

Explore the Bible: May 30

Commissions • Luke 24:36-49

By Laura Lee Leathers



Leathers

The following are phrases people use when something extraordinary has happened: “Pinch me; this can’t be happening. Are you serious? Is this for real?” The actual situation may seem unbelievable, but it did occur. It takes time for a person’s mind to believe the reality, and they find themselves replaying the situation in their mind because there of doubt.

It often helps the process to have verification from another individual who was there and also witnessed it. Was this the consensus of the disciples as they gathered together in the upper room? Can you imagine the discussion? There was believing joy – yet doubt and fear – as they thought about the events surrounding the resurrection of Jesus.

Let’s recap chapter 24 from Warren Wiersbe’s commentary, *Be Courageous*, because it shows the progression of the heart. The title is, *The Son of Man Triumphs!* The headings are, *Perplexed Hearts: He Opens the Tomb (24:1-12)*; *Discouraged Hearts: He Opens Their Eyes (24:13-35)*; *Troubled Hearts: He Opens Their Minds (24:36-46)*; *Joyful Hearts: He Opens Their Lips (24:47-53)*.

Assures (Luke 24:36-43 ESV). It’s the evening of that day, the

first day of the week, and the doors were locked because those gathered were fearful (John 20:19). The eleven disciples and the two followers from the walk to Emmaus are talking “about these things.”

Unprepared, the men suddenly have Jesus standing in their midst. Perhaps they thought they had seen a ghost, but Mark 16:14 gives us an additional reason: “He rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart.” They didn’t believe those who had seen Him.

Jesus, knowing what they’re thinking, says, “Peace to you!” It’s a blessing and an assurance (see Rom. 5:1; Phil. 4:6-7). Then He asks why they are troubled and doubting in their hearts. He instructs them to look at his hands and feet (Ps. 22:6): “It is I myself. Touch me and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.”

Dr. Luke describes Jesus showing them his hands and feet and writes, “And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling” (v. 41). They were overjoyed because what was taking place seemed almost too good to be true.

Next, Jesus asks for something to eat. The disciples have heard Him speak, touched His nail prints, and watched him eat. They went from skepticism to realizing the truth of the resurrection. “The resurrection is the basis of Christian hope and the indispensable foundation of the Gospel” (see 1 Cor. 15:16-17, LifeWay).

Opens (Luke 24:44-46). In verse 44, Jesus is referencing the times He specifically talked with them about His suffering, death, and resurrection (see Luke 9:22,44; 17:25; 18:31-33; 22:37). He references the Old Testament prophecies found in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and Psalms.

“Must be fulfilled” is a significant phrase because it shows the fulfillment of God’s promises regarding future events. God is sovereign, controls history, and fulfills what He promises.

“Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures” (v. 45) – just as He did with the followers on the road to Emmaus. Jesus, the Living Word, was revealing the Word.

Wiersbe writes, “Believers were not being sent into the world to share their own personal experiences but to share the truths of the Word of God. We today cannot touch and feel the Lord Jesus, nor is it necessary that we do so, but we rest our faith on the Word of God” (1 John 1:1-5).

Sends (Luke 24:47-49). Usually when we think of the Great Commission, we use the passage found in Matthew 28:16-20. Dr. Luke’s account is shorter, and his focus is, “You are witnesses of these things.”

“Witnessing is not something that we do for the Lord; it is something that He does through us, if we are filled with the Holy Spirit. There is a great difference between a ‘sales talk’ and a Spirit-empowered witness” (Wiersbe, *Be Courageous*).

“And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power on high.” Just as Jesus promised, the Holy Spirit came (see Acts 2), equipping the disciples to fulfill the mission of taking the Gospel to the nations.

To close this quarter of Bible study, I leave you with the commission from the Apostle Paul: “And now I commend you to God and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified” (Acts 20:32).

Leathers is a member of First Church, Lexington.