

## SESSION 6

# VICTORY SHARED

### ▶ **The Point**

The victory we have in Jesus is too big to keep to ourselves.

### ▶ **The Passage**

Luke 24:44-49

### ▶ **The Bible Meets Life**

Ad agencies live to create that one slogan or campaign that's remembered for years. For example:

- ▶ Put a tiger in your tank. [1960s]
- ▶ It's the real thing. [1970s]
- ▶ Where's the beef? [1980s]
- ▶ Just do it. [1990s]

I do my own form of viral marketing because I am a grandfather. Yes, I am one of those grandfathers. I try to steer every conversation toward the subject of grandchildren. I can't help it! This news is just too good to keep to myself. In his Gospel, Luke told one last story about Jesus with His disciples. Jesus reminded His disciples they were witnesses of some incredible events. What Jesus had done is incredibly good news, and like any good news, the story of God's saving work in Jesus had to be told.

### ▶ **The Setting**

Jesus is risen! A group of women discovered the empty tomb. Angels shared the good news with them (see Luke 24:1-8). Peter and John ran to the tomb to investigate (see v. 12; John 20:3-4). Jesus appeared to two disciples on their walk to the village of Emmaus (see Luke 24:13-35). On Easter evening, Jesus appeared among His disciples (see vv. 36-43). In that place, Jesus told His disciples the words of our focal passage (vv. 44-49).

## *What does the Bible say?*

**Clothed with power from on high** (v. 49)—That the empowerment would come “from on high” points to the true source that enables disciples to be bold witnesses for Jesus—the Holy Spirit.

### ***Luke 24:44-49***

**<sup>44</sup> He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.”**

**<sup>45</sup> Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.**

**<sup>46</sup> He told them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day,**

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

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

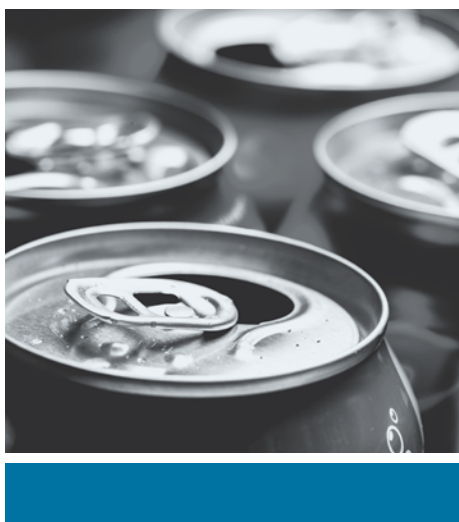
**<sup>49</sup> I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”**

# GET INTO THE STUDY



5 minutes

Notes



**DISCUSS:** Question #1 on page 53 of the PSG: **“What are some marketing campaigns you will always remember?”**

**Note:** Take advantage of this opportunity for your group to have fun together. For example, see if group members will sing or act out the marketing campaigns they remember. Or, use follow-up questions to encourage group members to share stories about their experiences with those products or services.

**ACTIVITY (OPTIONAL):** Supplement your group’s discussion of Question #1 by bringing several products with popular brands—food, electronics, clothing, and so on. Pass these products around the group and see if people can identify the slogan or marketing campaign connected with that product (or with its larger brand).

**Note:** As an alternative to carrying several products into the group meeting, you could also ask group members to locate different items throughout your meeting space that have popular or established brands and marketing slogans.

**GUIDE:** Direct group members to “The Bible Meets Life” on page 54 of the PSG. Introduce the topic of being a witness by reading or summarizing the text—or by encouraging group members to read on their own.

**GUIDE:** Call attention to “The Point” on page 54 of the PSG: **“The victory we have in Jesus is too big to keep to ourselves.”**

**PRAY:** Transition into the study by expressing your belief in the gospel message—that Jesus Christ died to pay the penalty for our sins and rose from the grave so that all who follow Him can receive eternal life.

Dotted lines for taking notes.



# STUDY THE BIBLE

## Notes

### Luke 24:44-45

**44** He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.” **45** Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.

**READ:** Luke 24:44-45 on page 55 of the PSG. Read the text out loud or ask a volunteer to do so.

**GUIDE:** Ask for a volunteer to set the scene for this session by reading aloud the first two paragraphs from page 55 of the PSG.

**DISCUSS:** Question #2 on page 55 of the PSG: **“What practical tools help you engage and understand the Scriptures?”**

**Note:** Consider taking the lead in this conversation by bringing a few examples of such tools to the group meeting and explaining how you use them in your study of God’s Word. These could include commentaries, study Bibles, apps, websites, books, and so on.

**GUIDE:** Use the final paragraph on page 73 of this Leader Guide to help group members understand in what ways Jesus opened the disciples’ minds to understand the Scriptures.

**RECAP:** Read aloud the second paragraph on page 56 of the PSG:

Unfortunately, we still find too many examples of people who misinterpret the Bible or choose to read it in light of what they want it to say. How do we know when we’re reading the Scriptures correctly? Look for Christ. Reading the Bible as God intended will always bring us back to Jesus.

**DISCUSS:** Question #3 on page 56 of the PSG: **“How would you summarize the grand story of Scripture for an unbeliever?”**

**TRANSITION:** As we continue with verses 46-47, we’ll see how Jesus understood His crucifixion and resurrection in light of the Scriptures.

**ALTERNATE QUESTION:**

**Why is it important that Christ connected His life to the Old Testament?**

## Luke 24:44-45 Commentary

***The whole of Scripture points to the truth of Jesus.***

**[Verse 44]** Jesus reminded His disciples of the words He had spoken to them while He was with them prior to His crucifixion, death, and resurrection. Thus, this was not a new teaching, but a continuation of His previous instruction.

**While I was still with you** indicated that Jesus' appearance to the disciples was exceptional and unusual. The definitive events of redemption had now taken place, and His dwelling would no longer be among them on earth as before (see John 1:14; 14:2). His presence with them from this point on would be of a different nature (see Matt. 28:20).

Jesus called attention to the three divisions of the Old Testament: the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms. **The Law of Moses** refers to the Pentateuch (Genesis–Deuteronomy). **The Prophets** means the books of the prophets and includes both the “former prophets” (the historical books) and the “latter prophets” (the major and minor prophets). The words show that Jesus viewed the Old Testament as a united whole. Bible students debate whether **the Psalms** refers to just the Old Testament book by that name or if it was meant to stand for the third major division of the Old Testament Scriptures that began with the Book of Psalms.

Jesus' words “**everything must be fulfilled that is written about me**” emphasize that Jesus is the focus of both the content of the Scriptures and the fulfillment of the Scriptures. While Jesus did not cite specific passages here, this is the second time in this chapter that Luke stressed these truths. Luke recorded Jesus' words to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus in verse 27, where Jesus apparently did cite specific passages from the Old Testament that were fulfilled through His life and death. No proof-texting was necessary, however, for the whole of the Scriptures points to Him. The emphasis here is on the totality of the Old Testament witness to Jesus the Messiah and His ministry.

Interestingly, Luke began his Gospel record of Jesus' ministry with Jesus reading from the Book of Isaiah in the synagogue at Nazareth, where He stated, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:21). Now, at the end of His earthly ministry, Jesus stated that everything written about Him in the Scriptures “**must be fulfilled.**” The two narratives stand like bookends to Jesus' earthly ministry and stress that the fulfillment of the Scriptures is found in Jesus (and in Jesus alone) from beginning to end.

**[Verse 45]** Jesus **opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures** (contrast with 9:45; 18:34). **The Scriptures** refers back and clarifies the character of the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms in verse 44. Now the disciples had a real and clear understanding not only of what the Scriptures prophesied, but of what they had witnessed during their time with Jesus. These words remind us that the Scriptures need to be understood. It takes the illumination of the Holy Spirit to understand God's Word (see 1 Cor. 2:14). The risen Lord is not only the content and fulfillment of Scripture; as the Living Word, He is the interpreter of the written Word.



## Luke 24:46-47 Commentary

***The cross and empty tomb are central to the gospel of Jesus.***

**[Verses 46-47]** In helping the disciples understand the Scriptures, Jesus referred to **what is written**. Luke used three infinitives to summarize what had been written in the Old Testament Scriptures concerning the Messiah, which are translated: **suffer ... rise ... will be preached**. The first two were now past; they were accomplished. The third item, the preaching, was about to begin. The first two—the cross and the resurrection—are the central elements in the preaching.

“Suffer” refers to Christ’s crucifixion, His “Passion.” For the third time in this chapter, the work of the Messiah was summarized in terms of His crucifixion and resurrection (see also vv. 7,26). Jesus explained to His gathered disciples how the Scriptures foretold His death and resurrection (v. 46). On several occasions during His ministry, Jesus either shied away from the title Messiah (the Christ) or seemed to have wished to conceal the fact He was the Messiah (see Mark 1:43-45; 8:29-30). Here, however, Jesus clearly identified all those predictions concerning the Son of Man with **the Messiah** (“the Christ”). Now that His messianic role had been clarified by His death and resurrection, the title became a common reference to Him in the early church’s proclamation.

That Jesus did not in any of these places refer to His birth, teachings, healing ministry, or other aspects of His life on earth reminds us that, while these were important, it was His redemptive work on the cross that is the saving act (see Rom. 5:15-19).

It’s on the basis of Jesus’ atoning death and glorious resurrection that **repentance for the forgiveness of sins** can be **preached** in His name to **all nations**. Verse 47 adds for the first time the element of proclamation to the work of the Messiah (“preached” is the third infinitive following “suffer” and “rise”). The words point to the following mission of the church, starting in the Book of Acts and continuing to today.

What is to be proclaimed? **“Repentance for the forgiveness of sins.”** The act of repentance involves turning away from sin and turning to God. It involves a total reorientation of one’s life. Indeed, repentance is a key feature of the preaching in the Book of Acts. Forgiveness is also a key emphasis in Acts. What is the basis for this forgiveness? It is **in his name**. The name represents the person of Jesus and all He stands for (see Luke 9:48).

The recipients of the proclamation of the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ are “all nations.” The message of Jesus is a universal message. It’s for everyone, although many choose to reject it. Jesus’ words anticipate the commission in Acts 1:8 and the proclamation that began on the day of Pentecost beginning in Jerusalem (see Acts 2); yet that was also intended to reach to the ends of the earth (see Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8). Where Jesus’ earthly mission ended, in Jerusalem, the mission of the church began. That Jesus’ disciples would proclaim the good news beginning in Jerusalem fulfilled Old Testament prophecy as well (see Ezek. 5:5; Isa. 2:3; Mic. 4:2).





## Luke 24:48-49 Commentary

***We are to share the message about Jesus.***

**[Verse 48]** Jesus told His disciples that they were **witnesses** to the events concerning Himself. While up to this point the disciples had been mostly observers as they accompanied Jesus, now they were to actively champion the message of repentance and forgiveness of sins as His witnesses. The disciples were witnesses to the fulfillment of the Scriptures, and they could testify to what had occurred because they had seen those events happen (see 1 John 1:1-3). **These things** refers to the content of verse 46. This theme is repeated in Acts 1:8 and then throughout the Book of Acts.

**[Verse 49]** The disciples could be effective witnesses because Jesus was **going to send** [them] **what my Father has promised** and because they would be **clothed with power from on high**. What the Father **promised** Jesus did not specify here, but it clearly was the Holy Spirit (see John 14:16-17,26; Acts 1:4-5,8). The Holy Spirit would make them effective and bold witnesses. This was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (see Acts 2:1-4,32-33). The Greek verb rendered **clothed** refers to putting on a garment, a metaphor Paul often used in his letters (see, for example, Rom. 13:12; Gal. 3:27). That the disciples would be **clothed with power from on high** at the end of Luke's Gospel recalls the beginning of Luke's Gospel when Mary was told, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you" (Luke 1:35).

**From on high** keeps before us where the real power for evangelism and witnessing comes from. The words may be another way of referring to God or merely a reference to heaven (compare 1:78). In either case, these words remind us that Jesus' disciples do not witness in their own power. Until Jesus sent them this gift, the disciples were to **stay in the city**, that is, in Jerusalem. Their staying and waiting was intended to be done together, not in isolation. (See Acts 1:12-14 to review how the disciples obeyed this command.)

The reference to Jerusalem (Luke 24:47) and "the city" (v. 49) is the first time it's indicated that the place where Jesus' ministry and atoning work ended was to be the same place where the church's mission would begin. From there, the good news would go forth to "the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

In Luke's second volume, the apostles remained in Jerusalem through chapter 7 of Acts. Then Peter and John, upon hearing the people of Samaria "had accepted the word of God" through the preaching of Philip, went to Samaria and witnessed to the Samaritans (see Acts 8:14-17). Peter next went to Caesarea after he experienced a heavenly vision and witnessed to the Roman centurion Cornelius (see 10:1-11:18). Paul took the gospel to the Gentiles but often returned to Jerusalem (see 11:29-30; 15:2; 19:21; 20:16,22; 21:13).

In Romans 15:18-19, Paul summarized his ministry up to that point: "So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ" (v. 19). The gospel was well on its way to all nations (see Matt. 28:19) and to the ends of the earth (see Acts 1:8).





# 5 WAYS TO MAKE A GREAT FIRST IMPRESSION

BY KEN BRADDY

It's corny but true: "You never get a second chance to make a first impression." Once made, these first thumbs-up-or-thumbs-down impressions can become lasting impressions.

While visiting churches a few years ago as my family and I sought to find a new church home, we spent time at a half-dozen or more churches. Some made better impressions than others. That's because some were intentional in preparing for guests; others were not.

How can a Bible study group put its best foot forward? Here are five simple but needed improvements most groups can make with minimal effort.

## **Name Tags**

They are simple, powerful, and inexpensive. Stick-on nametags help everyone in the group get to know one another. Name tags put everyone on equal footing and level ground. As a guest, it's uncomfortable when people in the group are able to call each other by name—and I am not.

Name tags are great equalizers.



## Empty Chairs

You need a few empty chairs for guests. I've visited Bible study groups and have had to wait for chairs to be brought to the room before I could sit down. When that happens, it communicates the group didn't really expect me to be there. They weren't overly concerned about having guests in the first place and were probably an inward-focused group.

## Greeters

These are people in the group who are designated as greeters in order to help guests quickly assimilate into the community. Greeters should be outgoing, friendly, and people-oriented. It's their job to introduce the guest to a few others, and to sit with the guest during the Bible study—and hopefully the worship service.

## Bible study materials

Having extra Personal Study Guides available for guests to use (and take home) communicates they were expected, and that they were valued enough by the church and the group to have received the Bible study materials being used by the group members.

I've also visited groups that did not have extra study materials, and it seemed as though everyone in the group knew what was going on—except for me.

## Declutter

When I sold a home a few years ago, the realtor told my wife and me that we needed to declutter the house. His statement caused a poor reaction on our part! We thought our home looked great as-is. But because he had “fresh eyes,” we realized in time that he was right. We took out the extra furniture and clutter we'd become accustomed to, and it made a huge difference in the impression our home made on potential buyers.

The same principle is in effect in our classrooms where we meet (assuming your group meets on a church campus). We can become so accustomed to clutter that we quit seeing it. How many rooms have old posters, picture frames, clocks that don't work, a stain on the carpet, a tear in the fabric of a chair, or a pile of junk in one corner that we turn a blind eye to week after week? Guests quickly notice these things.

Decluttering helps groups make a good first impression.

**Ken Braddy** blogs weekly with great ideas for becoming a better Bible study leader. Follow his blog at [kenbraddy.com](http://kenbraddy.com). He is the manager of Adult Ongoing Bible Studies at LifeWay.

# ENOUGH WITH VAGUE PRAYERS!

BY MICHAEL KELLEY

“He prayed like he knew us.”

I said this a few days ago after having a long conversation with a friend. When we finished talking, he prayed for me. And I had to stop and pause because my breath was caught in my chest.

“I’ll pray for you” is one of those things we say a lot to each other in the body of Christ. I hope we mean it. I suspect many times we do not. In those times, what we mean is that we hope things get better, or that we feel a measure of comfort, or that we don’t worry about the future. Even when we do pray, it is often with vague generalities.

But not this time.

This time my friend prayed for me like he knew me. He prayed for my family and I by name, each one of us, and for each family member he prayed different things specific to their personality. He knows us, he loves us, and he prays as such.

It was an amazing thing to experience and to benefit from, for in a moment, I not only felt truly known and loved but also advocated for in a very specific way before the throne of God above. This is what we must pursue in the context of our groups in the local church.

We must not be content with the vague generalities that pass themselves off as prayer requests, but instead must know each other to the extent in which we can truly and deeply pray for one another. Of course, that kind of knowledge doesn’t come without risk, for all of us have at one time or another been the victims of betrayal. That kind of memory makes us gun-shy about what we do or do not disclose even in the body of Christ. But if you, like me, have the responsibility of leading a group, one of the ways we can serve our group is by taking that risk upon ourselves. It’s by sharing true needs and

burdens, and in so doing, setting the expectation that here, in the church, we know each other and lift each other before the throne. Not generally, but specifically.

In thinking more about it, I have considered that this is but a shadow of what we have in Jesus who is praying for us even now. Hebrews 7:16 tells us that Jesus, the resurrected Jesus, now has an “indestructible life.” And what will He do with that indestructible life?

Just a few verses later, in Hebrews 7:25, we see that Jesus “is able to save completely those who come to God through him, since he always lives to intercede for them (CSB).”

This is no mere general intercession; consider the wonder that He, through whom all things were made and in whom all things live and move and have their being, is the same one who is praying for us. He who knows us better than we know ourselves, the one who understands the darkest places of our hearts, the one who comprehends our deepest longings and motivations that even we ourselves don’t know, stands on our behalf before God.

Can you imagine the specific nature of that intercession? Can you hear Him call you by name and describe your situation in intricate detail? This is the intercession of Jesus. It’s not made up of filler words like “just” and “um”; it’s not comprised of vague generalities for comfort or provision; it is specific. It is loving. It is fervent.

Jesus, the one who is closer than a brother, prays like someone who knows you.

And loves you. So must we love one another.

**Michael Kelley** serves as Director of Groups Ministry for Lifeway Christian Resources. As a communicator, Michael speaks across the country at churches, conferences, and retreats. He is the author of *Wednesdays Were Pretty Normal: A Boy, Cancer, and God*; *Transformational Discipleship*; and *Boring: Finding an Extraordinary God in an Ordinary Life*.