



### **Luke 24:44-53 New Revised Standard Version**

<sup>44</sup> Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” <sup>45</sup> Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, <sup>46</sup> and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day <sup>47</sup> and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup> You are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup> And 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.”

<sup>50</sup> Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. <sup>51</sup> While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. <sup>52</sup> And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, <sup>53</sup> and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

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On this “Ascension Sunday,” we remember not only Jesus’ return to the Father, but also his instructions to his followers for the continuance of his ministry on earth. Jesus prepared the disciples for such a moment by

reminding them they would not be left alone to perform this work. God would send the Spirit in due time to aid disciples in the ministry of God’s Kingdom.

In these Sundays following Easter, we have been considering some of the words which Jesus spoke to various men and women after his resurrection. Today, our focus is upon Jesus’ insistence that his earliest followers, coupled with generations of disciples since, bear witness to the Gospel through our lives. That’s right! Each of us is a witness for the benefit or detriment of the Kingdom.

It is discouraging to consider the many challenges in our present-day world and the negative impact some have had upon the Good News of Jesus Christ. While the world may provide some external threats to the faith community, the failure of Christians to be true to our calling has taken a toll as well. We do this when we act super spiritual, criticize others, allow certain attitudes to hamper the growth of the Kingdom.

Not all witnesses have a negative impact upon the Church and there are many men, women, and young people who portray the genuine Christ within our world. Author Leonard Sweat has stated, “The strength of the church is not the strength of its institutions but the authenticity of its witness.” This has been true since the first century and continues to influence our world even today. What kind of witness do you seek to be each day?

### **Thoughts to Consider**

- You too are a witness and the world is watching.
- Our witness gives others a certain impression of God.
- An authentic witness draws others to Christ.

**Prayer Pebble:** Lord, equip me to be a witness who draws others to you.