

Bible Studies for Life: April 7

The Mission of Jesus Shared • Luke 24:44-53

By Carl White



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It can be argued that Jesus Christ is the one unavoidable person in all of history. At some point we each must deal with the questions of who he was, and what he did.

Some want to reduced Jesus to a series of moral teachings, like the Sermon on the Mount. The Gospels won't allow that. In our focal texts, Luke forces the reader to confront the fact that who Jesus was and what he did is founded in the Scriptures of old.

We sometimes forget that the only Bible the apostles had was the Old Testament. The Apostle Paul was an expert of the Old Testament. After he met Jesus on the road to Damascus, he went

to the Scriptures of old and there he discovered Jesus.

Luke sums up what is learned from the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms. *"The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."* (24:46-47) In other words, what Jesus did was prophesied, along with the results. These results are the essence of our commission as followers of the Christ – preaching the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins to all peoples (see Matt. 28:19-20).

One of the things that makes Jesus the one unavoidable person of history is that he is the fulfillment of the prophecies of old. Mohammad was a significant and powerful figure from history, but he was not a fulfillment of the prophecies of old. Nor was Confucius or Buddha. They each have significant historical claims, but not that they were the fulfillment of prophecies from God. This fact makes Jesus unique and unavoidable.

The Unavoidable Cross and Empty Tomb

In considering who Jesus is and what he did, the cross and the empty tomb are unavoidable. Discount these two realities, and Jesus is just another ancient figure who had followers who remembered a few things that he said. Unfortunately, some who call themselves "Christian" do this very thing. They deny the significance of the cross, and the reality of the resurrection. Any faith that denies these is not Christian.

The Apostle Paul clearly states the significance of the cross and the resurrection, and how these events are tied to the Scriptures of old. *"For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures..."* (I Cor 15:3-4 NIV)

If Jesus is unavoidable, it is because what he did on the cross and his resurrection are unavoidable. You cannot be a Christian without believing this. As Romans 10:9 says, *"If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."* It does not say if you believe Jesus is a good moral teacher you will be saved. There is no salvation in the Sermon of the Mount apart from the cross and the resurrection.

Our Unavoidable Mandate

This understanding clarifies our calling as followers of Christ. We are to proclaim Jesus Christ, who died, was buried, and was resurrected. To equip us to this task, the Holy Spirit is given. Our text says this message *will* be proclaimed to all the nations of the earth. (vs. 47) It is unavoidable. The only question is whether you will be part of the greatest endeavor of all history.

Why did Jesus come to earth? He came to bring salvation to everyone, to give us the gift of eternal life so we might be with him in heaven forever. This is our witness, not how good your praise band is, nor how dynamic your preacher is, or how sweet your church's fellowship is. If you are not proclaiming and celebrating the resurrected Christ, you are not following Jesus.

Everyone you encounter has, to some extent, considered Jesus. He is unavoidable. Will you, in the week to come, allow the Holy Spirit to empower you to share the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ? This is the Gospel, as Peter exclaims in 1 Peter 3:18 (NASB): *"For Christ also suffered for sins once for all time, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit."*

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