

A Credible Faith

The Forgiveness of Sins

November 13, 2022

Overarching Theme: 2022 – *The Year of the Lord’s Favor* (Luke 4:19)

Instructions:

When using this material as teacher, feel free to pick and choose the point you want to emphasize in the lesson. *The format of the curriculum is designed to have an abundance of information in which to refer as desired.*

Core Point:

As the world awakens from 2 years of pandemic stupor, the words of Jesus proclaiming “the year of the Lord’s favor” is a message whose time has come. This passage from Luke 4 harkens back to the ‘year of jubilee’ of Leviticus 25 and Isaiah 61, a year of a fresh start, a clean slate and reset for everyone who can envision new *possibilities* with God this Lenten season and always.

Reflect on this Scripture:

Luke 24:44-49 NRSV

⁴⁴ 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.” ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶ 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 ⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ 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.”

Commentary:

This passage comes as part of the Resurrection Narratives in the Gospel according to Luke. Most obviously, it proclaims the resurrection of Jesus. Beyond the obvious, however, it also relates the resurrection to the proclamation of the Church, declares that the events of the crucifixion and resurrection fulfilled the Scriptures, establishes that the presence of the risen Lord will be found in the study of Scripture and the sharing of bread,

commissions the disciples for their mission in the book of Acts, and brings closure to the Gospel through the report of Jesus' departure. These verses from the account of the resurrection appearance of Jesus to the Eleven contain the part related to the interpretation of Scripture and the commissioning of the disciples. Verses 44-46 has the theme of the necessity of Jesus' death and the fulfillment of Scripture, while in verses 47-49 Jesus commissions the disciples, promises their empowerment from on high, and outlines the mission that lies ahead.

Luke gathers under the authority of Scripture not only the death and resurrection of Jesus but also the mission to all nations. The mission of the Church in Acts is tied to the fulfillment of Scripture, and it is a continuation of the same divine necessity that guided Jesus through his death and resurrection. John the Baptist had preached a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, and Jesus had preached good news to the captives and the coming of the acceptable year of the Lord. He had preached the coming of the Kingdom in their synagogues and sent the disciples to do the same. In the Gospel, Jesus continued John the Baptist's preaching of repentance and the forgiveness of sin, and the disciples will continue this work in Acts. The mission will begin in Jerusalem and will extend to all nations. Jerusalem has been the center and focus of the Gospel from its beginning. The commission given the disciples in Acts 1:8 repeats the mandate that the mission begin in Jerusalem. There they will receive the power of the Spirit, and they remain there until they have filled the city with their teaching. In the faithfulness of God, the forgiveness of sins will be preached to Israel first, then to the Gentiles. The concept of "witness" develops in the course of the New Testament writings from the role of an eyewitness, to one who can testify to the Good News of Jesus, to one who dies for the sake of it (a "martyr"). There will be plenty of work for the disciples to do, but for now their instructions are to stay in Jerusalem ("sit still") and wait for the fulfillment of the Lord's promises.

- Adapted from The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary, Vol IX, pp. 466, 484, 486-8

Questions to Ponder for Accountability in the Group:

1. Why is repentance and the forgiveness of sins central to the Good News of Jesus to be proclaimed to all people?
2. How is the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus and its fulfillment of Scripture, i.e. the prophecies pointing to it in the Old Testament, crucial for the forgiveness of sins?

3. Even as there is a connect between the disciples' proclamation of repentance and the forgiveness of sins in the name of Jesus and that of the preaching of it by John the Baptist, is there a difference?
4. What is the relation between the disciples receiving the promise of the Father, i.e. the Holy Spirit, and being witnesses of Jesus to the world?
5. As disciples of Jesus today, does this relate to us and how are we to respond?

Activity for the Life of a Disciple:

1. Remember to find encouragement for the day by reading the daily devotional from FUMCC.
2. Ponder and pray on this scripture this week: Luke 24:45-48 NRSV
⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶ 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 ⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.
3. Reflect on the words of the Apostle's Creed this week:

The Apostle's Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic** church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

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