

(Wonderful 50 Days) 05 - Peter at Gallilee

by Ed Miller

The sermon emphasizes the importance of dealing with past mistakes and seeing oneself through God's eyes before being used for the Great Commission.

Duration: 51:45

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15, John 20:24-29, John 21:1-23, Revelation 22:15

Topics: "Great Commission", "Resurrection Appearances"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the final 40 days of Jesus before his ascension. He emphasizes that during this time, Jesus had a great burden for missions and evangelism. Jesus gave his disciples the Great Commission, instructing them to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them and teaching them to observe his commandments. The speaker also mentions two other appearances of Jesus after his resurrection, including the one where he appeared to the seven disciples at the Sea of Tiberias.

Transcript

Thank you again that thou hast given us the Holy Spirit, the resident Bible teacher who lives in our hearts, ever who searches the depths of God and reveals it unto us. Lord, we know how hopeless we are and helpless apart from that unveiling that you give. We ask thee again, Lord, to tear the seals from the book, from the scroll.

You're worthy and show us the Lord Jesus again. We pray that in a special way you would clinch all that's been on your heart to reveal unto us this weekend. We pray that you tie together all of the loose ends that you administer in the hearts that you have been working in and bring, we pray, to a very clear conclusion all of your manifestation.

Thank you that you're doing it, you're going to continue to do it, and we just believe you and claim it in the all-prevailing name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. Well, we're in our final look at this wonderful topic, and so since we have some ground to cover, I will assume in the short period since we've met you won't need a lot of review.

Basically what we've been saying, this 40 days we've been contemplating, meditating upon, this wonderful 40 days where Jesus gave a transition from what was into what would be in the glorious day of the Holy Spirit. In the day after Pentecost when he sent his Holy Spirit, he anticipated it. He said, this is how I will appear to you.

And in the Old Testament he just waved that seed. That's enough. Shut up.

Take a good look at this risen one. He will appear as he appeared to Mary Magdalene. Stop clinging in the flesh.

He will appear as he appeared to those disciples on the road to Emmaus. So that your heart burns within you, so that you can swing open the door and fellowship with him in the breaking of bread. May God deliver you from the slow heart, slow to believe.

From any kind of a depression that would come from the agenda we offer the Lord Jesus. He appears through this book. And then he appears to faith.

May God give us the faith and the blessedness that comes with it without seeing, without all of that which limits so much. We want to see the Lord. And so this morning we need to cover two more appearances.

How are we going to do that? Well the only way we can do it is just to skim on the top and get the heart. And I pray that God will guide you to go back and to meditate. Some of the things I say will be suggestive.

They're not exhaustive at all. A little bit suggestive and I pray that they would stimulate you to go back and to look upon him. There are two more appearances for which God gives us great details.

The one the children presented to us this morning. The seven disciples in Galilee at the Sea of Tiberias. That's just another name for the Sea of Galilee.

Then he appeared finally when he ascended and went to heaven. And so we need in our closing moments to look at that. We'll look only at the chief message, only at what I consider to be the heart of it.

When we closed last night I tried to suggest to you that in all of these wonderful appearances we have been emphasizing the story and we have not been emphasizing some of the things he said. When he appeared he talked. He also said some things concerning the kingdom of God.

And though we can't look at every detail. I mean his benediction and his peace and all of the details of what he said. I think the big thing he said we can look at, I think we must look at.

Because if we're going to understand these appearances we must see how he brought these 40 days to a close. And we must emphasize what he emphasized. So what did he say during those 40 days? Well in one expression he said the great commission.

In one word he said missions. He said evangelism. He said soul winning.

That was his great burden. He's about to leave. And as he leaves he said I will appear to you.

But all to an end. A redemptive end. All toward a goal.

My heart beats hot through the world he said. And it's there that we must reach. And so we need to touch this great purpose.

Now before we glance at it I'm going to, before we glance at chapter 21. Again I'll read these verses or you can look them up. I just want to scan the appearances and isolate those passages which we call the great commission.

Matthew chapter 28 beginning at verse 18. And Jesus came up and spoke to them saying. All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations. Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to observe all that I commanded you and lo I am with you always.

Even to the end of the age. And if you look please at Mark 16. Beginning at verse 15.

And he said to them go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved. He who has disbelieved shall be condemned.

And these signs will accompany those who have believed. In my name they will cast out demons. They will speak with new tongues.

They will pick up serpents. If they drink any deadly poison it will not hurt them. They will lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.

Luke chapter 24 please. Verse 48, 49. You are witnesses of these things.

Behold I am sending forth the promise of my Father upon you. You are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high. Acts chapter 1 please.

Beginning at verse 7. And he said unto them it is not for you to know the times or the epochs which the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. You shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth.

We are told that these are the records of the great commission in the New Testament. We are told that the gospel of John does not contain the great commission. At least not in the appearances of Christ.

Matthew has it, Mark has it, Luke has it and Acts has it. Some allow one little possibility in John. In chapter 20 verse 21.

The Lord Jesus therefore said to them peace be with you. As the Father sent me I also send you. And they say there is John's record of it.

As the Father sent me so send I you. It seems strange to me that the apostle John whoever unveils the Father's heart whoever takes us into this spiritual reality I thought how strange that John would leave out the great commission. That Matthew would say it and Mark would say it and Luke would say it and Luke said it twice.

And that John wouldn't say it. I want to present before your heart in this last appearance or the next to the last appearance I not only think John said it but I think the most complete record of the great commission is in the gospel of John. Matthew just brushed over it.

Mark just brushed over it. They told you go into all the world. Luke hinted at how.

But in the gospel of John I believe at this great chapter 21 the seven disciples at Tiberias I think God does what he always does in the gospel of John. He gave us a sign. He gave us a story.

He gave us an object lesson. I don't think that there would be many who would quarrel with this if I said there are two parts to the great commission. If I said one part of the great commission is evangelism is soul winning is bringing the lost to the Lord Jesus Christ and to the knowledge of God missions When I came to know the Lord at age 16 I didn't even know there were two testaments.

I didn't know anything. Nobody was colder to the truth. And immediately I was thrust into situations because the Lord did such a work in my heart.

People thought I knew something. I remember being called on to pray shortly after I got saved and I asked God to save Satan. I thought that saved a lot of problems.

I didn't know the scriptures. And I remember all I had was my King James verse and I remember so well reading that verse Preach the gospel to every creature. I had a dog I'm serious Patches, my beagle my little creature and I remember going home and telling Patches I know you don't understand this but Jesus died for you Preach the gospel to every creature part of that I know a little more than that.

I read the end of Revelation chapter 22, 15 Outside are the dogs The first part is definitely soul winning evangelism. And I don't think anyone would doubt the second part of the Great Commission has to do with discipleship. Has to do with training and teaching and admonishing and building up the body of Christ after they've come to the Savior.

Turn please to chapter 21 I'm going to ask you to read it at this point I'm going to ask you to speed read it at this point. I want you to glance at the first 14 verses. I want you to reflect upon what our children taught us this morning.

Am I wrong if I said those first 14 verses talk about fishing? It's the first part of the Great Commission. Fishing. Look at the end of the chapter.

Verses 15 to 23 Tend my sheep. 16 Shepherd my sheep. 19 Tend my sheep.

22 You follow me Shepherding Chapter 21 Fishing Shepherding The Great Commission And in that marvelous chapter on the Great Commission He tells us how. See that's what was missing in the others. I need to know how.

And he tells me how to fish. And he tells me how to shepherd. And in his almost final appearance Not his final appearance.

You see the first appearance the focus was on Mary Magdalene. And in the second the focus was on two disciples on their way to Emmaus. And the third was on Thomas.

And in this one the focus is on Peter. In the final appearance as he rises up the focus is on Exactly right. Exactly right.

But we've got to see this first. God said I'm going to get you out of the upper room. But you've got to learn how to fish.

You've got to learn how to shepherd. And before I deal with you out there How will he come? Yes in the spirit. Yes in the word.

Yes to faith. He will always come redemptively. He will always come first redeeming us then we might redeem others.

That's how he always appears. And in a climactic way he does it here. You see God chose Peter.

Peter felt so disqualified. And you understand why. You know the record.

He had attempted before to fish and to shepherd. And he had failed miserably. He didn't know how to fish.

He didn't know how to shepherd. And so now God is going to give him the how. Chapter 21 please.

After these things Jesus manifested himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberius. He manifested himself in this way. There were together Simon Peter Thomas called Vitimus and Nathanael of Canaan in Galilee the sons of Zebedee and two others of his disciples.

Simon Peter said to them I'm going fishing. They said to him We will also come with you. And they went out and they got into the boat and that night they caught nothing.

When the day was now breaking Jesus stood on the beach. Yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus therefore said to them Children you do not have any fish, do you? They answered him No.

And he said to them Cast the net on the right side of the boat and you'll find a catch. They cast therefore and then they were not able to haul it in because of the great number of the fish. That disciple therefore whom Jesus loved said to Peter It's the Lord.

So when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord he put his outer garment on for he was stripped for work and he threw himself into the sea. But the other disciples came in the little boat they were not far from the land but about one hundred yards away dragging the net full of fish. And so when they got out upon the land Jesus said to them Bring some of the fish which you've now caught.

Simon Peter went up and drew the net to land full of large fish one hundred fifty three. I say there are many details here and it is an exciting study to get into some of these details. We'll only look at the surface.

Seven disciples. Who are the seven? Well God names five Peter, Thomas, Nathaniel the sons of Zebedee, James and John. Who are the other two? That's you and me.

That's the other two. Peter with six other disciples by an invitation of the Lord Jesus himself have gathered at Galilee to meet him as he promised. And now the Holy Spirit takes the light off of the six and puts the light on the one on Peter.

Because God wants to show us as he showed us through Mary as he showed us through the two disciples as he showed us through Thomas. Now he needs to tell us something through Peter who is perfectly qualified to teach us this final principle. John chapter 21 verse 3 the first thing we have to learn in soul winning he illustrates it here is who does the fishing.

They went out into the boat and that night they caught nothing. Perfect set up. Remember our little missionary who testified yesterday.

God tricked me. He loves, he's tricky. He loves to bring us to the place.

This is a set up for Peter. It was indispensable for us and for the principle he's going to lay down in redemptive living in this whole idea of we got to learn before we get out there who does the fishing. I don't know how to fish and you don't know how to fish and we don't know how to fish and God decided to teach us that by showing us that the fishermen did not know how to fish.

Don't forget they were fishermen. That was their skill. Children, you do not have any fish, do you? And they answered, no.

So shall it ever be when we do the fishing. And so verse 6 he said cast your net on the right side of the boat you'll find a catch and they cast their net and they were not able to haul it in because of the great number of things. If you're going to fish you've got to obey the Lord.

And he'll tell you where to fish and he'll tell you when to fish and he'll tell you exactly on what side of the boat to fish. It's a lesson for all who want to win soul. And of course when that happened they recalled and they said it is the Lord.

That's all Peter needed to hear. In a moment he was in the water and he was swimming to shore. When he got to shore, verse 9 a charcoal fire was frying some fish.

Jesus already had fish. Where'd he get his? Well some say maybe he just created it. We don't know that.

That's not the point. The point is if you're going to understand fishing you're going to have to understand that he's the one that's going to have to do the fishing and he doesn't need you. He doesn't need me.

He's already got the fish. But then verse 3 they caught fish because Jesus was doing the fishing. Verse 10 he said bring some of the fish which you've caught.

He doesn't need you but he wants to use you. And so he'll tell you where to fish and he'll catch the fish and he'll fill your net. Where can I bring Jesus? And the answer is only the things he's put in my net.

Where can you bring Jesus? Only the things that he's put in your net. He doesn't need you. He doesn't need me.

But he's willing to use us and if we give him back the things that he's given us already. That's the beginning. But God needs to lay down a greater principle.

Not only must he teach us that he's the one that has to do it. What if you're Peter? See God chose him on purpose. Knowing that God's going to do the fishing and fish through me that's a great principle.

But I'm not qualified to be a fisherman. And don't forget what happened to Peter. If you feel disqualified if you feel like you can never measure up if you feel like God can never use you it is not an accident brothers and sisters in Christ that God selected the apostle Peter to fossilize this fourth principle of how he will always appear to us.

He's the one who felt most unworthy to be used. He never thought he's going to get recommissioned because he failed the Lord so miserably. You know what's going on in Peter's mind.

Peter's saying I confessed one time that I loved him with a love that was willing to die for him. At that point I didn't realize the possibilities of my own flesh. But I confessed anyway and I said Lord though everyone else forsakes you I won't forsake you.

I'm willing to die for you. I'm ready right now. And he warned me that before the cock crowed three times I'd deny it.

And I was determined not to. We may have a great commission to send some people out but I sort of blown it. I denied the Lord three times.

See I'm bringing that up because if you don't read this context this text in that context you're not going to know the marvelous things that are happening here. The Lord is doing some wonderful things here. Peter needs to see a couple of things before he gets out there.

And they're exactly the things that I need to see before I get out there. And they're exactly the things that you need to see and that we as a body need to see. Everything's a set up.

Everything's tricky. God has planned this thing and it's a trap for Peter. God is going to bring Peter to the place where before he can ever begin to think about the world he needs to see how God sees him.

He needs to see who he is in the Lord before he can go out and try to win anybody else to the Lord. Now don't let Peter fool you. It looks on the surface like he's functioning well.

But a lot is going on in his heart and God's going to dredge it up. I don't know what was going through Peter's mind. I love reading between the lines.

For example, we read that when John said, It is the Lord that he put his shirt on and jumped into the water. I would think you'd take your shirt off to jump into the Lord. Why did he get dredged? Well, I can't prove it.

I think I know. I think he's saying, It's the Lord. I blew it last time.

I'm not going to blow it this time. I think he thought he's going to walk on water. I think he's, I'm going to walk on water.

I'm not going to blow it this time. And he gets dressed and he focuses on that stranger on the shore. It's the Lord.

Watch this, Jesus. It's where he got his name, The Rock. I don't know what was going through his mind as he's swimming the shore.

I blew it again. I blew it again. But it doesn't matter.

Jesus is on the shore. I don't know what was going through his mind as he swam the shore. But I know what was going through his mind when he arrived at the shore.

And I promise you, saints, he wanted to turn around and swim right back to that boat. He did not want what he saw on that shore. As he got to the shore, he lifted up his eyes.

Verse 9, He saw a charcoal fire. See, we just sort of read that, La, la, la. Charcoal fire may not mean much to you, may not mean much to me.

I promise you it meant something to Peter. See, the only other time in the Bible a charcoal fire is mentioned is in John chapter 18, verse 18. Now the slaves and the officers were standing there, having made a charcoal fire.

It was cold and they were warming themselves and Peter was with them standing there warming himself. It was at a charcoal fire that he denied the Lord. Three times at a charcoal fire he denied the Lord.

Why is God bringing that up again? Wasn't that a cruel thing for Jesus to do? Jesus knew that. Why in the world did he have a charcoal fire on the beach? Because of the Great Commission? Because Peter, we've got to show you how we look at you and you've got to be comfortable with that before you ever get out there to bring them in. I love meeting the Lord, but not at the charcoal fire.

I meet the Lord in my study, I meet the Lord at hospital. Let's go out in the wood, I love to meet the Lord. We'll go in the chapel, we'll meet the Lord.

Let's go in the closet, we'll meet the Lord. God says if you're serious about being part of my redemptive program, we've got to deal with some things. Peter, you just can't let that thing smolder in there.

We've got to deal with some things. I want to meet you at the charcoal fire. That charcoal fire represented everything in his past.

Peter, until you see how I see your past, you're not ready to go out there. We need to meet at the charcoal fire. That's exactly where he waits for us.

It's one thing to read a fish, oh yeah, he's going to fish through me and tell me what to do and everything. Missions, evangelism, souls, eternity. Man, what kind of person does he call out there? I'm not qualified for that.

I'm not ready for that. That charcoal fire started to dredge up so many, many things. You know, it wasn't only the charcoal fire.

I told you this thing was a set up in many ways. For example, remember that fish, did you catch anything? No. Fish all night? Yeah.

Remember anything about that, Peter? See, that happened once before. And he'd throw them in, and he'd bring them in. That's all designed to stir up his mind and his memory.

I think as he got out of the water all wet, I don't know, maybe Jesus had a smile on his face cooking fish on the charcoal fire. Just done that miracle. Peter is shyly, he's embarrassed, it's hard to meet Jesus at the charcoal fire.

He's embarrassed, and he sort of makes his way over there. They sit down. Jesus says, Simon? He did it again.

See, in his early ministry, he said, You were Simon. From now on, you're Peter, a rock. He goes back to the old name.

Lillian says, Honey? I said, Oh, my sweet Lillie's gone. Edward Philip Miller. I'm in trouble.

That's what he did to Peter. Simon, and his heart must have sunk when he did that. Then he says, Simon, do you love me more than these? What does that mean, these? Some think maybe it's the fish in the nets.

He said, I'm going fishing. Some people think he was giving up and going back to his old occupation. Going fishing.

You love me more than these? Maybe he meant these disciples. Peter, I remember when you said, Though they deny you, I will never deny you. Though they're not willing to die, I'll die for you.

Peter, let's hear that confession again. Let's hear you make it. Picture Peter.

See, we sort of read this line off. Peter is at the charcoal fire. He does not want to be there.

He has this memory stirred up. He doesn't want to think about these things. I'll make you fishers of men.

That once rang alive in Peter's heart. God said, follow me. You'll be a fisher of men.

He messed up. He blew it and he threw it all away. Now, Jesus meets him there and it's all a set up.

He doesn't bring up his past in order to make him squirm. The Lord Jesus doesn't like to see someone embarrassed and feeling bad and all convicted inside. That's not why he's doing it.

That's what the psychologist does. And all that morbid introspection. Look inside and bring up the past and deal with it.

He's not doing that. At the charcoal fire, Jesus says, verse 12, Come and dine. Remember what dine meant? Remember what sup meant? Remember what the breaking of bread? Jesus got it.

Peter, here's the charcoal fire. Here's the name Simon. Here's the old fish and chips.

Here's all these people who make... Peter, I am comfortable with your past. And I want you to fellowship with me in your past. I'm going to teach you, Peter, that you can fellowship with me and dine at the charcoal fire.

See, cousin, until you know how God views your past, you're not ready to go out there and tell that sinner that he can be forgiven. That there's life. And God begins by redeeming us in order that we might redeem them.

He doesn't just take us and throw us out. He begins with us. And every time He comes, He comes to revive us and to show us who we are in Him.

And to show us that we can be comfortable in the presence of Jesus in spite of our past. And we can fellowship with Christ at the charcoal fire. I think it's a glorious thing that the Lord Jesus was doing to the Apostle Peter.

He didn't want Peter running in shame every time he saw a charcoal fire. He didn't want him to go out and weep bitterly every time a rooster cock a doodle dood. Is that a word? Yes.

He didn't want Peter embarrassed every time someone said, Simon, he wanted his missionary to be free. Oh, the glory of being free from the past. I can't change my past, but I have perfect liberty about my imperfect past.

You can't change your past but Christ is inviting you to the charcoal fire. I don't care about your past. You know what I mean.

I don't mean I don't care. But it doesn't matter about your past and how badly you've grown it. If you're serious about God's redemptive purposes, you will meet Him at the charcoal fire.

Say, oh, that's embarrassing. That's hard. That's the cross.

Yeah, but you'll meet Him there. Not so He can beat you over the head with a broom handle either. So you can learn to dine with Christ at the charcoal fire in spite of your past glory.

He's got to learn that. He's got to see something else, but He's got to learn that I can be comfortable in the presence of Christ no matter what my past has been. He needs to see something else.

Peter says, alright, so I'm forgiven. Alright, so He's allowed me, He's invited me to dine in this strange, strange place. In the light of all that I've done, He's invited me to dine, but that doesn't change anything.

Even though I'm forgiven, I know me, I'm going to do it again. I'm not qualified to be His missionary. I may be forgiven, but I'm not qualified.

Peter, you need to see something else. I'm quite certain almost all of you who have studied this glorious chapter 21 have heard or have studied the wonderful Greek words in this chapter. I honestly think in this particular case, it's so precious that the Greek has done us a disservice.

Someone says, did you know that there are different Greek words for love? And did you know there are different Greek words for feed? Feed, tend, my... Did you know there are different Greek words for sheep and for lamb and for lampkin? If you don't understand this passage, you better know Greek. And which word love did He use? And which word feed did He use? And which word lamb did He use? Or sheep did He use? And so on. I think sometime because of that, we miss the heart of what was happening.

Let me just give you the heart of that. See, this is an easy way for me to say, forget the Greek. I don't want you to forget it.

You go home and study it. That's precious stuff there. But don't miss this.

This is the big thing. Peter. Jesus says, this is the Greek word.

Peter. You denied me three times now. Do you love me enough to die for me? That's the word He used.

Do you love me enough to die for me? You see, this is the quiz that He gives every missionary. You wouldn't find that in the world. You wouldn't find that in those cases.

Oh, you're going to be a missionary. Here's the question. Where did you go to seminary? That's the question we ask.

Are you properly trained? Have you been called? Do you love sheep? Do you like to work with children? Do you like to work with derelicts? Do you have a burden from the lost? Do you have spiritual gifts? Do you have any experience in this area? Are you committed to this? Are you totally surrendered? Are you ready to go to China? Africa? Asia? Fiji? Jesus asked one question, verse 15. He doesn't ask those things. He says, Peter, do you love me? I'm about ready to send out missionaries and I need to know, do you love me enough to die for me? Peter could have wished for 10,000 questions beside that one.

Any question, Lord. Ask me any question beside that. I'll even guess at my gifts.

Anything. But don't ask me if I love you enough to die for you. Because I said it once and I saw what happened.

And the only question you ask me is the one I can't answer. I can't answer it. Why don't you ask me, Peter, are you willing to love me enough to die for me? Then I'd say, yeah, I'm willing.

Don't ask me, are you, do you love me enough to die for me? Because I can't answer that question. And you know how he changed the question later to make it a little easier and he couldn't even answer that one. When I arrived at Hoshua this week, a brother opened the scriptures and took me to John 21 and in tears he told me how God pressed that question home to his own heart.

And he told me he couldn't answer it. He couldn't say yes. And he even made this suggestion.

I have an idea, I'll never be able to answer that. What happens when the only gospel duty you're required to have to love Jesus, and you can't say it. In reality, you can't say it.

Let me show you what happens and we'll close up this section. You know, you sort of read this, la la la, this is the story of the great commission, fishing, shepherding, and the word about Peter's death. It is not a word about Peter's death at the end.

This is all part and parcel of the revelation of the Lord Jesus. In verse 18 and 19, Truly I say to you, when you are younger, use to gird yourself and walk wherever you wish. When you grow old, you'll stretch out your hands.

Someone else will gird you and bring you where you do not wish to go. This, he said, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he said to him, Follow me.

What's that all about? He said, Peter, someday you're going to die for me. You all know church history. The record is that Peter actually did get crucified, and by his request, because he wasn't worthy to die as his savior died, he asked to be crucified upside down.

He said, what's Jesus trying to do? First he has a charcoal fire to make him feel bad. Now he scares the wits out of the poor fisherman. Say, Peter, let me tell you about your end.

You're going to get killed. You're going to get murdered. Does Jesus mean? Is he cruel? What does he mean? Is he cruel? What does he mean? He's grieved because he can't say it.

Who longs to say it? Who longs to love Christ that way but can't say it? He said, good, then I'll say it for you. You don't have to worry. Your past is buried, and your present is covered, and your future is secured.

Now, having known who I am in Christ, I am forgiven. I am qualified. How am I qualified? Because he said it for me.

I can't say it. He said it for me, and he's going to keep me unto the end. When he finds somebody like that who knows he's clean, who is fellowshiping with Christ at the charcoal fire, and who knows God has worked in him and will work in him unto the end, the love that will lay down its life for the Lord Jesus.

He says, now, there's missions. Having said that, let's look at the final appearance. It's a short one, and we'll be done.

After he redeems us, he's ready to redeem the world. Acts 1.9 After he had said these things, he was lifted up while they were looking down. A cloud received him out of their sight.

As they were gazing intently into the sky while he was departing, two men in white clothing stood beside him. They also said, Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? The same Jesus who's been taken up from you into heaven will come in just the same way as you watched him go into heaven. Now turn, please, to Luke 24, and this is the text we'll look at for a moment.

Begin at verse 50. And he led them out as far as Bethany. He lifted up his hands, he blessed them, and it came about while he was blessing them, he parted from them.

And they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, were continually in the temple praising God. You see, we come to the 40 days, and he appears, and he disappears, and he appears, and he disappears, and he appears, and he disappears, and all of a sudden, on his final appearance, he doesn't just vanish. You see, when something is different, you take note.

How come he didn't just disappear and then get lured from heaven? I'm going now, and I'm not going to be back. Why they do it this way? Luke gives us the answer, I believe. It's the Gospel of Luke that calls attention to the physical posture of our Lord Jesus as he ascended to his Holy Father in heaven.

You see, once again, there's an allusion here to the Old Testament. They had the Passover, and they would do all of the sacrifices that were necessary, and the people outside whose sins were being represented are waiting and waiting for the High Priest. When we come out of the Holy of Holies, we will be struck dead in the Holy of Holies.

And when he came out, Numbers 6 tells us what he did. The High Priest would come out, the sacrifice is over, the Passover has been accepted, God has received the blood, and he would hold out his hands like this and say, The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you.

The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. I have no doubt those words were spoken by our Lord Jesus as he ascended to heaven. He ascended as a priest, giving a benediction.

He went up to heaven anticipating his present ministry at the right hand of God, which would not resume. He's the priest. Sometimes I ask myself the question, when did he put his hands down? When he got behind the cloud? Past the Milky Way? You see, as far as the record goes, he's never put his hands down.

Oh, I don't doubt his hands are down in act. But that is an everlasting attitude. And in his final appearance, he said, I've come to bless those who have offered the sacrificial lamb.

And he rises to bless. How will he come in these 40 days? I'll tell you how he'll come. He'll come in the Spirit, and he'll come in the Bible, and he'll come to faith.

He'll come to do a work in me before he does a work in them. And then he will come to bless his people. Brothers and sisters in Christ, see Jesus.

That's how he comes. And right now, his hands are in benediction to you. See Jesus.

Wait. Wait for the precious Holy Spirit. See Christ this way, and then wait.

And if you're seeing Christ this way, the Holy Spirit will guide you, and he will take those loaves and wave them over the live lamb as a testimony for the world to see. That's missions. That's how to fish.

That's how to shepherd. You are qualified. You say, Oh, but I don't know.

Do you love him? I can't say it. Let him say it. That's the only gospel duty.

Love Jesus. That's it. Love Jesus.

So simple. May God work these things in our heart. May he continually appear as he appeared.

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you.
The Lord lift up his calmness upon you and give you peace.

In Jesus' name, amen. The Lord bless you.

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