



Sermon, Sunday March 20, 2022

“You are witnesses of all these things”

SCRIPTURE: Luke 24:46-53 ⁴⁶and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.” ⁵⁰Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. ⁵¹While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. ⁵²And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; ⁵³and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

Introduction: A Christian who finds hope during suffering

A few days ago, I saw an article about the war in Ukraine in the Associated Press. It was news that a pregnant woman and a baby who were transported on a stretcher from a maternity hospital died after Russian bombing in Mariupol, Ukraine.

The current plight of Ukraine is no stranger to Koreans. This is because Koreans have the experience of losing about 1.37 million people during the three-year Korean War from 1950 to 1953. This includes 36,940 US soldiers who died. Of course, I am not a generation that has experienced war firsthand. However, I heard about the horrors of the war through my father, who passed away in 2016. My father was 12 years old at the time of the Korean War, and he often told me the story of the hardships he had to endure because of the Chinese military's participation in the Korean War. My father always told me that there should be no war under any circumstances. My father's words contained his horrific experiences of war.

However, Koreans have risen from the ravages of war. It was possible because Koreans did not give up their hopes for the future. As a result, Korea has become the 10th largest economy out of 200 countries in the world and has a cultural influence that is second only to that of Hollywood. I pray that not only the war in Ukraine, but all conflicts in the world will end soon. Also, I pray that Ukraine will overcome the difficulties of war and rebuild their country anew.

In fact, the way we view life is based on our experiences. That is why I sincerely hope that our experiences of pain and tragedy will not remain as scars, but rather become the driving force to dream of a brighter world.

For the disciples of Jesus, the death of Jesus on the cross brought frustration and pain to them, but through the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, the disciples have a new hope and share the gospel with the world. Today's text shows how we can find hope in suffering and move forward toward the future. Through today's Word, I hope that everyone will live with hope in faith. How, then, can we live as witnesses to Jesus Christ with hope for the future?

Body: The life of a witness who preaches the gospel

Today's text is a command that Jesus gave to His disciples after He was with them for 40 days after His resurrection and before ascending to heaven. The last thing Jesus said to His disciples was to live as witnesses to the gospel. So, we too must live our lives as witnesses to the gospel. However, in order to live the life of a witness, there are things we must prepare for. It is the same as if we must prepare to move from the seat of pain



to the place of hope. The first thing we need in order to live a life of witness to the gospel and move forward to a place of hope is confidence in Jesus Christ.

1. Confidence in Jesus Christ

For a witness to qualify, he or she must have seen or experienced something. However, our confidence in the Lord comes from fellowship with the Lord, experiencing His miracles, and experiencing His love. The disciples in Jesus' day could have direct fellowship with the Lord, but we cannot. So, how can we who live today experience fellowship with the Lord?

We can experience the Lord's help and comfort in prayer. Also, we can meet the Lord in our suffering. The Holy Spirit opens our closed hearts and enables us to meet the Lord passionately when we draw near to the Lord's Word. Furthermore, we experience the Lord's work through us as we carry out the tasks given to us through the body of the Lord, the church.

Then, what else do we need to prepare to live a life of witness to the gospel and move forward to a place of hope?

2. There must be a desire to become like Jesus.

We must have a desire to become like the Lord. There is a way to ascertain whether we have these aspirations. It can be seen by looking at how we apply the teachings and precepts that the Lord has given to. **The Lord said, "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." (Matthew 11:29).** We should humbly seek to learn from the Lord and reflect on our desire to do His will in our lives.

The Lord asked those who wanted to be healed of their sickness. **"Do you want to get well?"** We must be able to answer **"yes"** to Jesus' question with sincerity and earnestness. The Bible calls this kind of heart **"repentance."** The freedom we enjoy begins with true repentance.

The Lord Himself leads those who have been healed by His grace. Such a life is a blessed life. People of the world say the following about these people. **"I saw Jesus in your eyes, in your words, and in your face!"**

Do we have a desire for such a blessed life? Such people can enjoy freedom from influences from their relationships with people and their environment and are full of gratitude for life. They also want to tell the world about the Lord who has given them grace. Finally, what do we need to prepare to live a life of witness to the gospel and move forward to a place of hope?

3. Witnesses are not ashamed to share the gospel.

Christians are to proclaim to the world who Jesus is, what He has done, how it has changed us, and what riches the gospel can give the world.

The Apostle Paul says in Romans 10:14. "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?"

Then what are we to testify? In today's text, Luke 24:46-47 clearly states what we must tell the world. Christians must preach that Jesus died on the cross for us and rose from the dead three days later. Also, we must proclaim to the world that we must receive the forgiveness of sins and repent in the name of Jesus.



Of course, the world hinders and hates this Christian witnessed life. Nevertheless, the kingdom of God is expanding in the world in the Lord's providence. **Acts 6:7 says: “So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and many priests became obedient to the faith.”** Also, the gospel continues to be preached in difficult circumstances. **Let's look at 1 Thessalonians 1:6. “You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit.”**

When we testify about the Lord's gospel to the world, the Lord, who values one soul above the world, is with us and helps us. Christians should be able to preach the gospel boldly.

Conclusion: Christians living in hope

Now let's summarize today's sermon. Let's try to experience the Lord more. Let us also desire to be more like the Lord. And let's do our best to spread the gospel of the Lord to the world.

In this way, when we live day by day as witnesses of Jesus, we will not lose hope for the future under any circumstance. May such blessings be with all of us.

