

Confidence to proclaim

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[0 : 00] Let's pray one more time and ask God for his help. Father, as we open the scriptures this morning, I pray, Lord, that you would be present with us, helping us to see the scriptures for ourselves.

We pray that we would have the same experience as the man on the road to Emmaus last week, who had their hearts burning as they heard the scriptures explained to them.

So I pray that that too would be the case, and I just ask that your Holy Spirit would be working towards that end. Pray all this in the name of Christ. Amen.

Have you ever met an Apple fanboy? These are the true believers, the people who think that every problem in life can be solved with an iMac, an iPhone, and maybe a few air tags for good measure.

Apologies if I'm describing you, and this is hitting a little too close to home. And the one thing about Apple fanboys is that they can't stop talking about everything Apple.

[1 : 05] Take Guy Kawasaki, for instance. Kawasaki was the original Apple evangelist. That was literally his job title. And when the first Macintosh computer came out, back in 1983, he genuinely believed it would be life-changing.

Listen to him in his own words. I wasn't just marketing a computer. I believed in it so much that I wanted others to experience it too.

So he kept talking about the Mac to anyone who would listen. Developers, businesses, educators, journalists. And his enthusiasm was so contagious, he ended up convincing many to become early adopters and subsequently turn them into lifelong fans.

Now that is the kind of contagious conviction we aspire to, don't we? After all, that seems to be exactly what Jesus is calling his disciples to in verses 47 and 48.

We are to bear witness to life-changing meals. But the thing is, try as we might, many of us deep down don't feel like Guy Kawasaki.

[2 : 26] Of course, there is always an exception or two. I think of my former colleague in KL. No matter who she meets, a student, a Grab driver, even someone on the street, she naturally shares Jesus with them with such genuine authenticity that they are never put off.

It is really inspiring. But paradoxically, it can sometimes also feel discouraging. I will never be like her, I think.

So, if we think we are not like Guy Kawasaki or my colleague, can we still share the gospel with confidence? Well, today the good news is God says yes.

And you can do so without faking it. You don't have to become extroverted if you are introverted. You don't have to become all bubbly if you are normally the more laid-back type.

You don't have to become witty if you are not normally the life of the party. You just need to love Jesus and be you. And you just need to have the right convictions that what you and I have in our possession is something so amazing, something so wonderful, something so good that you want others to experience it too.

- [3 : 57] And right here at the end of Luke's gospel, Jesus offers us three big encouragements to strengthen those convictions. Jesus is going to show us that we have a sure footing, a fulfilling story, and a blessed gift.
- And if we know that, whatever our personality, we can have confidence to share the gospel with the world. And so let us look at each of these encouragements.
- Firstly, a sure footing. As we come to the end of Luke's gospel, don't forget what a journey these disciples have just been on.
- Put yourself in their shoes. For three years, you have been following this somewhat mysterious but incredibly fascinating man, someone who captivated the crowds with his teaching and with his miracles.
- And you have been on an emotional rollercoaster as your hopes grew bigger and bigger that the Messiah has really come, only to watch him get beaten, arrested, crucified, without seemingly any resistance from the man himself.
- [5 : 18] So your faith has been shaken. And now, as you huddle together in a room, keeping a low profile because you don't want the Romans coming after you, you are feeling more confused than ever.
- For you see, some women have come and reported that the tomb is empty and there are angels saying, Jesus is alive. And now, there are two more men come from Emmaus, saying that they have seen the risen Jesus and even eaten with him.
- What's going on? And while you are still talking about this, you turn around, verse 36, and there is Jesus himself standing among you.
- Now, as a pastor, I've taken my fair share of funerals. And I can say with 100% confidence that the one person I do not expect to see at the lunch afterwards is the person who has just been buried in the ground.
- And if I did, I'll definitely be just as startled and frightened as the disciples in verse 37.
- [6 : 38] And I'm sure you're the same. Your first thought won't be, Ah, how nice. The disease is alive after all. No, you'll be thinking, Am I imagining things?
- Did I get enough sleep? Am I more affected emotionally than I thought I was? Was the colomie I had for breakfast that bad? Or worse still, is this a ghost?
- And that gives this account the ring of truth, doesn't it? None of us, whether we're in the first or the 21st century, expect to see our dead friend come say hello the next day.
- Their reactions are exactly what we expect to see. So the Lord has to move them from doubt to faith.
- And he does so by offering them two reassurances. First of all, verses 39 and 40, he says, Come, look at my hands and my feet. Touch them.
- [7 : 49] Feel them. Do ghosts have flesh and bones? No, they don't. And in Jesus' case, of course, his hands and his feet bear the marks of crucifixion.
- And that means, not only can the disciples confirm that Jesus is in fact alive, they can also verify that this person who is alive is the same person who was dead just a few days ago.
- But understandably, verse 41, the disciples can't quite wrap their heads around all this just yet. This seems real, but can it be?
- Really? So Jesus offers them a second reassurance, verses 41 to 43. Give me some fish, he says.
- And he took it and ate it in their presence. Now, let me just draw your attention here to what I have in my hands. These are fish biscuits.

[9 : 00] Sorry, it was a bit too difficult to get ikan kembong. So, this is the next best thing. Now, I brought some scissors as well, so that's easy for me to just make sure that I open it. Okay, so it's open.

I'm going to step to the side here in a moment so that you can see my entire body. And then I'm just going to eat one or two of these, okay? So, here you go. The video can track me as well, the live stream video.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Now, the food, sorry, it's still in my mouth.

Let me finish eating. The food is truly disappeared, hasn't it? You can check the YouTube video later on.

If I was a ghost or a spirit, the biscuits would just fall onto the floor and not into my stomach. So, once again, here is proof.

[10 : 13] These disciples know that because as Jews, they definitely believe ghosts couldn't eat or drink. Let me finish munching first. This is a bit more than it took. Okay, it's done.

It took a bit longer than I expected. Now, I'm sure that the choice of fish was deliberate. Recall how last week, that the two travelers who recognized the risen Jesus, how did they recognize him?

It's when he broke bread, which intentionally echoed the feeding of the 5,000. And now, once again, to prove that it is truly him, Jesus eats the other food item from that same miracle.

Once again, he is identifying himself with the great I Am, the living God of the Exodus. And what Jesus is really doing for us in all of these is giving us a sure footing.

Is this truly Jesus? Yes, it is. Has he truly risen from the dead? Yes, he has. This is no fable.

[11 : 33] This is no fairy tale. After all, we have fables and fairy tales from the early centuries. And none of them sound like Luke.

For example, there is one called the Gospel of Peter. Peter. This document, which is not written by Peter, by the way, was written about 200 or so years later, after Jesus has died.

And in this story, we are told of three men coming out of the tomb and a cross following them. Yes, you heard that right. A cross. And even better, this cross can speak.

A voice from heaven asks, did you preach to those who sleep? And this talking cross answers, yes.

Now that sounds like a fairy tale. And that is why it is not accepted as authentic. But here in Luke, Jesus shows up, the disciples respond just as any of us would, and then he just eats ikan baka.

[12 : 42] This has all the marks of real history and eyewitness memory, not myth or legend. And that is what even secular historians think.

Here's what Ed Sanders of Duke University concludes, for example. That Jesus' followers, and later Paul, had experiences of seeing Jesus alive is, in my judgment, a fact.

What the reality was that gave rise to their experiences, I do not know. In other words, Professor Sanders is saying something strange really did happen, causing them to be convinced Jesus is risen?

We are just not sure what it was. But of course, even if secular historians weren't admitted, we do know why the disciples were convinced.

It is because Jesus really did rise from the dead. It is no hallucination. Sure, some skeptics might say, you know, what about those times when people claim that they saw a statue of the Virgin Mary crying blood?

[13 : 52] Weren't they just seeing things? Maybe this is the same? But those moments usually happen when people come already wanting, believing, maybe even expecting something like that to happen.

But no one expected Jesus to rise. Sure, they might have longed to see him again, just like we might with our loved ones, but they were not looking for it.

And besides, you can't touch hallucinations. You see, my friends, why can we share the gospel with confidence?

very simple. Because it's actually true. We are not sharing a conspiracy theory. We are not sharing a subjective opinion.

We are not sharing a story we simply happen to like very much. No, we have a much surer footing than that. Guy Kawasaki often likes to say he is selling people a dream.

[14 : 57] But when we share the gospel, we are not selling fantasy. We are speaking of a reality grounded in history. And actually, that is still what people crave.

Yes, sometimes we are wary of those who claim to hold absolute truth because we are worried that they have hidden agendas. But deep down, we still long for what is real.

That's why we celebrate the investigative journalists who uncovered the 1MDB scandal. Because at the end of the day, we want to know the truth.

And so that is our first encouragement. Why be confident to share the gospel? Because we have a share footing. When Jesus says, I am the truth, we can verify it.

the truth of his life is public. It has witnesses. And if the resurrection of Jesus is true, that means he is someone you can anchor your lives to.

[16 : 11] For did you notice how Jesus uses his physically resurrected body? He used it to draw the disciples from fear to fellowship.

In other words, he did not just reveal himself to prove a fact, but also to demonstrate his love. He loved them by comforting them with the truth.

And does that not compel us to do the same? To express our love by sharing that truth with others. That is our first encouragement.

Here is another one. secondly, Jesus offers us a fulfilling story. A fulfilling story. Now, my first degree is in English literature, so some of you might say stories are my thing.

But let me correct you. Whether we realise it or not, stories are everybody's thing. We all tell stories. It is how we make sense of our lives.

[17 : 22] none of us think of our lives as a series of unconnected events, but all of us instinctively connect them in some way to tell a larger story of how we came to be who we are.

That is why when my son wants to get a better sense of who I really am, he'll say, Papa, tell me a story from your school days.

Or, Papa, tell me a story from when you met Mama. Or, Papa, tell me a story of how you became a pastor. And now that he's finished eating, maybe that is why Jesus decides to tell his disciples a story.

It is the best way to help them make sense of him. And so he says, let's open our Bibles because essentially the Bible is his story.

It is actually the story of the whole world, as one scholar puts it. It is a story that is relevant for everyone everywhere. And Jesus, verse 45, is going to open their minds.

[18 : 42] He's going to bring together what seems like an unconnected series of events into one grand unforgettable story that is ultimately all about him.

And Jesus does that, I suspect, because that is not how we typically think of the Bible, do we? More often than not, we treat the Bible as a handbook of laws and principles and advice.

So it is no wonder we don't feel like sharing it. I watched a drama recently where the main character is a successful but socially awkward lawyer.

And in trying to woo the girl that he likes, he suggests spending time together going over the law code. No surprise that the girl turns him down.

But if we think of the gospel in that way, no wonder we feel reluctant to share who wants to listen to law codes. But what if the Bible, at its heart, is really a story?

[19 : 56] If so, then we have something for people to listen to. As the writer Donald Miller puts it, story is the one thing that can hold a human's attention for hours.

And what if we have a story that helps people understand why the world is the way it is and what hope there is for the future?

That is precisely what Jesus is doing. He starts right at the beginning, not just with his birth, verse 44, but with Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms, the Old Testament in other words.

Because you see, like all compelling stories, the Bible has a shape, a beginning, a middle, and an end. Or, if you prefer, it has an origin, a conflict, a quest, and a destiny.

And if we follow its shape, it gives us the key to what the story of Jesus is truly about. God. So let me just unpack that story for you briefly, using this very framework.

[21 : 13] So where does the Bible story begin? With origins. And right away, this speaks to what many people are wanting to know. They are placed in this great big universe.

People are asking, who am I really? Where have I come from? What is my purpose? Well, the Bible tells us, our place is to be with God.

Right from the beginning, the God who is love has always been there. And in love, he made a good world, and he made us in God's image.

That means we are made love, made precious in his sight, made with purpose to care for his world. love. And when we know that this is our intended place in the universe, we begin to see that our deepest longings for meaning, for worth, for identity, even for transcendence, have been written into the story from the very start.

That is the truth we can share with others. But then, we have a conflict. work. We had everything we could have hoped for, but we then doubted God's goodness and truthfulness.

[22 : 38] And we messed things up big time. We forgot our place in the universe. We thought that we were bigger than God, so we left him. And in that moment, everything broke.

Sin infected every part of life. Work, often burdensome. Misunderstandings, all too common. power struggles, part of the world now.

Alienation from God, that is our reality. So now we long to get back to what we lost, but we don't know how.

And doesn't this part of the story ring true as well? Don't your friends sometimes wonder how the world can be so beautiful and so broken at the same time?

Or why even success at work or a great marriage still doesn't quite fulfill them? Do they ever have the sense that things are not as it should be?

[23 : 39] Guess what? We have a story that explains exactly why. And so ever since then, we have been on the quest, a quest to find our way back God to make that possible.

And isn't that what so many of our favorite stories are about? That is the story of finding Nemo, a dad on a quest to find his lost son.

That is the story of Harry Potter, a young wizard's quest to destroy Horcrux's and defeat Voldemort. And that is the story of the Bible, to find the promised one who can break the curse of sin, defeat the devil, and lead us who are lost back to where we truly belong.

In fact, you could say that that is what the whole Old Testament is building towards. Who can fulfill this promise? Who fits the pattern? Where is this person?

Because we really do need him. For the Old Testament doesn't just show us the promise, it also shows us the wreckage sin leaves behind.

[24 : 58] Broken marriages, broken families, broken nations, it's all over the Old Testament. And what is true in the Old Testament is still painfully true today, in 2025.

That part of the story is still part of our story. But here is the good news we get to share. That quest is ultimately successful.

Why? Because Jesus says, verse 44, everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.

So if there is a promise in the Torah that the devil and his work will be overturned, will that be fulfilled? Yes. If there is a promise in the prophets that we can have new hearts with new desires that are not corrupted, will that be fulfilled?

Yes. If there is a promise in the Psalms about the king who will bring peace and justice to the nations, will that be fulfilled? Yes.

[26 : 07] Because Jesus says he fulfills it all. He is the promised one. And if that is true, that means we really can be reconciled and regain our place with God.

We really will live in a renewed, unbroken world one day. Now that is the story we hold and the story we get to tell others. Everything the Old Testament hinted at, Jesus brings to completion.

He is more wonderful than we ever dared hope. And here is the plot twist. Jesus tells his disciples the quest is successful, verse 46, only because this was also written.

The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day. Or put another way, we have a fulfilling story to tell because Jesus' scars tell the story of what he did.

He had to die on the cross and bear the punishment for our sin. And his simple meal of a broiled fish also tells the story of what he finished.

[27 : 28] He has risen again to show death no longer has any claim on him. He has done it. It is all fulfilled.

And that means our natural longings for purpose and meaning and acceptance are fulfilled in him too. And all that remains is our destiny to be with God and to enjoy the best life ever in the new creation.

you see here is the second big encouragement Jesus offers us. We really do have a fulfilling story in all senses of that word.

It is an amazing, satisfying, awe-inspiring story. And if we really, truly, honestly believe that, we will not be able to help ourselves.

We will keep sharing this story with anyone who has not heard it yet. Because, to quote Guy Kawasaki again, an evangelist's job is simply to spread the good news.

[28 : 46] In fact, Kawasaki has an interesting take, given that he is not a Christian as far as I know. He says, what sets an evangelist apart from a salesman is this.

A salesman usually has their own interests at heart. They have quotas to hit, KPIs to meet, but an evangelist has your best interests at heart.

They genuinely believe what they have isn't just good for them, but good for you too. Isn't that interesting? And isn't that right?

And that is why the story is not over yet, verse 47. For not only does Jesus need to die and rise again, but repentance for the forgiveness for the forgiveness of sins needs to be preached in his name to all nations.

You see, this story is the most relevant story that any person can ever hear, because it is everyone's story. Everyone, whatever their nationality, needs to know what they were made for, what their place in the universe is, why they have lost it, and how they can find their way back.

[30 : 09] It is by turning from their sin to God by trusting Jesus. That is repentance in a nutshell. It is a story for doctors and factory workers, for teenagers and retirees, for people who go to church, and people who hate going to church.

It is something we do, verse 48, because we are witnesses. As a New Testament scholar, Brian Tapp, has noted, the word witness is actually a legal term.

It refers to people who testify in court, and who must speak truthfully about what they have seen and heard. And that's what these disciples are.

And now, as those who have received the writings of the apostles, that is what we are. We have a story we must truthfully tell, but because it is such a fulfilling story, it is a story that is truly good to tell.

Do you see that is what we have today? And do you see how that is an encouragement to share Jesus? So we have a sure footing, and a fulfilling story, but there is one more encouragement Jesus gives us.

[31 : 41] So thirdly, Jesus offers us a blessed gift, a blessed gift. Look at verse 49, and notice Jesus says, yes, go out and proclaim, but wait first, because there is one more promise I need to fulfill.

There is one more thing I would love to give you, what he calls power from on high. You see, we have what is true, and we have what is beautiful, but even then, as the great Baptist preacher Spurgeon once said, it is better to wait for divine equipment than to go out to holy service in our own strength.

And that is exactly what Jesus gives us. You see, verse 51, Jesus is going back to heaven. And you might very well ask, oh, why Jesus?

Isn't it better for evangelism, for you to just remain here and show yourself to everyone? But Jesus says, don't worry, I am not leaving you alone, because I am going to send the Holy Spirit to you.

And because the Holy Spirit is also just as divine as God the Father and God the Son, it is not like Jesus is leaving us with something inferior to himself.

[33 : 06] And of course, when we turn to the book of Acts, that's exactly what God did. And did you notice the effects? The Apostle Peter, who was so afraid of even admitting that he followed Jesus to a servant girl, now stands boldly before leaders to proclaim the gospel.

And what Peter received is also what we have received. For every Christian has received this blessed gift, the Holy Spirit.

My brothers and sisters, do you find sharing the gospel difficult? I do. But here is the encouragement Jesus gives us. He has given us the Holy Spirit.

So we can be bold to pray that we might be so filled with him that we will be courageous where we lack courage. We will have the words to say where we lack eloquence.

We will have the ability to live up to what we say. But of course, to truly make use of this gift, there is one thing we still need to do. Phil Knox is the head of evangelism for the British Evangelical Alliance, that is like our NECF.

[34 : 20] And in his book Story Bearer, he identifies a few reasons why we are not good at sharing the gospel. And here is one of them. We lack any meaningful contact with people who need to hear the story.

We lack any meaningful contact with people who need to hear the story. As he puts it, if Christians do not have friends who are not Christians, whom they regularly spend time with, it is unlikely that they will be able to pass on the story.

Do you have friends who are not yet Christians? Are you close to them? Do you spend enough time with them for the story to spread? And here is where many of you can do this better than I can, simply because unlike me, you are in schools or you work at secular workplaces.

So let's pray that we can build bridges with at least one non-Christian contact, so that the Holy Spirit might have opportunity to work in us and through us.

In fact, let us make this concrete. Why don't you write down or think of the name of one non-Christian now? write it on the sermon outline or type it in your phone or something.

[35 : 45] And then pray for the person and pray especially for an opportunity to invite them out for coffee or something along those lines to get to know them better. I'll give you a few seconds now to think of such a person.

But as we finish here is another bonus encouragement Jesus gives us, a priestly benediction. Verse 50. When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them.

And in doing so, Jesus is doing what priests do. You see, don't forget, Jesus might not be a Levite, but he is a priest in the heavenly realms.

So as he sends them out, he gives a priestly blessing to assure them he is with them now and always. You could say he is fulfilling the prayer of Psalm 67 verses 1 and 2.

May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine on us so that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations.

[37 : 05] God says he will be so my friends, I hope that you have enjoyed our journey through Luke's Gospel. But remember that this is not good news God says we are to keep to ourselves and to encourage us to share the Gospel with confidence.

He has given us a sure footing, a fulfilling story, and a blessed gift. what more do we need? So let's not be afraid, let us carry out our mission so that more and more people will give God the worship he deserves.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, I pray that your Holy Spirit has indeed been working among us, in us, and through us.

And I pray, Lord, that we will be filled with confidence from the words of Scripture, filled with confidence that what we have is indeed the truth. And what we have is not just the truth, but it is life itself.

It's life that is satisfying and fulfilling and that we want to share that hope of life with others. And Father, thank you that you have indeed given us the Holy Spirit, and so we are not alone, but you have given us what we need to have the confidence to be your witnesses.

[38 : 34] Help us to be your witnesses, we pray. All this we pray in the name of Christ. Amen. Amen.