

Great Hope
A Sermon by Rev. Frances Savill
Sunday May 29, 2022

Luke 24:44-53

There are a few things from this passage from Luke's gospel that I want you to notice.

First, from verse 44

*Then Jesus 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."*

The Old Testament is made up of:

Torah- first 5 books of the Bible- **Law of Moses**

N- nevi'im – historical books and **prophets**

K- Ketuvim – poetry – **Psalms**

The risen Jesus is claiming that He is the fulfillment of the entire Old Testament.

Everything written, the whole of the Hebrew Scriptures, (the Old Testament) is fulfilled, completed, perfected in Jesus.

The longings of the prophets, the promises of God, are fulfilled in Jesus.

Jesus opened their minds to understand the scriptures – the Hebrew or Old Testament.

Three groups of us have been studying the Bible together and there are some things that I am realizing in a new way.

First, the Bible is truly meant to be read together and discussed together. We can certainly read our Bibles on our own, and we should ponder the Bible day and night, but it is also meant to be discussed and connections made together.

That is part of how Jesus opens the scriptures to us.

Secondly, we should be asking God to open our minds to His word. It's okay when we don't understand something. When we ask God for help He does.

In my experience God doesn't always do it immediately, there isn't an instant bolt of lightening or a new epiphany that instant. But as we ponder God's word, as it becomes part of us, God gives us understanding. And that understanding grows over time.

God's word should be new to you, you should be discovering new things, your understanding should be deepened over your lifetime.

Then Jesus said to them;
Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day^(B) 47 and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem

Those words turned the world upside down. The Messiah, the long awaited King would set the people free and bring salvation, not by killing and destroying His enemies, but by dying and rising from the dead.

And now repentance and forgiveness of sins in His name is to be announced to the world.

"Repentance" and "forgiveness of sins" are words we use a lot. Repentance is about turning around, it's about being given a new heart- a new way of thinking and being.

Putin needs to repent – which doesn't mean that he just needs to feel sorry for what's he's done. He needs a new heart, a new way of thinking and being, and that new life is offered in Jesus' name.

“Forgiveness of sins” means pardon and forgiveness, but it also means being delivered from captivity.

Sin and sinful ways that have bound us are broken, and we are set free to live new lives in Jesus, we are given a new start, new life, washed clean in the blood of the lamb.

This is the good news that we are witnesses to, that we are now heralds of, that is ours to share to anyone and everyone.

Someone, likely several someone’s shared that good news with you.

You have your story to share with others.

And you are not alone in sharing that story, for God the Holy Spirit is with us.

The power that raised Jesus from the grave is at work in us.

The power that was at work in Jesus as he taught and ministered is with us.

And Jesus is present with us, going before us, going into all the places where we will go.

I have always found ascension Sunday a little sad- because Jesus is taken up from the disciples.

I’d really like to hang out and have a meal together.

But I have come to see that although it is not the same as it was in those 40 days after the resurrection, Jesus is still very much present with us.

Have you ever had a “mountain top” experience- a moment when you have experienced the power of God?

We might say that our hearts, or our lives, or that we were lifted up to God.

But our feet didn’t really leave the ground.

We might say we were transported to heaven, but we’re here in the sanctuary.

Jesus is lifted up isn't about him being away from us, but his ruling at God's right hand.

The throne of heaven is above every power, and every name, but Jesus is still in our midst, present through the Holy Spirit.

You and I are his witnesses.

Thanks be to God.