

# **TETELESTAI!**

## The Story of Hope

Lessons 33-35

Sometimes the best way to prepare for a big race is to do...nothing. Our track coach, Coach Ballou, surprised us by telling us the best thing we could do to prepare for the League meet was to rest and not run the week before. He understood what we did not. Through his training regimen we were “peaking”; our conditioning was at such a level that further hard running was counter productive. As counter intuitive as it seemed, he was right. We ran our fastest times of the season.

As we continue God’s Story of Hope Jesus will reveal something that will not make sense to His disciples. But in the end they will see Jesus was right.

We pick up the story early on a Sunday morning in April 33AD.

### **RESURRECTION OF JESUS**

Luke 24:1-12, 36-43

On the third day after Jesus died and was buried, God supernaturally raised Him from the dead to demonstrate His power over sin, death, and Hell.

Jesus was placed in the tomb on Friday late afternoon before dusk. Its early Sunday morning and a group of women have come to the tomb hoping to further embalm Jesus’ corpse. The disciples are nowhere to be found; they’re hidden away for fear of the Jews. Neither His disciples nor these dear ladies believed Jesus would rise again (Luke 9:21-22, 44-45; 18:31-34).

Luke tells us:

Luke 24:1-12 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. <sup>2</sup> And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, <sup>3</sup> but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. <sup>4</sup> While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. <sup>5</sup> And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? <sup>6</sup> He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, <sup>7</sup> that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.” <sup>8</sup> And they remembered his words, <sup>9</sup> and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. <sup>10</sup> Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, <sup>11</sup> but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. <sup>12</sup> But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened.

Even after seeing the empty tomb and hearing the angels the women and particularly the disciples were slow to believe Jesus was really alive. It took the personal appearance of Jesus to convince His disciples.

Luke 24:36-43 (ESV)

<sup>36</sup> As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, “Peace to you!” <sup>37</sup> But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. <sup>38</sup> And he said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? <sup>39</sup> See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” <sup>40</sup> And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. <sup>41</sup> And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” <sup>42</sup> They gave him a piece of broiled fish, <sup>43</sup> and he took it and ate before them.

We, too, would have been skeptical. Hearing His voice, seeing His scars, watching Him eat and most probably touching Him; the disciples were convinced. Jesus was no ghost. He physically was alive again. This began a transformation in the disciples that eventually changed the world.

Why is the resurrection of Jesus essential to God’s story? There are two reasons I want to emphasize. First, the resurrection establishes the absolute credibility of Jesus.

- Because God raised Jesus from the dead we can be confident the things Jesus said about Himself are true.

Because God is holy, just and true, we know that God would not have raised Jesus from the dead if Jesus had been delusional or dishonest in His claims. Therefore the self-revelation of Jesus and all His teachings are trustworthy and true.

This is an encouraging truth. In this age of information overload and clashing ideologies who should we listen to? It is neither simplistic nor naïve to choose to listen to Jesus and live by His teachings. Jesus is 100% trustworthy. Who has better ethics than Jesus? Resolve your anger. Do not lust, but be faithful to your spouse. Be 100% honest and trustworthy; let your yes be yes and your no, no. Love your enemy. Who's wisdom and grace has consistently transformed anger, bitterness and despair into peace, love and hope in countless lives for two millennia?

Because of the resurrection we can be completely confident Jesus is the way, the truth and the life.

The second reason the resurrection is essential to God's story has to do with our sin problem.

- Because God raised Jesus from the dead we can be confident that God was satisfied with Jesus' death as payment for our sins.

When God raised Jesus from the dead He declared that Jesus' death on the cross paid our sin debt in full. All of the innocent sacrificial lambs that had died through the ages were pointing to the ultimate Lamb of God Who would take upon Himself the sins of the whole world. The Apostle Peter explains that when Jesus hung on the cross He, *...bore our sins in his body on the tree...* (1 Peter 2:24).

Because Jesus bore our sin, the Father withdrew from Him. That is when Jesus suffered spiritual death on our behalf.

The Gospel of John tells us that in His final moments, Jesus cried: "It is finished" (John 19:30). Even though Jesus probably spoke Aramaic routinely, here He uttered one Greek word – *tetelestai*.

This word was used in business transactions and it meant "paid in full". When a debt was fully paid, *tetelestai* would be written across the receipt. In the first century when people paid their debt in full they would shout *tetelestai!* It was a shout of celebration; a shout of victory. When Jesus cried out *tetelestai* He was declaring victory. The sin debt of the entire world had been paid.

*Tetelestai!* The resurrection of Jesus from the dead assures us that Jesus paid the penalty for all our sin - *past, present and future*. "There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). Do you have the assurance that all your sin is paid and forgiven by the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus? If not, I encourage you to meditate upon Colossians 2:13-14:

Colossians 2:13-14 (ESV)

<sup>13</sup> And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, <sup>14</sup> by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

Over the next forty days, Jesus appeared to His disciples many times and, as Luke tells us, talked with His disciples about the Kingdom of God (Acts 1:3). It is prophesied the Messiah will liberate Israel and restore to her the Davidic Kingdom. The disciples were hopeful this was the next chapter in God's story...

## ASCENSION OF JESUS

1 Corinthians 15:3-8; Acts 1:6-11

After His resurrection, Jesus made numerous earthly appearances to His disciples and then ascended to Heaven to be with His Father.

Forty days after Jesus' resurrection, Jesus and His disciples were together on the Mount of Olives opposite Jerusalem. Luke tells us:

Acts 1:6–11 (ESV)

<sup>6</sup> So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” <sup>7</sup> He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. <sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” <sup>9</sup> And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. <sup>10</sup> And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, <sup>11</sup> and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

The next chapter in God’s story is not *restoring the kingdom* but *reaching the nations!* God is fulfilling His promise to bless all the families of the earth through Abraham’s offspring.

But this task is too big and too difficult for the disciples to accomplish on their own. This is why Jesus told His disciples it was better that He go.

John 16:5–8 (ESV)

<sup>5</sup> But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ <sup>6</sup> But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. <sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. <sup>8</sup> And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment:

When the disciples first heard this from Jesus it made no sense. How could it be better for Him to go? But when the Holy Spirit indwelt them they realized Jesus was right. Their personal lives were transformed. They had courage and power to preach the Gospel and people were getting saved. The Holy Spirit empowered them to persevere through persecution and even martyrdom.

Through the indwelling Holy Spirit the disciples became unstoppable witnesses for Jesus.

## PETER PROCLAIMS THE GOOD NEWS

Acts 2:22-36

Soon after Jesus ascended, His disciples began to proclaim the good news about who Jesus is, what He did, and why people should trust in Him as their Savior.

Think about the transformation that took place in the lives of the disciples. After Jesus was crucified, what did the disciples do? They went into hiding. Then they encountered the risen Jesus. They spent the next 40 days with Him and witnessed His ascension. Ten days later Peter preaches to the very people who crucified Jesus.

Acts 2:22–36 (ESV)

<sup>22</sup> “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— <sup>23</sup> this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. <sup>24</sup> God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. <sup>25</sup> For David says concerning him,

“I saw the Lord always before me,  
for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken;  
<sup>26</sup> therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;  
my flesh also will dwell in hope.  
<sup>27</sup> For you will not abandon my soul to Hades,  
or let your Holy One see corruption.  
<sup>28</sup> You have made known to me the paths of life;  
you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’

<sup>29</sup> “Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. <sup>30</sup> Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, <sup>31</sup> he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the

Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. <sup>32</sup> This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. <sup>33</sup> Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. <sup>34</sup> For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says,

“ ‘The Lord said to my Lord,  
“Sit at my right hand,  
<sup>35</sup> until I make your enemies your footstool.” ’ ”

<sup>36</sup> Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

3,000 believed.

What happened to Peter?

The Resurrection and the Holy Spirit.

From that day ‘til now the Good News of Jesus Christ continues to be proclaimed throughout the world. God is still *reaching the nations* through Spirit-filled men and women.

- Through Spirit-filled missionaries like Fred & Ruthie Sammons, the Guarani Indians of Paraguay have heard the Good News of Jesus Christ.
- Through Spirit-filled Bible translators like John & Bobbie Pearson, the Aragonese & Nossa Fala peoples have the Good News of Jesus Christ in their heart languages.
- Through Spirit-filled missionaries like Nate & Megan Ingvaldstad, the Cuyunon people have heard the Good News of Jesus Christ.
- Through Spirit-filled seminary professors like Dave Gettis, pastors and evangelists will bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to people groups throughout Central and South America
- Through Spirit-filled Sunday School teachers like Kathleen Nowakowski, Kent Steiner, Erick Bennedorff and many, many others, children are hearing the Good News of Jesus Christ.
- Through Spirit-filled AWANA leaders like Sandy Burney, Cesar Cervantes, Danielle St. John, Cindy Paris and many others children from 3 years old to 18 years old are hearing the Good News of Jesus Christ.
- Through Spirit-filled youth workers like Pollyanna Meloche, Lori Snyder, Davey & Jessalyn Bruce, Matt & Kim Smith and others, Jr. Hi. and High School students are hearing the Good News of Jesus Christ.
- Through Spirit-filled RPCC volunteers like Becky Strahm, Cindy Barth, Sharon Plunkett and many others, ladies in our community are hearing the Good News of Jesus Christ.
- Through Spirit-filled moms and dads like Kent & Rachel, Adam & Brandi, Shawn & Jennifer, Seth & Kerri, Evan & Kimball, Brandon & Bree, Jonathon & Dorothy, Mike & Traci, Chuck & Sara, Bowen & Lacey and many, many others, Roma, Wyatt, Grayson, Cade, Truman, Rylan, Theo, Cale, Keith, Mason and all their brothers and sisters are hearing the Good News of Jesus Christ.

This is the chapter of God’s story in which we find ourselves.

If you are trusting in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sin, you are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. He is in your life to transform you like He transformed the disciples. And He is in your life to empower you to spread the Gospel like He empowered the disciples.

There is no one way He does this. He works through each of our unique personalities to touch people in our sphere of influence. And He works through all of us as a church as we support local and cross-cultural ministries through our service, prayers and financial support.

We may very well be nearing the end of this chapter. Jesus is coming to *restore the kingdom*. But in the mean time we need to fulfill our part in God’s story to bring the Good News of Jesus to those near and far.