

Making Disciples Who Make Disciples

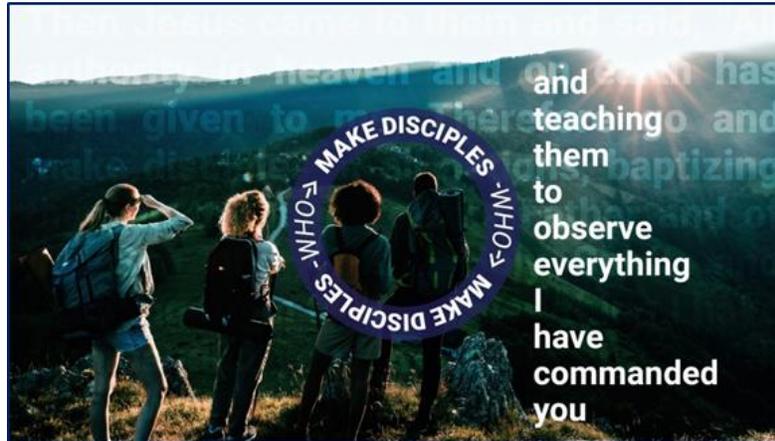
Ministry year 2021-2022

Kenwood Baptist Church Sermon Series

Pastor David Palmer

April 24, 2022

TEXT: Luke 24:44-53



Let's turn our attention to God's Word together. We turn to Luke 24, which is the final scene of Luke's Gospel. We've been in a year-long discipleship series, focused on the Great Commission found in Matthew's ending of his Gospel. This is Luke's ending of his Gospel. It's his ending of the Gospel, when Jesus appears after His resurrection to two disciples on the road to Emmaus. As He meets with them, He opens their minds to understand the Scriptures. He entrusts them with the core convictions that make up Christianity, and then He promises the power of the Holy Spirit so that we can live for Christ and serve Him in this world. We want to join the meeting that happens. We were invited into it through Luke's writing. I want you to journey with me into this scene to allow your mind to be opened, as Jesus opened theirs, and also to embrace and allow these core convictions that really shape Christian faith to be written on your heart, to be entrusted with them, and then to expect and await the presence and power of the Spirit, so that we can live for Him and share Him with the world.

Keep your Bible open to Luke 24. In Luke 24:44, Jesus meets with these disciples and tells 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 and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

This is a remarkable statement of Jesus because Jesus says in this statement to the disciples that the Bible is essentially about Him. That would be totally blasphemous unless it was absolutely true, wouldn't it? In fact, Jesus in His earthly ministry, told the religious leaders in

John 5:39:

“You search the Scriptures. You think that you have life in them, but it is they that bear witness about Me.”

The Bible is actually about Jesus Christ. Philip, in John 1:45, found Nathaniel and said to him:

“We found Him of whom Moses in the Torah and also the prophets wrote.”

The Bible is about Jesus Christ. Jesus says, *“The things that are written about Me must be fulfilled.”*

For some of you this morning, grammar may still be an acquired taste. Let me just invite you to fall in love this morning with the passive voice. Sometimes when you write in the passive voice, teachers will critique you. I've even been known to receive a mild correction from loving folks at Kenwood if I dip into an excessive use of the passive voice, because it's not as strong a construction. But sometimes God's activity is right there in the passive voice. In this passage, Jesus says, *“These things must be fulfilled.”* So I want to ask you this morning: Who's doing the fulfilling? Who is the unexpressed Actor in bringing all of God's Word to realization? God watches over His Word. He has designed it to be fulfilled, and this language—a prophecy, a promise, a purpose, a desire—that which God has spoken and intended to come to pass will be fulfilled, and it comes to pass in Jesus Christ. We are a people, as believers in Christ, who live in a space that is described as an atmosphere of fulfillment. We are people who know that the God of the Bible keeps His Word, that He can be trusted, that He watches over the details. When He says to us, *“I will be with you,”* He means it, and will keep His promise.

Jesus then opens their minds to understand the Scriptures. Sometimes our minds need to be opened, don't they? The opposite of an open mind is a closed mind. A closed mind is a mind that already knows what the Bible means before reading it. A closed mind is a mind that's unwilling to change, whether through a friend who will give you constructive feedback or in a marriage relationship. When your mind is closed, you don't take any more new data. A closed mind is kind of a burden, and it's a frustration to people around us when our minds are closed and we're just set and fixed in our ways. Sometimes we need the Lord to come in and open it up. When our minds are open, we can take in new information. We can see life from a new perspective with an open mind, not a closed mind.

This is Jesus, opening our minds so we can see the coherence and the meaning of the Scriptures. What are these core convictions, these central teachings, that Jesus says are about Him, in the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms? This threefold division of the Scriptures is a way of describing the whole of the Old Testament canon. Sometimes the whole Old Testament canon is described just as the Torah. Sometimes it's described as the Torah – the five books of

Moses, the prophets, and the writings. Sometimes “the Psalms” is used as a shorthand for the writings. Jesus is saying that the whole of the Scriptures is about Him and, specifically, that what is written is three things.

First, the Messiah should suffer. It is necessary for the Messiah, the Savior of the world, to be a suffering Savior. There is no salvation for the world without the suffering of Jesus. There's no Easter without Holy Week, without Good Friday.

Second, it's also necessary for the Messiah to rise from the dead, that His suffering unto death is not the end of the gospel; it's the beginning. Jesus' resurrection, that we celebrated gloriously last week and that many of our brothers and sisters in the world are celebrating this morning, means that His offering for sin is accepted and that the power of sin and death is broken.

The third core conviction in this passage, that Jesus says is written into the story of the Bible about Him, is that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed. It should be shared in His name to all nations, starting with Jerusalem.

The three core convictions are: the Messiah must suffer; He must be raised; and He must be proclaimed among all nations. How is this story written into the Scriptures? We're not given a detailed list of passages that Jesus talked about with the disciples, but I think that we can know with reasonable certainty some of the things they talked about, some of the passages they talked about. When we hear early Christians preaching and teaching, they reference these texts, texts that Jesus shared with them. How are death and resurrection and forgiveness written into the Torah?

In Genesis 3:15, immediately after the fall of humanity, God curses the serpent and tells the serpent:

“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”

Augustine, the great African leader of the early church, said that Genesis 3:15 is the first mention of the gospel—that a descendent of Eve will smash the head of the serpent. And yet, in that act of defeating the dragon, the serpent will strike His heel. Here's death; here's resurrection; here's a word spoken of forgiveness.

In Genesis 22:2, still in the Torah, God shows to Abraham a picture of what is to come. He calls Abraham and tells him:

“Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and

offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

Abraham and Isaac rise and go up the mountain, and, as they are going up the mountain, Isaac asks his father in Genesis 22:7b:

"Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

Abraham says in Genesis 22:8:

"God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son."

As the moment comes when Abraham is about to offer his beloved son on Mount Moriah, the angel of the Lord stops him, and he turns his head and sees that God has provided a lamb, a substitute. The lamb is offered: death, resurrection, forgiveness of sins.

Then God says to Abraham in Genesis 22:17-18:

"I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice."

God is doing something in Israel that will have implications for all the earth. When God reaches out His hand with a mighty outstretched arm, He weaves into the story lines, central to His saving action, that forgiveness is made possible for God's people and all who believe in Him through the atoning sacrifice of a lamb.

In Exodus 12, the lamb is slain and placed above the door posts. The angel of death passes over, and God's people celebrate the Passover. The blood is a sign of forgiveness, and the Lord says in Exodus 12:14:

"This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast."

In Leviticus, God's people worship Him in such a way that offerings for sin are woven into Israel's daily worship. There is no forgiveness, Beloved, without the shedding of blood. God shows His people, His purpose, His plan: the Messiah, the Savior, must suffer and be raised for forgiveness to be possible.

In Deuteronomy 18:18, near the end of the Pentateuch, Moses tells the people that the Lord *"will raise up for you a prophet like me."* You must listen to Him. The Lord says:

"I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him."

He is the prophet like Moses, who is to come.

When Jesus fed the people in the wilderness, that was how they responded. In John 6, the people saw the work that Jesus did in feeding them, and they said, *“This is the Prophet who was to come into the world.”* Death, resurrection, forgiveness. Atonement through sacrifice is woven into the story.

The Law, as the Pentateuch describes it, is a central feature of Israel's worship. Jesus opens our minds to see that this was God's plan all along. Jesus says that the prophets wrote about Him. How so? Isaiah is the most frequently quoted prophet in the New Testament. Isaiah 53, a critical passage, describes a Servant of the Lord who bears the sin of the people, who suffers in their stead, and yet offers His life as a sin offering. Isaiah 53:10 says:

“It was the will of God to crush Him, to give His soul as an offering.”

And yet, when He has offered His life, *“He will prolong His days.”* How do you prolong your days after offering yourself unto death? It's through resurrection, Beloved. The willingness of the servant to offer Himself as a ransom for many, to bear the sin of many, to intercede for transgressors, the Servant of the Lord suffers, dies, and is raised. His willing act is one that Jeremiah describes in Jeremiah 31 as ushering in a new covenant, a new covenant between God and His people, a new covenant where the Scriptures are written upon the heart, a new covenant, which is rooted in forgiveness of sins.

Ezekiel, the third of the great major prophets, describes the coming day of salvation as a death and resurrection. In Ezekiel 36:25-27, the Lord says:

“I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.”

In Ezekiel 37:13-14, this renewal is depicted as a death and resurrection. Ezekiel is summoned into a valley filled with bones and invited to prophesy in the vision to these bones. The Lord says to His people:

“I will open your graves. I will raise you. You will know that I am the Lord. I will put My Spirit within you, and you will live.”

Hallelujah! Death, resurrection, and forgiveness of sins are woven into the story.

Jesus opens the minds of the disciples in this conversation on the road to Emmaus. He shows them that the Pentateuch, the Torah, has this woven into the story: the death and resurrection

of the beloved Son, substitutionary atonement, blood atonement, forgiveness of sins, spoken right after the fall. The dragon will be defeated. The serpent will be destroyed by a real human being, who will suffer, die, and be raised, and forgiveness is possible for sinners like us. Jesus says, "This isn't something new. This is what God intended from the beginning." It's woven into the story. The base story is woven into the saving act of the Exodus. It's institutionalized in Israel's worship on a daily basis. It's predicted in the prophets that the day is coming: death and resurrection, forgiveness of sins to all nations. Repentance is possible.

Jesus tells the disciples that this story, that His suffering and His dying and the effect on all people, is a central feature of the Psalms. The Psalms are the most beloved portion of the Old Testament. The Psalms are the portion of the Bible when we speak, as it were. Most of the Bible is God speaking, and yet 150 Psalms are prayers where God's people speak back, where we speak to God. The Psalms are so beloved that almost half of the Old Testament manuscripts that have been transmitted are the Psalms. They are the most copied portion. It's like the Gideon New Testament. The New Testament is awesome, praise the Lord. But the Gideons know that so are the Psalms and the prophets and the Proverbs. So those are often added to a Gideon New Testament. If you're going to have just one portion, you have to have the Psalms.

We can use the Psalms to teach us how to pray. One of the keys to understanding the Psalms is to see Jesus as the speaker, to read the Psalms with our Lord as the speaker. When we read the Psalms with our Lord as the speaker, we hear Jesus' own prayers and His statements on the cross. Jesus is the righteous sufferer, who dies and is vindicated with resurrection. In Psalm 22 we read:

"My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?...All who see Me mock Me....He trusts in the LORD; let Him deliver Him; let Him rescue Him, for He delights in Him!"

Psalm 22 continues through the suffering of the righteous:

"The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek Him shall praise the Lord....Posterity shall serve Him; it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation; they shall come and proclaim His righteousness to a people yet unborn, that He has done it."

Jesus is the righteous sufferer in the Psalms. In Psalm 31, we read:

"In You, O LORD, do I take refuge; let me never be put to shame; in Your righteousness deliver me!...Into Your hand I commit my spirit; You have redeemed me, O LORD, faithful God....But I trust in You, O LORD; I say, 'You are my God....My times are in Your hand.'"

In Psalm 69, we read:

"Save me, O God! For the waters have come up to my neck...For zeal for Your house has

consumed me...But as for me, my prayer is to You, O LORD. At an acceptable time, O God, in the abundance of Your steadfast love answer me in Your saving faithfulness."

Psalm 118 says:

"I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the LORD...I thank You that You have answered me and have become my salvation. The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. Save us, we pray, O LORD! O LORD, we pray, give us success!"

Jesus is the righteous sufferer, who dies and rises again, and forgiveness and repentance are proclaimed to all people. Jesus opens the minds of the disciples to see that God has written into the story of Scripture from the beginning: the death and resurrection of the beloved Son and that forgiveness is made possible through His atoning sacrifice.

The Bible makes sense. It is comprised of 66 books. It is written over 2000 years. It is written by more than 40 different human authors, and yet it has an organizing coherence to it that's unmistakable. My dear friend John Pierce was a graduate student at MIT, a very smart guy in computer science. InterVarsity, a campus ministry, invited him to a small group Bible study. He started going, and he thought, "What's this about?" He started to read the Bible, and as he read the Bible more and more, he realized that the Bible makes sense. It has a single story. It coheres together. It has a plot that's recognizable, beginning, middle, and end. It has an organizing center around Jesus Christ and the promises about Him that would come to pass. He finally came to the point of realizing: How could 40 people, who didn't know each other, who spoke three different languages, lived centuries apart, write a book together? How is that possible unless there's one mind behind them all: the Lord God Almighty! God has written into the story, Jesus says, "things about Me," not only individual verses, prophecies that would come true, but a whole coherence to the story of the death and resurrection of the beloved Son, signaled to us right after the fall. It is enacted before our eyes in Abraham and Isaac, is written into Israel's worship. Blood atonement is central to their worship, written on a national scale. With the death and resurrection of Israel, exile, and return, the valley of dry bones leads to resurrection.

At the heart of it all is the righteous suffering. Jesus embodies and fulfills the Psalms, and that's why He quotes them on the cross. This is the saving action of God, and it's a saving action that takes place in Jerusalem. All the earth belongs to God. The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. There's no place on planet Earth outside the scope of the Lord's dominion, and yet He picked Jerusalem as a place to cause His name to dwell. He picked Jerusalem, *"the mountain which I will show you."* God's people, scattered throughout all the earth, look to Jerusalem for when God came and suffered, died, and rose again. It's from Jerusalem that this good news,

this gospel, would go out into all the earth. The prophets speak of the Servant in Isaiah 49:6:

“I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”

In Isaiah 2, we read:

It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains...and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say: ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord...that He may teach us His ways and that we may walk in His paths.’”

All the earth is drawn to Jerusalem, not because of the topography, not because the food is great, not because the architecture is fascinating, but because of what happened there, just outside the city walls. The earth can never forget what happened on the rocky outcrop called Golgotha or Calvary, that God sent His one and only Son, who died and rose again. From that spot, from that place, the gospel, the good news, is proclaimed.

That must have been quite a conversation. That must have been quite an evening with Jesus. That's like the ultimate Bible study, isn't it, with Jesus walking you through the Scriptures? Luke doesn't record the details of their conversation. He doesn't have to, because he knows he's already planning to write the second volume. In the second volume (what we know as the Book of Acts, the acts of the exalted Jesus) we hear Christians preaching and teaching and sharing Him and living for Him and quoting the passages that He taught them to read. In our text, Luke 24:48, Jesus says to these disciples: *“You are My witnesses of these things.”* You are witnesses of these things. We are entrusted with these core convictions. We are entrusted with this lifesaving information. Jesus blesses the disciples, and the end of the Gospel of Luke is the promise of Jesus that He would send the promise of the Father, the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit, upon them. They are to wait in the city until they are clothed with power from on high, and they returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually praising God.

Luke's Gospel gives us his version of the Great Commission. This ending of the Gospel is a powerful inclusio to the beginning of Luke's Gospel. Have you ever noticed that Luke's Gospel begins and ends in the temple? It begins with Zechariah and his turn in the sanctuary, his rotation in serving his priesthood, and having a vision in the temple. It ends with disciples having seen the resurrected Jesus, praising God in the temple. It's a movement from expectation to fulfillment. It is a movement from accomplishment of God's redemptive purpose. It's what Luke said at the very beginning of his gospel:

“Many have undertaken to write a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us....It seemed good to me also...to write an orderly account for you, most

honorable Theophilus," [why?] that you might have certainty concerning the things you have been taught."

It's so you would know for sure that what you have been taught is true, it came to pass, and it's rooted in eyewitness testimony.

Beloved, this morning we are invited to share this status—to share the status of a witness. The Greek term for “witness” is *martyr*. When you appear in court and you bear testimony (you give your testimony), this function is known and described as that of a martyr. We use the word “martyr” to describe someone who has died for his faith. This is a narrow usage of the term. In its broad usage, “martyr” just means someone who bears witness. You are someone who is entrusted with an accurate knowledge of these events, and you offer testimony to verify the veracity of these events. The early church used the word “martyr” to describe the ultimate bearing of witness to the truth of Jesus' death and resurrection. I'm not afraid to die because He has died for me and risen again.

I want to invite you this morning, on this first Sunday after Easter, to see yourself in this way: to see yourself as someone who is entrusted with the understanding of the Scriptures, to invite Jesus to open your mind to see that the Bible makes sense. It coheres from Genesis to Revelation, and it's fundamentally about Him. The central convictions of Christianity are Christ's atoning death, His bodily resurrection, and forgiveness of sins in His name. Forgiveness of sins is available. It is accessible for all who repent. Jesus says that the Torah, the prophets, and the Psalms point to Him—to His death, His resurrection, and forgiveness in His name. This is for all peoples. There's no one that you'll ever meet, who does not need the death and the resurrection of Jesus, the forgiveness that is possible in His name.

The ending of Luke's Gospel summons us to heaven, a heavenly vantage point. As Jesus ascends in glory, He is exalted to the right hand of the Father. He blesses the disciples and promises to clothe us with power, the power of the Holy Spirit. This morning we enter into that season of waiting. It's the interval between Passover and Pentecost. It's a season of absorbing, reflecting, settling our conviction on the centrality of Jesus' death and resurrection, His exaltation to the Father and His enthronement, and we await the outpouring of the Spirit. That interval marks the 50 days between Passover and Pentecost. Pentecost Sunday is June 5, and we will celebrate that.

This morning it is right for us to pray and expect the fresh filling of God's Spirit. We are witnesses of what Jesus has done. This morning, if you stand outside of those convictions, if you stand outside of that space where the death and resurrection of Jesus equates for repentance and forgiveness of sins, I want to invite you just to allow Christ in. You don't have to understand

all the passages that we've talked about this morning. All you need to know is that Jesus died for sinners, His offering was accepted, He was raised, and repentance is possible. Sometimes we feel so stuck. Our minds are closed. We don't know where to turn. We don't know where the path is for new life, new beginning, and that path opens up for us when we turn in repentance. Repentance is a fancy word of saying to God: "I'm sorry. I've been going the wrong way. I've done things that are offensive to You, and I've not done some things that You've asked me to do." I think that each of us can find space in our souls to acknowledge that before God.

When we repent and turn to Christ, we turn to a Savior who has suffered, who has died, but is alive. Jesus is exalted this morning. He runs His Kingdom from the throne. He looks out over the earth, seeking to bless those whose hearts are dedicated to Him. Ask Him to open your mind to understand the Scriptures, and ask Him to clothe you with power from on high. The presence and the power of the Holy Spirit is the driving force of the Christian life. God is at work among us. The Holy Spirit is God's personal presence. The Holy Spirit will call to mind Jesus' words. The Holy Spirit will convict you of sin when you didn't feel conviction before. The Holy Spirit will prompt you to speak or to act. The Holy Spirit will confirm your reception and adoption. The Holy Spirit will bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God. Beloved, I want to invite you this morning to ask Jesus to open your mind, to ask Jesus to empower your repentance, and to ask Jesus to come and send the Holy Spirit to fill us with His empowering presence. These are exciting days in the life of our church, and we need more of God's Spirit among us. Let's pray.

Precious Lord Jesus, we thank You. We thank You for opening to us the Scriptures this morning, for showing us that the Bible is about You, Your death, Your resurrection, and that Your death and resurrection make forgiveness possible. Lord, I invite those this morning who are looking at You, suffering Savior, resurrected Savior, and desiring a new beginning. I invite you to turn to Jesus and just ask Him for forgiveness and new life. Lord, I pray for those who have already responded to your gospel and are living for You now. I ask You to open our minds to see. Open our minds to see You in the pages of Scripture, and open our hearts to receive a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit. Lord, we come to You, and when we come to You in Jesus Christ, Your arms are open wide. The blood of Jesus makes us new, trades our sorrows for Your joy. Lord Jesus, You are a wonderful Savior. Fill us with Your Spirit, that we might share You with those around us.

We ask in Jesus' powerful Name, Amen.