

## Only Jesus Is Necessary

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Ascension

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**Luke 24:44-53** <sup>44</sup> Then He said to them, "These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me." <sup>45</sup> And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. <sup>46</sup> Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, <sup>47</sup> "and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup> "And you are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup> "Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high." <sup>50</sup> And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. <sup>51</sup> Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. <sup>52</sup> And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, <sup>53</sup> and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen.

**"It was necessary"** - Those are words along with other similar phrases that we use way too often. Jesus doesn't use these

words lightly or prodigiously. When Jesus says it was necessary he means it. This is what was necessary for him and for us.

When I was a missionary traveling in India and Africa, I often heard the words "we need." We need a church, we need medicine, we need bibles, bicycles, etc. Many of those requests were very reasonable and seemed very necessary. We helped with some of those requests. However, even when we couldn't help, the word of God was still preached. I've known pastors that for years preached under a streetlamp. A church building is nice, but the only thing that is necessary is the word of God, and the power which comes through that word.

**Psalm 68:11 The Lord gave the word; Great was the company of those who proclaimed it:**

At his ascension Jesus gave to the whole church on earth both the word and the power. He told the disciples to wait in Jerusalem, and they would receive the Helper.

**John 16:7 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 depart, I will send Him to you.**

Having ascended into heaven and received all authority and power, what did Jesus do? He used that authority and power to give us everything that is necessary. Everything that is necessary not only for sharing the gospel for our whole life.

**Hebrews 13:5 be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."**

Jesus is risen and has ascended and is with us forgiving all our sins, we have all that we need.

Since I have come back to the states, I don't hear those words "I need" less but more often. Certain people are currently trying to convince us that ILC needs a new gym, even if it costs \$10 million. A gym would certainly be nice, but it is not needed. What is needed is the preaching of the gospel. The list of things that we think we "need" is getting higher and higher every year.

The disciples also had a list of things they were certain were necessary. Philip for example thought that he needed more than two fish and five loaves for five thousand people. We would tend to agree with Philip, but like Philip we are wrong. Peter thought it was necessary to rebuke Jesus when he spoke of dying on the cross. Jesus himself rebuked Peter for that one. In our reading from Acts the disciples thought it was necessary for Jesus to "restore the kingdom to Israel." Once again, they were wrong.

What was necessary? It was necessary for Jesus to suffer, die and rise again. It wasn't necessary for his sake but for ours. It was necessary for the scripture to be fulfilled. It *is* necessary that the Gospel goes forth, that we have it.

When you are packing for a vacation, it is so important to know what is necessary and what is not. Trying to pack everything loads you down with things that aren't necessary. Leave behind the things that aren't important. What is necessary for us as we follow Jesus? Comfort and an enjoyable life are not necessary. The gospel is necessary. Leave behind the things that aren't needed. Take Jesus with you.

The Apostle Paul reminds us that Jesus "**ascended on high and gave gifts to men.**" That is at his ascension we have received everything that is necessary, everything that we need. We have received his word and the preaching of the forgiveness of our sins. We have received the message of the Christ who was dead but now lives forevermore.

We have that which is necessary. We have that which is necessary for witnessing, for preaching the message to others, but also what is necessary for everyday of our lives. The message gives us the power and strength to witness, to find comfort, to endure, to resist temptation, to forgive us others, and to find forgiveness for all our failures.

AS Jesus said to Martha, "**one thing is needed . . . [It] will not be taken from her.**"

There are a lot of things that we think we need, but in the end the only thing that we really need is forgiveness of sins. Jesus has given us that one thing needful.