disciples] and said to them, “Peace be with you.” ³⁷They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. ³⁸He said to them, “Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” ⁴⁰And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. ⁴¹While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” ⁴²They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³and he took it and ate in their presence.

⁴⁴Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” ⁴⁵Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸You are witnesses of these things.”

^{36b}Jesus himself stood among [the disciples] and said to them, “Peace be with you.”

We pick up here at v. 36b. In 36a, we read that this appearance of Jesus happened as the disciples were still discussing “these things.” They were discussing the experience of two of Jesus’ disciples on the road to Emmaus and the seemingly simultaneous experience the other disciples had of Jesus’ appearing among them there in Jerusalem. While they were still discussing what they had experienced, Jesus came and stood among them again, greeting them with the words “Peace be with you.” This is one of many parallels between this encounter and the encounter from John 20 we looked at last week.

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In John’s version of this encounter the disciples began their gathering in fear, but Jesus’ presence led them to trust and worship him. Here, they begin with excitement and become afraid when they see Jesus, whom they presume is a ghost. Jesus invites them to see and touch his hands and feet, which are “flesh and bones.” While the parallel account from John 20 mentions Jesus’ nail-wounded hands and pierced side (John alone, remember, reports the detail of the spear wound), here Luke makes no mention of wounds. In fact, nowhere in Luke are we told about nails used on the cross. It may be that Luke is implying Jesus’ hands and feet were wounded by nails or it may be that Jesus is inviting the disciples to see and touch his hands and feet because they were the parts of his body uncovered by clothing and would, therefore, be easy to touch and see at a moment’s notice. In either case, Jesus speaks these words and shows himself to the disciples in order to relieve their fears and doubts.

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Their experience of the risen Christ gives them joy, but the disciples still seem to have doubts about Jesus’ identity. His question about food and his action of eating in front of the disciples is intended to further relieve their doubts, reassuring them that Jesus is the same one they had eaten with during his earthly ministry. Just as on the road to Emmaus he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread, so here a meal gathering serves as a revelation of Jesus’ presence with his followers.

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Jesus reminds the disciples that his teaching consistently pointed toward his own suffering, death, and resurrection. Further, he teaches them that all of the scriptures pointed toward this event, as well. More than that, though, he teaches them that the mission they started together will be lived out by the disciples themselves—going to all nations in order to proclaim “repentance and forgiveness of sins.” This work will begin “from Jerusalem,” that is, among the Jewish people first. We know from the history of the early church, however, that this work quickly spread across the known world at the time, gathering in gentile and Jewish believers alike. In reminding the disciples that they “are witnesses of these things” he is emphasizing their role not only as eyewitnesses to the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus, but also their role as those who can give voice to Jesus’ significance to Israel and all nations.

Discussion/Reflection Questions:

- 1. Why do you think the disciples were still wondering and doubting even after seeing and touching Jesus in the flesh?**
- 2. How do we see Jesus in our midst in our own gatherings in this day and age?**
- 3. What does it mean for us to proclaim repentance and forgiveness of sins in our own context?**