

Living truths out in our lives

Part 1

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[00:00:00] Luke's Gospel. First of all, Luke chapter 1.

Luke's Gospel, chapter 1, verse 1. Just the last part of the first verse.

Those things which are most surely believed among us. Then chapter 15, verse 8.

[00:01:01] Even what woman, having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, does not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it. And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the peace which I have lost. Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repented. And then chapter 24.

Verse 44.

[00:02:04] And he said unto them, These are the words which I have spoken unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures. And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day. And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you. But tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high. And he led them out as far as Tibetani, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven. [00:03:17] And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.

And we've been enjoying those things as we've been having our meetings together over this week. But as we think of those words, we also think of the great responsibility we have, and perhaps we've begun to touch on that, particularly with our Bible reading this afternoon. [00:04:07] When we've looked at the question of the apostles' doctrine, the fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayers. The things which are most surely believed among us.

And in the latter verses of the gospel that we read from Luke chapter 24, we see those things

described as the scriptures, the sacred writings, that which God has given us. Those things which God has imparted, and which have been, as it were, entrusted to us. And of course the challenge then comes as to whether we not only believe them, but seek to work them out in our lives, day by day, individually, as families, and also as gatherings of God's people.

[00:05:05] The reason I read from Luke chapter 15, is just to take it as a little illustration of what is on my heart to say this evening. And that is that we have been thinking in our times together already, of the greatness of the revelation of the Father. How the Lord Jesus has declared to us the Father's name, and one of the wonderful occupations we have had is to consider this beautiful privilege we have of worshipping the Father, in spirit and in truth. It's the distinctive side of the day in which we live, for those who believe on God, that they know God in this intimate, personal way. They know him as he is. What he is personally, the Father. They know the Lord Jesus as their Saviour, and their Lord, as we've been thinking as well. [00:06:05] We have thought of the greatness of the Lord Jesus too. At the beginning of our conference we considered him as the one who is the rock on which he builds his assembly. We thought of the permanence, the strength, the excellence of the Lord Jesus in that connection. What he is in himself. As well of course as the great work he has done on Calvary's cross in order to redeem us to himself. And as we think about these things and the things that follow from them, the things that are most surely believed among us, then of course our thoughts are drawn to the work of the Holy Spirit to enable us to work these things out. To offer up praise and worship to Father and Son. And to be able to, as we've already prayed in our prayer this evening, to display something of the attributes of the Lord Jesus in our lives here in this world. [00:07:03] In this passage from Luke's Gospel, it's often been described, hasn't it, as a parable in three parts. And we have seen, we think, in it, the work of each person of the Godhead. In the first part of the Gospel, the Lord Jesus as the one who goes after that lost sheep. In the third part of the parable, the Father, the one who is looking for that one who is his son, to be in his presence, to enjoy his presence. And we often like to apply that to ourselves, sons before the Father, able to enjoy his presence. The first part of the parable can be said to look back upon what we've been saved from. And we did have it, didn't we, at the beginning of our conference. The importance of salvation. That we cannot enter all these blessings which we've been talking about unless first we have been saved. We've been saved from the peril we were in as sinners. [00:08:07] Under judgment. Under the possibility of God's judgment falling upon us unless we believe because we are sinners. And that first part of this chapter would bring before us the wonderful love of the Lord Jesus who has gone after us in order to rescue us from this. And it would bring before us that unless we accept that as sinners we are lost and without hope and without God in this world, as Paul writes about the Gentiles, then there's no possibility of us enjoying all the other blessings we've been reading about in our Bible readings and hearing about in our evening meetings. The absolute imperative that we get saved. That we trust the Lord Jesus as our Saviour. That we accept our need of him to save us. Perhaps the third part of the parable looks forward, in particular, to those wonderful blessings we will enjoy in the Father's house when we shall be with the Lord Jesus there in the presence of our God and Father. [00:09:22] Stumbling block to our worship and enjoyment of him. About something, of course, we can realise and enjoy now. But in the middle part of the parable we get the thought of the woman having ten pieces of silver. If she lose one piece, doth not light a candle and sweep the house and seek diligently till she find it. It's not my desire to expound this verse in any detail but just to take some elements of it and to see how we might apply that to some of the things that we have been thinking about already. First of all, this woman taking a candle might be a picture to us of the operation of the Holy Spirit. If in the first part of the chapter we see the operation of the Lord Jesus, if in the last part of the parable we see that of the Father, in this middle part perhaps we see a picture of the operation of the Holy Spirit. [00:10:21] And, of course, in connection with what the Lord Jesus was actually saying to those who were listening to

him, the thought as we have it in verse 10 is that there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repented. But looking at verse 8 we see that there were ten pieces of silver and one piece was lost. And in scripture often ten is a picture of responsibility, the ability to be able to carry out our responsibility before God or not carry it out before God. I would like to suggest that we could take this as a picture of the way in which the Holy Spirit is seeking to draw out those who, having put their faith in the Lord Jesus, will act here for his interest in this world, will make up, as it were, that set of ten pieces of silver. [00:11:18] Those who have been redeemed, as silver speaks of redemption, but who now, as it were, in this world, want to display and be for the Lord Jesus. Well, in this particular parable we see that a candle is lighted and maybe that will bring before us once again the Word of God, that which is a lamp to our feet, that which is a light to our path, that which shows us the truth of God, that which is the truth of God, the Word of God. And as we've been thinking of the things most surely believed among us, and as we've been thinking, as we've read the verses at the end of this Gospel of the Scriptures, then we see that they are the only thing we have which sets before us the truth of God. [00:12:10] There's nothing else. They are all that is necessary. They are indeed sufficient in setting forth to us in our situation, in our day and generation, what we need to know in order that we may first of all find our way, may first of all be saved, but more than that, live for the glory of God. The importance of the Scriptures and them alone as the basis of salvation and the means of us knowing the will of God in any given situation. That doesn't of course take away the importance of prayer, but as we come to God in prayer, it's to seek his mind and to be held from his word, to know his mind. But this will also swept the house, and thinking of us as believers, those who have trusted the Lord Jesus, and often we find that if we are to work out these things in our lives, then there has to be that sweeping action of the Holy Spirit, clearing away that which isn't according to God's mind and will. [00:13:21] Often there is rubbish, obscuring that which God wants to come out in our lives for his glory. Now having said that from that parable, it would be good just to look at some of the ways in which we can practically see the Holy Spirit working out some of these things day by day in our lives. Before we do, can we just mention those last verses I read in Luke's Gospel. There we see the believers, the disciples of the Lord Jesus, who had realised that he was now risen, he had been in their midst, they had come face to face as it were with the risen Christ, and the Lord Jesus commissions them to serve him in this world.

[00:14:19] And again in those verses we read, verse 44, we see the great importance of the scriptures and understanding them. One of the things we were emphasising earlier was the need to act intelligently. Does that mean to have a superior intelligence which gives us an ability to know things which others don't? Not at all. It only comes through acquaintance and knowledge of God's word.

And that can only come as we meditate upon him, as we wait upon the Lord to show us the meaning of his word, as we listen to those who are gifted to help us with understanding his precious word. [00:15:01] And in a way, although this of course was par excellence in this particular passage, because it was the Lord Jesus himself who was doing this, we see a little picture of how we may too attend to the word of God and learn from it. And of course the key to it is always to be looking for the Lord Jesus in it. As we were singing in our hymn, he is our glorious matter to declare, and the scriptures declare the Lord Jesus. And see how even though we are referring strictly in these verses only to the Old Testament, the Lord Jesus is able to say that that which was written in the Law of Moses and in the Prophets and in the Psalms, indeed the whole of the Old Testament, was concerning him, concerning the Lord Jesus. And he opened their understanding that they might understand the scriptures. And moving on a bit further down these verses, we see that it is as a result of that, that he commissions them to be witnesses for him. [00:16:09] And then we get the thought of the Holy Spirit, that which he would say, the promise of his father upon them, and they were to wait for the gift of the

Holy Spirit before they were able to fulfil his commission. And so here again we see the importance of the word of God and the Holy Spirit in enabling us to work out these things day by day in our lives. We were thinking earlier on of the importance of worship, the aspect of worship in the Christian life. The highest service, we said, of the believer is to worship God, as it were to prostrate himself or herself before God and to be taken up with him as the object of their hearts. [00:17:01] For their love to flow out and to outpour to their God. Well that comes across in these verses here, for when the Lord Jesus blessed them and was parted from them and carried up into heaven, it says they worshipped him. They worshipped the Lord Jesus and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. Now all this of course was in accord with the words of the Lord Jesus himself to the disciples, to his own, in the upper room. And if we could just turn very briefly to John's Gospel chapter 16. And verse 12.

[00:18:01] I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

Howbeit, when he the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.

We were saying earlier that the disciples hadn't been able to understand a lot of what the Lord Jesus had said to them while they had been with him before he went to the cross. Remember how they found it difficult to credit some of the things which he said. [00:19:02] We didn't allude to it in our Bible reading about Peter's wonderful confession, but it wasn't long after he made that wonderful confession that he tried to deter the Lord Jesus from going to the cross. He didn't realize what he was saying, he didn't understand what the Lord Jesus had been saying to him.

And of course the Lord Jesus had many wonderful things to say to his own in the upper room and also in the journey that followed from the upper room to the garden of Gethsemane. But there was still much more to be said to them and we had it suggested, didn't we, in our Bible reading this afternoon that maybe much was said to them during those 40 days after the Lord's resurrection before he ascended back to heaven. But here we see that a lot of what they needed to know and what we need to know through them was given to them by the Holy Spirit coming upon them at Pentecost. [00:20:07] And then the message we have principally in the letters from the Apostle Paul came through him to the believers, to the Church of God, and we have it in the Scriptures.

But the great desire all the time of the Holy Spirit and his operations is as we have it in verse 14, He shall glorify me for he shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you.

And we had a little reflection of that in the story of Joseph and Jacob, how Joseph could say, go tell my father of all my glory in Egypt. That's the delight of the Holy Spirit to glorify the Lord Jesus.

And perhaps the first thought in this connection of his ministry is always to glorify the Lord Jesus and that should be our motive in everything. [00:21:10] Firstly, before anything else, to do that which glorifies the Lord Jesus. To do that which is for his glory, which is true to him, which is loyal to him, which is according to his mind and will, to make his interests our interests. The Holy Spirit is always seeking to promote that in our lives. But the Holy Spirit also wants to bring out in our lives something of the Lord Jesus, day by day.

And in Galatians chapter 5 we have a reference to this. In Galatians chapter 5 verse 16.

[00:22:03] This I say then, look in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

And then moving on down to verse 22. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.

Against such there is no law.

Here is the, not simply the matter, though of principle importance, that the Lord Jesus is glorified. But that we become more like the Lord Jesus in a practical way in our lives. Instead of fulfilling those things for which we have been saved.

[00:23:03] That is a terrible thing, although sad to say it sometimes happens. We should be walking in the Spirit so that we no longer manifest those things which were once part and parcel of our lives. But instead set forth the Lord Jesus in our thoughts and words and actions.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Against such there is no law.

The end of Philippians chapter 4 there is a list of things which we are to think upon. It has been suggested that those things are the things of the Lord Jesus. And as we think upon those things, think on these things. As we think on the Lord Jesus, as we take him in to our lives. Then we shall start to produce the fruit, the nine-fold fruit of the Holy Spirit. [00:24:07] In the terminology of computers there is an input and an output. As we meditate upon the things of the Lord Jesus, as those things are the input to our lives, the output to our lives will be the attributes that we see in these verses from Galatians chapter 5. But who brings them about in our lives? It is the Holy Spirit because he delights to develop the attributes, the features of the Lord Jesus in us while we are here. We were thinking this afternoon of how the Church will be complete in the day to come and will be the perfect complement of the Lord Jesus through God's sovereign will and grace. But we were also seeing how this would challenge us in a practical way to manifest, [00:25:04] to show in our lives those things which are fitting for the Church of God even now.

Very often we blame other believers, we perhaps blame the gatherings or the meetings for things that happen. But we have to remember that the gatherings are made up of individuals. And it's as we meditate upon the Lord Jesus, as we are occupied with him as individuals, that together we will manifest these wonderful attributes and we will be a testimony to the Lord Jesus in this world, however feebly it may be.

In Ephesians we are also told to be careful not to grieve the Spirit of God.

Not to have those things in our lives that would disturb his operation so that he can't achieve these things in our lives. [00:26:08] That's in no way to belittle him, but it is to show us that by allowing things in our lives which aren't according to God's mind and will, we do indeed constrain the Holy Spirit's operation in our lives to bring out those things which are to God's glory and for the pleasure of the Lord Jesus. The actual verse is in Ephesians chapter 5, verse 30.

Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

But in Thessalonians there's another thought which is of equal importance.

And that's in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, verse 19.

[00:27:02] Quench not the Spirit.

And that is not to let the Holy Spirit lead us and direct us for the glory of God. And that's something that we have to face up to too.

We can be limited by other things and so instead of responding spontaneously to the leading of the Holy Spirit, we don't, we quench his operation in our lives. We don't do what he asks us and leads us to do.

And perhaps that's something that is happening more often than not among us. That there isn't that freedom and spontaneity in our lives.

May well be because we have grieved him, we have allowed things in our lives. Things which aren't really holy.

In that verse from Ephesians you will notice that he's described as the Holy Spirit, the Holy One. [00:28:06] And therefore of course his operation will be constrained because he will be grieved by sin. He will be grieved by those things which aren't fitting.

Fleshly things, worldly things, earthly things.

Get it in the way of our spiritual service to God. Working out those things most surely believe among us.

Doesn't have to be just sin, can be occupation with this world. To the extent that our desires to further the interest of the Lord Jesus take a back seat. Are not the most important thing. The most important thing for us may be to get on and get a good job and do well materially. [00:29:01] Like the people of this world, that's their desire. Our desire should be to further the interest of the Lord Jesus.

To be for his glory.

To give our time to the one who gave his all for us.

We may be earthly minded, we may be just occupied with the everyday things of life. And count them more important than the things of eternity. The spiritual things.

But it's possible also to quench the spirit.

To simply not be guided by him.

To be afraid to act for him.

To be afraid of what people think. How many of us can say that this has stopped us witnessing when an opportunity has arisen. How many of us as we were learning last night can say that we haven't spoken in a meeting if we're a brother. Haven't given out a hymn. We've quenched the spirit.

[00:30:03] We thought well maybe that isn't the right thing for the moment. And as a result there's been a prolonged silence when there should have been worship to the Lord. I think the scriptures would encourage us to be faithful, to take God at his word.

But he will put that in our hands to offer up to him in praise and worship.

Yes when a thought comes into our minds in a meeting which we think we could offer up to God in praise.

Maybe we do need to test it briefly. How does it fit in with the rest of the meeting? How does it fit in with God's word?

But if there is nothing to indicate that it is at all contrary to those things. We should take it as something that God has given us. The Holy Spirit has given us something to offer up. [00:31:01] And we should offer up in praise and worship to the Lord Jesus. The same with the word spoken here or there or him. To encourage one another in the things of the Lord Jesus. These are all ways in which the Holy Spirit is seeking to use us. To take and to make opportunities of one kind or another. Not necessarily in the meeting. In order that we may glorify the Lord Jesus and work out these wonderful things. That we have been considering during our conference over these last days. Certainly when the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples on that Pentecostal day.

In Acts chapter 2 of which we have been reading. Instead of being marked by fear as they have been originally.

They were marked by power. They went forward. The man who had denied the Lord Jesus. He testified for the Lord Jesus publicly. [00:32:03] And right from the start it seems. The believers, those who made up the church started to work out the truths. That we know now through the writings of the Apostle Paul. They didn't need to know the writings of the Apostle Paul to work them out. And the Lord Jesus confirms this to us. By the words he said to the Apostle Paul. When he said to him.

When he said to him. When he was still sore and persecuted the church. Why persecutest thou me? He was referring to his body here upon earth. Those who make up the church at any one time here upon earth are the body of Christ. Now that hadn't been actually set out in the scriptures. Nonetheless it was true. [00:33:01] We know today through the scriptures. How was it then that they could work the things out that we've read about in Acts chapter 2 verse 42. The doctrine of the Apostles. The fellowship. The breaking of bread and prayers. It was as the Holy Spirit acted among them.

And they were obedient to his promptings. As they heard the words of the Apostles. As they worked out the fellowship. And notice the fellowship here is not a positional thing. It's a practical thing. Involving responsibility. You have to steadfastly continue in it.

Something that involves actual commitment and work. Breaking of bread. The remembrance of the Lord Jesus. And prayers.

As they did these things. The message of the grace of God was not only spoken but displayed in their lives together as God's people here upon earth. [00:34:02] And more and more were added daily to the church. Well we've often said don't we that we live in days of ruin. When these things no longer

happen in that way. The church of God was split. No one can claim to be the assembly in any one place. Because as we know every believer makes up the assembly. The assembly is his body here upon earth. Every believer. And so as we go through every town in this country. Many believers meeting in different places. Within a particular town or village or city. They make up. They all make up the assembly in that particular place. But of course they're not together in a practical way. And so the power.

The ability to be a testimony for the Lord Jesus in this world. In the way in which we have read about it. In Acts chapter 2 is seriously constrained.

[00:35:01] It's sad to say. It appears doesn't it. As we look at the prophetic view of the history of the church. In Revelations 2 and 3. That's not going to change. But nevertheless where we do seek to gather to the name of the Lord Jesus. May we seek to work out these things most surely believed of us. However feebly and failingly.

By letting the Holy Spirit clearly evoke things out of our lives. Which aren't according to the mind and will of God. As we attend to the scriptures. Seek to be obedient to them.

In strength. In prayer and dependence upon the Lord Jesus. Amen.