

**Do you view your daily activities as commissions, duties, or something else?
How do these duties compare to the commission of carrying the gospel to others?**

Military personnel do not debate orders to report for duty or to undertake a mission. They carry out their commission; that's what they signed up to do. Christians also have a commission—a Great Commission. After the resurrection and before ascending again to heaven, Jesus gave His followers their marching orders—to take the good news of salvation to all the world.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Luke wrote his Gospel to inspire his audience to believe with certainty what they had been taught about Jesus (1:3-4). He wrote to expose the gospel of grace—that both Jews and Gentiles can share in the kingdom of God through faith in Christ.

In this week's Bible passage, Jesus appeared to His disciples once again. This account follows Jesus' appearance to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (24:13-32). The two who encountered Jesus on the road returned "that same hour" (v. 33) and excitedly shared with the others the news of their visit with Jesus. As the larger group of disciples met behind closed doors out of fear (John 20:19), Jesus suddenly and unexpectedly stood in their midst (Luke 24:36).

This account of Jesus' appearance to His followers emphasizes the necessity of His death and resurrection taking place in fulfillment of God's plan. It also stresses

the reality of Jesus' bodily resurrection and presence with His followers. Moreover, as Jesus commissioned this small band of disciples for a world-wide mission, He promised the coming and indwelling of the Holy Spirit to empower them for such a task.

Salvation comes with a joyous invitation to enter the kingdom of God. As we enter the kingdom, God commissions us to be ambassadors for that kingdom. Therefore, Christians not only are delivered from the darkness of sin but also are sent out to be lights in a dark world. We are saved to be sent. We are cleansed and then commissioned. The great thing is, Jesus does not send us out alone. His presence not only gives us courage but also empowers us for the task.

LUKE 24:36-49

36 As **they**^A were saying these things, he himself stood in their midst. He said to them, “Peace to you!” **37** But they were startled and terrified and thought they were seeing **a ghost**^B. **38** “Why are you troubled?” he asked them. “And why do doubts arise in your hearts? **39 Look at my hands and my feet**^C, that it is I myself! Touch me and see, because a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you can see I have.” **40** Having said this, he showed them his hands and feet. **41** But while they still were amazed and in disbelief because of their joy, he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” **42** So they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, **43** and he took it and **ate in their presence**^D. **44** He told them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that **everything written about me**^E in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” **45** Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. **46** He also said to them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead the third day, **47** and repentance for forgiveness of sins will be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem. **48** You are witnesses of these things. **49** And look, I am sending you **what my Father promised**^F. As for you, stay in the city until you are empowered from on high.”

Passage Outline

Assures (Luke 24:36-43)

Opens (Luke 24:44-46)

Sends (Luke 24:47-49)

Key Words

- A. The disciples (minus Thomas, according to John 20:19-25) and those with them.
- B. They knew Jesus had risen (Luke 24:33-35), but locked doors now separated them from the outside. However, Jesus’ body had no limits of time or space (John 20:19-25).
- C. Jesus calmed their fears by showing them the scars the nails had left from His crucifixion.
- D. Jesus may have eaten the fish not because He was hungry but because he wanted to show them His personhood in yet another way, as ghosts cannot eat.
- E. The three major portions of the Hebrew Bible included the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms.
- F. Believers need the Holy Spirit to fully understand Scripture and to find power to act on their spiritual knowledge.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

Jesus invited them to confirm once and for all that what had been reported was true. His remarks suggest some still doubted, so He allowed them to see His hands and feet, where the scars of His crucifixion remained, and to touch Him. Ghosts do not have physical bodies. Moreover, His scars would have further solidified His identity. This was the crucified Jesus with the marks of nails in His hands to prove His identity.

What is the significance of Jesus' being physically resurrected? How does Him being physically resurrected impact how we view our own resurrection?

BIBLE SKILL: Use multiple Scripture passages to understand a major doctrine. Review Romans 8:11, Philippians 3:21, 2 Corinthians 5:6-8, and 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17. Consider how Jesus' bodily resurrection gives believers hope. How does Jesus' bodily resurrection offer hope for Christians?

Jesus' physical resurrection was too good to be true! The next thing Jesus did was ask for something *to eat*. The main reason Jesus asked for food wasn't to fulfill His physical hunger but to demonstrate His physical presence. Jesus took the food and *ate before them*.

What assurances might a person desire or need to accept the resurrection of Jesus?

Jesus first gave the disciples assurance that He had indeed risen from the dead. Then

He turned their attention to His fulfillment of the Scriptures. Jesus reminded them once more of what was written about Him *in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms*.

How do fulfilled prophecies concerning Christ provide us with assurance in the providential plans of God?

Jesus *opened their minds to understand the Scriptures*. What does that mean? He was making it clear that He is at the center of all the promises of the Old Testament. Since Jesus is the central subject of the Old Testament, its conclusion and fulfillment are found in Him.

How might we explain the difference between hearts burning, eyes being opened, and minds being opened? Do these happen for all believers in the order as they did here?

Now that Jesus had shown His disciples that He suffered and rose from the dead for the salvation of all who will believe, He sent them to proclaim that message to others. We often wonder how a small band of fragile disciples were able to turn the world upside down. The task's scope and difficulty seems impossible. But God had given them authority and power from above. The church's task is difficult; special ability is needed to accomplish it. It is not to be carried out in mere human strength.

How does this passage give us courage to fulfill the responsibility of sharing Jesus with others?

APPLY THE TEXT

- Believers can be assured of Jesus' physical resurrection.
- Believers can know that God has an eternal plan to redeem His creation.
- Believers are sent to tell all people about the forgiveness found in Jesus.

What are some ways you can assure people of Jesus' resurrection? Who do you know who could use some assurance?

Reflect on Luke 24:48, focusing on the role you play in God's redemptive plan. Consider how each word relates to you. Memorize this verse.

As a group, identify practical ways that you can help your church in taking the gospel to the nations. What actions need to be taken in the next week to help this happen?

Prayer Requests



DAILY EXPLORATION

Day 1: Jesus was resurrected from the dead.

Read Luke 24:36-40, identifying the proof Jesus gave that He had been resurrected.

Can you envision being in the room and hearing the reports of Jesus' return from the dead? Imagine the uncertainty, doubt, and questions. Even as the momentum of His appearances were stacking up, the idea that Jesus was alive was hard to accept. As the Emmaus disciples returned to Jerusalem and shared with the other followers their encounter with the risen Christ, Jesus *stood among them*. In John 20:26 we are given an extra detail, namely, that they were in the room with the doors locked because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. The door was locked, yet Jesus appeared among them. It's no wonder they were afraid. It makes logical sense that many of them *thought they saw a spirit*. They needed to hear His words, *Peace to you*. These very words changed the entire mood of the gathering from fear to faith.

How does Jesus' being physically resurrected impact how you view your own resurrection?

Day 2: Jesus proved to His disciples that He was alive.

Read Luke 24:41-43, contemplating why Jesus asked for something to eat.

The main reason Jesus asked for food wasn't to fulfill His physical hunger but to demonstrate His physical presence. The meal indicates further that Jesus was not an apparition but a physical being. This was not a mere "spiritual resurrection." Once again, He revealed Himself at a table as fellowship took place over a meal, which continued Luke's theme of Jesus teaching over a meal. Jesus' presence would have provided important assurance to the believers in the room. The recent events would have left them startled, but His presence calmed their hearts. Those in the room could forever vouch for the fact that this post-resurrection appearance was a real encounter with an actual person who had eaten and shown Himself to be alive.

KEY DOCTRINE: God the Son. Jesus was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion (Matt. 28:9).

What assurances do you desire or need to accept the resurrection of Jesus?

Day 3: Jesus' death and resurrection were God's plan.

Read Luke 24:44, underlining the verse.

The phrase *while I was still with you* sounds unusual since Jesus was speaking with them at the time. Jesus was talking about prior to the crucifixion. Luke recorded at least three of those occasions. After Peter acknowledged Jesus was the Messiah, Jesus warned He would be rejected and suffer before rising the third day (Luke 9:21-22). After casting a demon out of a child, Jesus told the disciples He would be betrayed (9:44-45). As Jesus led His followers toward Jerusalem that final time, He described how the prophets wrote in detail about His being mocked, insulted, spit on, flogged, and killed before rising on the third day (18:31-34). Without His death and resurrection, centuries of prophetic utterance would be in vain. More importantly, without His death and resurrection, Jesus' life would have been a lie, and we would remain in our sins (1 Cor. 15:17). This threefold designation is shorthand for the entirety of the Old Testament. Jesus was reminding the disciples that His cross and resurrection were part of God's plan for redemptive history, as revealed in the Scriptures.

How do fulfilled prophecies concerning Christ provide you with assurance in the providential plans of God?

Day 4: Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament.

Read Luke 24:45-46, considering what it means to have your mind opened to the Scriptures.

It is fascinating to consider how chapter 24 progresses. First, the hearts of the two followers traveling to Emmaus burned within them (vv. 18-29), then their eyes were opened (vv. 30-35), and finally the minds of the larger group, including those two men, were opened (vv. 36-49). Jesus opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. Christ is the Heir and Mediator of the promise made to Abraham (Gal. 3:16). Jesus fulfills the Law of Moses as the only Righteous One (Rom. 3:20-22; 5:19; 8:3). He is the promised Davidic King who will forever reign on the throne (Acts 13:22-23; Rev. 22:16). Jesus Christ is One the prophets spoke of, promising a new covenant between God and man (Jer. 31:31-34). This threefold reference to the Old Testament outlines the promised Christ. Jesus, the Messiah, was to suffer (Ps. 22; 69; Isa. 52:13-53:12) and on the third day rise from the dead (Ps. 16:8-10; 110:1), and this good news would be proclaimed by His disciples to the nations (Isa. 40:3-5; Amos 9:12). When Jesus opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, they realized that a crucified and raised Messiah was not an adjustment in God's plan but was God's plan all along. There need no longer be an obstacle between humanity and God because of sin.

How might you explain the difference between hearts burning, eyes being opened, and minds being opened? Did this happen for you in the same order it did here?

Day 5: The good news of Jesus must be proclaimed to all the nations.

Read Luke 24:47-49, noting the directions to the disciples.

Notice three things about the disciples' commission. First, they would proclaim repentance. Repentance is more than feeling sorry for doing something wrong. The word *repent* means a change of mind that results in a change of purpose, attitude, and behavior. Second, forgiveness would be proclaimed in his name. Only through Jesus' victory over death and hell could He have a name that makes the forgiveness of sins possible. Third, this good news is so vital that it must be proclaimed to all nations. Though Luke was concluding his Gospel account, we know that the story was just beginning. As God's plan moved forward, the disciples were a major part of its advance. We are witnesses in a different sense than these original disciples. They testified to what they saw; we bear witness to their testimony and to our experience with Christ through salvation. But the commission remains the same.

How does this passage give you courage to fulfill the responsibility of sharing Jesus with others?

TALK IT OUT

Reflect on the truths found in Luke 24, sharing with other members of your Bible study group.

How did Jesus announce His presence to the disciples?

Why was it important for the disciples to receive confirmation about what Jesus was saying?

How is the mission given to the disciples an extension of Jesus' mission?

