

# THE MISSION OF JESUS SHARED

Leader pages on pp. 124-127

**THE POINT:**  
THE TRUTH ABOUT JESUS IS TOO BIG TO KEEP TO OURSELVES.

## LUKE 24:44-53

<sup>44</sup> He told 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."

<sup>45</sup> Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.

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<sup>46</sup> He also said to them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead the third day,

<sup>47</sup> and repentance for forgiveness of sins will be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

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<sup>48</sup> You are witnesses of these things.

<sup>49</sup> And look, I am sending you what my Father promised. As for you, stay in the city until you are empowered from on high."

<sup>50</sup> Then he led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them.

<sup>51</sup> And while he was blessing them, he left them and was carried up into heaven.

<sup>52</sup> **After worshipping him, they returned to Jerusalem with great joy.**

<sup>53</sup> And they were continually in the temple praising God.

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### MEMORY VERSE

### KEYWORDS

**Everything written about me (v. 44)**—Using this resurrection appearance as a teaching opportunity, Jesus pointed the disciples' attention to what had been written about Him. In doing so, He was directing them away from their emotional response in seeing Him and toward a better understanding of His mission.

**Repentance (v. 47)**—In this verse, Jesus shifted His focus from the historical aspects of the gospel message to the individual person's response to it.

**For forgiveness of sins (v. 47)**—Jesus listed the purpose of repentance as the forgiveness of sins, something only God can do.

# WHY MUST CHRISTIANS SHARE THE GOSPEL MESSAGE WITH OTHERS?

“Sharing” has a different connotation than it did twenty years ago. In those days, “sharing” something generally required physical proximity to another. You could share a sandwich, share some news, or share a seat, but now sharing is done in different ways.

If we are enjoying a meal, we share it. If we take a good picture, we share it. If we think of something witty (or sarcastic), we share it. We accomplish this not on a one-to-one, physical proximity basis, but through Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram. In fact, you could argue that given the proliferation of “sharing,” we are better “sharers” now than at any point in history.



Interesting, in light of our abundant sharing, we don't take the chance to share more about Jesus. But that is exactly what is required of us as His followers. We are commanded and equipped to tell others about the life, ministry, and mission of Jesus. We do this because this news is simply too big and too good to keep to ourselves.

## We Are Empirically Sure //

**Luke 24:44-45**

The disciples must have blinked their eyes in disbelief. There, in their midst, was Jesus, and He was alive and well. True enough, He bore the scars of His death, but death no longer had a hold on Him. He was back, never to die again. Can you imagine the number of questions that came up in their minds? Questions about death? About life? About what He experienced? About their own future?

But rather than answering any of those questions directly, Jesus was first and foremost concerned with helping His disciples understand what they had long missed—that everything in God's Word, the law, and the prophets had led to and pointed to this moment. It was critical for the disciples to see this, and for us to see it as well, lest we mistakenly think that the death and resurrection of Jesus was some sort of “Plan B.”

That is to say, God has always had it as His plan for Jesus to be born of a virgin, live a perfect life, and die in the place of sinners. It's not that sin frustrated His original plan, and so God had to move on to the backup of Jesus. No, the cross and the resurrection is not some afterthought of God.

This is good news for us, very good news indeed. Because if Jesus was a “Plan B” then it would have massive implications about the character of God. Consider why we as human beings move from Plan A to Plan B. We might do it because we are presented with new information about something. There is something we didn't know about a circumstance or a person or an issue, and

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based on this new information, we are compelled to change the way we think about it. But God knows every circumstance down to the molecular level. There is never a moment when He's caught off guard or by surprise; never an instance when He is shocked or dismayed.

We might move to Plan B because we learn something new about our intent, our motivation, or our feelings. The human heart is a confusing, mixed up, and twisted sort of place. As a result, when we reflect on our decisions and opinions of the past, we almost always realize that though we thought we were acting for one reason, there was actually something else going on inside of us at the time. Not so with God. God knows Himself, and He always acts in accordance with His perfect character.

Jesus cannot have been Plan A for the same reasons that He could not have been Plan B. Because when we say, "Plan A," we are by implication saying that there are other plans in place. Plan B, C, and so forth—contingencies in case Plan A doesn't pan out the way we expect. God was not waiting to see whether or not the mission of Jesus played itself out the way He expected. Nor was He hoping that He had enough fortitude and influence to make Plan A workout. Jesus is not Plan B. Nor is He Plan A. He is simply God's plan—past, present, and future. And the whole of Scripture tells us so.

### WHY IS AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE OLD TESTAMENT HELPFUL FOR UNDERSTANDING JESUS AND HIS MISSION?

## We Have an Exemplary Strategy //

Luke 24:46-47

Verses 44-45 are holistic in nature; Jesus opened the minds of the disciples to understand the over-arching meaning of the Scriptures and their relationship to Him. He showed them that He, Jesus, was the main character, and that everything in God's Word pointed to Him. Having given them a broad understanding, He got more specific. Jesus intentionally helped them see that the cross and empty tomb were foretold and fulfilled. He chose these two aspects of His entire ministry to zero in on because the cross and empty tomb are central to the gospel of Jesus.

It is ironic that even today people try and separate the love, forgiveness, and moral teachings of Jesus from the cross and the empty tomb. For Jesus, nothing can be separated from His death and resurrection; one simply cannot have a cross-less Christ. That is because the cross and resurrection are the culmination, validation, and separation of Jesus:



### DIGGING DEEPER OPENING MINDS

Many of Jesus's disciples had the privilege of seeing His life and receiving direct instruction from Him. Jesus was the one who "opened their minds" to understand the Scriptures. While we should not expect to teach as well as Jesus, we can confidently imitate Jesus. With God's aid, Paul was able to engage Lydia with a compelling gospel presentation (Acts 16:14). Paul also used ancient reasoning techniques to open Scripture and convince many that Jesus is the "Christ" (Acts 17:3). Along with Jesus, Paul was given a special gift of teaching. However, Paul was just as human as we are, and we should imitate him as he imitated Christ (1 Cor. 11:1-2). After Paul was converted to the faith, he spent time seeking to understand the gospel. Once this time was completed, he began teaching and opening minds with the power of the Holy Spirit according to the authority of Jesus.

**Reflect on your spiritual journey. How has God used you to open the minds of those who are lost?**



- **The culmination.** Jesus’s entire life led up to the cross and empty tomb. This was His constant trajectory, the goal He was always aiming toward. He knew the will of His Father, and that was for Him to die and rise again. In the cross and resurrection, we find the apex of the character of God, the great answer to the question of who God is and what He has done for us.
- **The validation.** The resurrection of Jesus is the ultimate validation of everything He taught and did. It meant that Jesus knew exactly what He was talking about all along, and that anyone who might disagree with His claims about Himself, God the Father, or the nature of the world must be wrong. That’s the way it is with Jesus; there is no middle ground. That realization either brings great joy or great fear.
- **The separation.** Not only are the cross and empty tomb the culmination and validation of Jesus’s life on earth; they also validate everything else about Jesus. They separate Jesus from all other self-proclaimed “messiahs.” None of the rest were willing to die for their disciples. They might rally their disciples to sacrifice themselves, but they would not participate. Up to this point in Luke’s Gospel, Jesus was regarded in many ways to many people. He was regarded as a great teacher, a man of power, and maybe even a future earthly king. But few, if any, would have regarded Him as the living God.

Jesus, is in a league of His own, separate from any other human being. Because He died and rose again, He is not “a” way, truth, and life, He is **the** way, truth, and life. No one comes to the Father except through Him (John 14:6).

### WHY MIGHT SOME PEOPLE WANT TO REJECT THE HISTORICAL REALITY OF THE RESURRECTION AND CROSS?

## We Are Empowered and Sent //

Luke 24:48-53

Once He had risen from the dead, Jesus set about preparing the disciples for what was to come next. Though Jesus completed the work the Father had given Him, His mission lives on through His followers. So, Jesus commanded these early disciples with the same commission that we, as followers of Jesus, still carry today. As we reflect on Jesus’s command to share this message, we should remember a few things.

1. **Jesus’s command is not negotiable.** The lasting command Jesus gave to the church is couched in His authority. This, too, is one of the reasons why the Lord opened the eyes of His disciples—He wanted them to know that He was not giving them a suggestion; He was issuing a command. Indeed, it is a command rooted in the authority of Jesus.

We should beware, then, of all the ways we tend to try and negotiate with Jesus. We hold up our circumstances, our supposed limitations, our special instances, but they are of no consequence. That doesn’t mean Jesus doesn’t care about them; it does mean, though, that they do not excuse us from this command to share the good news.

2. **Jesus’s command is not restrictive.** This is a very inclusive command. Based on His authority, the witnesses of Jesus are to go to “all nations.” And here, too, we should be careful that we don’t intentionally or unintentionally restrict that which is meant to be loosed.

We should be careful that we don’t restrict the “who” of this. If we are Christians, then the command to be Jesus’s witnesses calls us to

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confront our political, racial, and socio-economic biases. It's an inclusive command for us to cross the lines we've drawn in our hearts.

3. **Jesus's command is not complicated.** We are to go. We are to share. We are to bring others along the road of following Jesus. That's it. When you look at it like that, it's really not that complicated. One might wonder, then, why we tend to make it so.

Complicating an issue is a neat way around actually getting busy. It's because the more we talk around something, the longer we don't have to actually do it. When it comes to Jesus, we simply need to trust Him and go.

4. **Jesus's command is not alone.** Jesus commands us with authority and sends us on a mission, but He also promises His presence. The Holy Spirit is what God had promised, and the Holy Spirit is Who would empower all of Jesus's disciples to walk in His command.

As we go, we can trust that we are not going alone. Jesus gives us what we need through the power of the Holy Spirit. We can go and tell with confidence and hope, trusting in the power Jesus has given

### WHAT ARE SOME SPECIFIC WAYS YOU HAVE BEEN EQUIPPED AND EMPOWERED TO SHARE THE GOSPEL?

### DID YOU KNOW?

There is often a misunderstanding about the method that Jesus desires to use to advance His mission. There is the belief that Jesus would have been better suited to do this Himself. Jesus could have read everyone's mind and come up with the best argument to convince them. However, He chose us! Jesus chose us because we can testify to our own encounters with Jesus. We can testify to what we have seen and heard. Interestingly, marketing research reveals that someone will buy a product 92% of the time because of the testimony of someone they know. People trust word-of-mouth advertising more than anything else.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, when people realize how Jesus has truly shaped us, they will respond one way or another to this genuine form of advertisement.

**Biblical Truth:** Our redemptive encounter with Christ is the greatest testimony the world could ever know.

**How have you used your authentic encounter with Jesus to help benefit someone else with the truth of the gospel?**

## LIVE IT

### Has the gospel changed your life?

If your answer is yes, then there is at least one way to know that this is not simply lip service. Are you sharing the good news? When a new restaurant opens in your neighborhood, people will go out of their way to tell you if it is worth your money or not. We should be doing the same about Jesus if He has really changed our lives. The truth about Jesus is too big to keep to ourselves.

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- **Commit to Jesus.** Before you can share Jesus with others, you too need to make commitment to trust in Him. If you want to know how to become a follower of Christ, talk with your group leader.
- **Commit to Share.** Make a list of people in your life who you know to be unbelievers. Commit to pray for each person, by name, daily for the next week.
- **Commit to Prayer.** Bookmark the site, [www.imb.org/prayer](http://www.imb.org/prayer). Here you will find daily prayer requests from all over the world. Make time each day to pray that the nations would come to believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ.



# DAILY READINGS

## 1. TRUST EVERYTHING! // LUKE 24:44

In Isaiah 55, God declares, “so my word that comes from my mouth will not return to me empty, but it will accomplish what I please and will prosper in what I send it to do.” Everything written about Jesus will be fulfilled. There is no missing the target in God. There are no mistakes in God. There are no do-overs by God. Moses declares these words about God, “God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?” (Num. 23:19).

**God’s is faithful and His Word true. For this reason, we can walk and live in without doubt.**

## 2. GOOD NEWS // LUKE 24:45-47

Have you ever been burdened with being the bearer of bad news? The downside is your awful feeling before and after delivering the message. On the contrary, there is a sense of jubilation when you are blessed to be the bearer of some good news. Remarkably, there is a state of happiness that remains with you. Imagine being able to tell someone that you know the way to a fresh start. Jesus gave this privilege to His disciples. They were charged to proclaim to everybody everywhere, in His name, the repentance for the forgiveness of sins. What a ground-breaking, life-renewing proclamation and privilege!

**The good news is that His disciples are given the same benefit today. Let us make somebody’s day.**

## 3. READY. WAIT. WITNESS. // LUKE 24:48-49

To wait is not to sleep or to lose hope. To wait is to expect and to obtain. The waiting process does wonders in the life of the believer. Waiting is the prerequisite for the mission. Here are the timeless words of comfort and encouragement concerning those who wait, by the prophet Isaiah. “. . . but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.”

(Isaiah 40:31). These are faith-building words for God’s witnesses. They let us know what is needed for the mission and the mission power that we shall have to overcome to accomplish the task while not getting weary or losing strength.

**Ready yourself for the assignment, wait for direction and witness according to the Spirit.**

## 4. THE ULTIMATE MESSAGE AND GIFT // JOHN 3:16

There is very little that compares to having a job you love. It is a job that you were made for and passionate about, a job that impacts lives. It is a job that always rewards. I’m describing the position of a witness continuing the mission of Jesus. It is like leaving the house daily with a floating billboard over you with the bold words, “It’s All About Jesus.” Your script is ready to be shared at the leading of the Holy Spirit, “For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.” As recipients of this gift, we should be encouraged to share the gift with others.

**What a job, what a privilege. Sharing the ultimate message and offering the ultimate gift.**

## 5. THE NAME ABOVE ALL // PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11

“For this reason, God has highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:9-11). There is nothing above, below or beyond the name of Jesus. The bible says even demons tremble and are subject to the name of Jesus (Luke 10:17; Jas. 2:19). His name is greater than anything we will ever face! Sickness must bow to His name. Financial struggles must bow to His name. Situations on the job, with our children and even our enemies, all surrender to the name of Jesus.

**There is victory, power and deliverance in the matchless name of Jesus!**



# Signs of An Authentic Church

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The Hartford Institute estimates there are roughly 350,000 religious congregations in the United States.<sup>6</sup> Twelve thousand of these are non-Christian congregations. All of these are divided into 217 different denominations with additional non-denominational groups. These segmentations represent different views of the Scripture, theology, culture, tradition, polity, and ecclesiology. During and since the pandemic, many have switched churches, some have even switched denominations. With so many choices, how can we tell if we are a part of an authentic church and not just an organization of like-minded individuals?

When the United States Treasury Department teaches its agents how to identify counterfeit

money, they do not study the counterfeits. They study the real thing. When you know what the real thing looks like it, is easy to spot a counterfeit.

Acts 2:41-47, provides an account of the original and authentic church, gives us some signs that should always be our guides.

**Rooted in Scripture:** Acts 2:41 says, “So those who accepted his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand people were added to them.”

Everything an authentic church does and says should be rooted in Scripture, “they accepted the message.” Not just in an isolated verse or passage, but the entirety of the Biblical text.

It is easy to draw all kinds of ideas from isolated verses, so what we believe must be able to stand the scrutiny of the entire Biblical text. Paul informs us in, 2 Timothy 4:3, a time would come when teachers would tell us what we want to hear. An authentic church is rooted in the Scripture.

**Regular in Practice:** Acts 2:42 says, “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer.”

Anybody can say good things, our mandate is to do it. James 1:22 encourages us, “But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.” Like the authentic church in Acts was fully devoted to living out what they were learning—the teaching, the fellowship, the breaking of bread, and the prayer; all authentic churches are committed to living out the teachings of the Bible.

**Re-encounter God in Worship:** Acts 2:43 says, “Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and signs were being performed through the apostles.”

This may come to you as a surprise, but worship is not about us. It is not about what we like, what we want or how it makes us feel. Authentic churches have authentic worship that is all about God. It is worship that ushers us into God’s holy presence. We re-encounter Him week after week and are awed in His presence. Remember when you are in awe you cannot speak, you do not have words, we are frozen in the moment. The church in Acts was constantly filled with awe. If your worship is plain, predictable, pragmatic, or pretentious, that is a problem.

**Regularly Generous:** Acts 2:45 says, “They sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all, as any had need.”

We cannot be selfish or materialistic and be an authentic church. I have heard far too many sermons and songs that are all about getting, gaining, hoarding, and having. This is not the message, attitude, or action of an authentic church.

Authentic churches are generous and are made up of members who delight more in giving than in gaining.

We may not need to sell everything, but I bet all of us have much more stuff than we need. Find something you can sell and use the proceeds to support missions. Think about giving before you use your credit card for one more thing you really don’t need. We can’t be generous if we are in debt.

**Reach out Evangelistically:** Acts 2:46-47 encourages us, “Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple, and broke bread from house to house. They ate their food with joyful and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. Every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.”

Notice this—they met in public; they ate with everybody; they kept a joyful attitude; they pointed their praises to God; and they enjoyed favor of all the people. These verses are all about the public witness of the authentic church and all the members therein. When your witness is right, the authentic church enjoys favor with the people and the Lord adds to the church. Jesus told us, “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35).

Never settle for an imitation. Go for the authentic. Jesus is still the real thing!

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