

Have you ever had to say a hard goodbye?  
Goodbyes aren't easy.

**There are some very memorable goodbyes in history.**

Lou Gehrig, after contracting ALS  
the disease that would bear his name  
with his famous words of goodbye to Yankee fans  
I am the luckiest man on the face of the earth.

On February 28, 1983, over 105 million people  
watched the final episode of the TV series MASH  
entitled Goodbye, Farewell and Amen.

Or ET phones home.

Or Spock's farewell, I have been and always shall be your friend.

One of the hardest goodbyes that anyone  
has to say is the one made to soldiers  
as they go off to serve.

Or the ones you will make or have made as you drop off  
your sons and daughters at college, or they leave home.

Or saying goodbye to high school days.

Or the loss of a loved one to death.

Or a major move.

Or saying goodbye to a time in your life you have loved  
but you knew it was time to go.

It was time for Jesus to go.

Today, in the last part of Luke 24, we are talking about Jesus' goodbye  
to His disciples – **we know it as the Ascension.**

We have now celebrated the most important events in Jesus' life  
Including His birth, baptism, temptation, transfiguration,  
crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension.

But you know what I find most interesting about the Ascension?  
That not all the gospels talk about it.

John says nothing.

He ended his Gospel, saying, 21:25

**"Jesus did many other things as well.**

**If every one of them were written down,**

I suppose that even the whole world  
would not have room for the books  
that would be written."

Matthew ended his Gospel with Jesus  
gathering with His disciples on a mountain in Galilee.

**He issued the Great Commission.**

Mark, in his longer ending, has a speech similar to Matthew, and then he wrote, 16:19

**“After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God.”**

But it is Luke the careful historian who gives the most ink to the ascension of Jesus.

Luke ended his Gospel in verse 50,

**“When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them.**

While he was blessing them,

he left them and was taken up into heaven.

Then Luke begins in Acts

which he also wrote

**“In my former book, Theophilus,**

**I wrote about all that Jesus began to do**

and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. “

How many times have you looked at your watch and said it was time to go?

Or told someone it was time to go.

I see you looking at your spouse or kids

Or they are looking at you 😊

Jesus had accomplished everything he needed to do on earth.

How many of us ever enjoy the luxury of coming to the end of even our most productive day & saying,

"It is finished. I'm through.

I've accomplished everything I set out to do today."

Those are rare right?

**Instead, most of us have a long list of things we hope to get done when? someday.**

You realize that there are seven days in the week and none of them is named someday.

Maybe it is the garage you intended to clean out last fall.

But spring has come & now you need to mow the lawn & work in the garden.

Or plant flowers like us.  
Very seldom can we just sit back,  
fold our arms, & say,  
"I've finished everything that I wanted to do."  
In July, it will begin our 5<sup>th</sup> year in the parsonage  
And we still haven't unpacked everything.  
But Jesus could say, "**It is finished.**  
I have done everything that God wanted me to do."

In the wilderness, He conquered sin.  
On the cross, He conquered death.  
In the grave, He conquered hell.  
And now in space, He ascends to the Father.  
Behind him is the persecution of men.  
Before Him is the applause of angels.  
Behind him is a cross.  
Before Him, there is a crown.  
Behind Him is Calvary.  
Before Him is all of heaven's glory.  
It was time to go.

When I look at Jesus' interaction with  
His disciples as He gives His goodbye,  
I see a lot of similarities to the kind of farewells  
that we have with our loved ones.  
Farewells often include three things.

First, we often **review and recall** the time  
we spent with the person we are visiting.  
We might say something like,  
"Well, thanks for inviting us to the wedding or graduation.  
It was great to be here."  
Or, "This trip has been great.  
We thoroughly enjoyed our visit with you all."  
That seems to be exactly what Jesus did with His disciples.  
He reviewed and recalled the things that  
were accomplished on His visit,  
and what they needed to accomplish in His absence.

Acts 1:3 says "**after his suffering,**  
**he showed himself to these men and**  
**gave many convincing proofs that he was alive.**  
\_He appeared to them over a period of  
forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God."

Helping them remember that his being alive  
was the proof that he had done everything  
necessary for salvation and that  
death had no power over him or us.  
In those 40 days, he spent saying goodbye to them.  
he reviewed the purpose  
for his coming to visit the earth.  
it is important for us to remember  
that part of his goodbye.  
We need to join him in looking back  
on what he has done.

And then also forward to what he wants us to do.

**9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes,  
and a cloud hid him from their sight.**

**10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going,  
when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them.**

we find the disciples with their eyes  
heavenward, and they didn't notice the  
two heavenly beings that slipped quietly  
alongside them until they spoke.

**11 "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking unto heaven?"**

The angelic beings asked the disciples  
"Why do you stand here looking into the sky?"  
It was the Earth, not the sky,  
which they should be occupied with –  
to be witnesses, not stargazers!  
And are we asking ourselves this question,  
"Are we redeeming the time until Jesus returns?  
Are we fulfilling the ministries he  
has given to the church and to us?"  
We have been placed where  
we are for a purpose.  
Our calling is not upward in nostalgia,  
but outwards in compassion to  
a lost world that needs Jesus.  
If you think about it.  
Two-thirds of the word God is go.

The second thing that is often a part of our typical goodbye is the **promise** to stay in touch. We say things like, “We really need to get together more often, or I’ll give you a call when we arrive home, or in a week or two.” They received his promise to keep in touch. Many times when we say our goodbyes, we make all kinds of promises about keeping in touch. But do we? Sometimes. Compassion Child???

But when Jesus said goodbye, his promises were more than just empty words. Jesus would keep in touch with his disciples by sending them the Holy Spirit. Just before his final goodbye, Jesus repeated his promise to keep in touch with his missional voice.

**8 “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you;**

and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

As the disciples carried out their mission Jesus would give them the power they needed. He would send the Holy Spirit to them. As we recall Jesus saying goodbye to his disciples and promising to be with them That leaves me with a question for myself and all of us as believers... Are we living in the power of those same promises? Because we, too, are given the promise of the Holy Spirit. When we hear the missional voice of Jesus he keeps his promise to stay in touch.

A family in the remote mountains of Tennessee went to a great deal of trouble to have electrical power installed in their home. After the line was put in the electric company noticed that the family didn’t use very much electricity. In fact, the meter barely moved. So they sent a meter reader to check it out.

The reader came to the door and said,  
“We’ve looked at the amount on your meter.  
Don’t you use electricity?”  
“Oh yes,” they said.  
“We turn it on every night to see how to  
light our kerosene lamps and  
then we switch it off again.”

Isn’t that the way we often apply  
the power of God in our lives?  
What we don’t realize is that God  
has so much to give, and we only use a little.  
Then we go back to our old way of  
living and our helpless struggling.  
The power of Jesus’ promise offers us much more.

And the final thing we often do as we say goodbye  
is to **remind** each other of our next visit.  
“We’ll see you next year, or next month,  
or whenever the next visit is planned.”

The last part of our “goodbyes” includes plans for the future.  
Luke’s record of Jesus saying goodbye  
to his disciples includes remembering  
Jesus’ plans for a future visit with us.  
The rest of Acts 1:11 says  
**“This same Jesus,  
who has been taken from you into heaven,  
will come back in the same way  
you have seen him go into heaven.”**

We must never forget  
that our future is built on Christ’s ascension.  
Jesus said in John 14  
"In my Father’s house are many rooms;  
if it were not so, I would have told you.  
I am going there to prepare a place for you.  
And if I go and prepare a place for you,  
I will come back and take you to be with me  
that you also may be where I am."  
Jesus ascended into heaven to  
prepare a place for us.  
We have a reservation in God’s house.  
We will be welcome there forever.

Someone said every goodbye makes the next hello closer.

**The word “goodbye” has an interesting history.**

It is an Old English contraction of “God be with ye.”  
So when they said “goodbye” they were really  
invoking spiritual protection on a journey.

**Other languages have similar  
expressions for parting words.**

Some like Arabic Ma'as-salāma (mah-as-sah-LAH-mah)  
mean with peace or God be your guardian.  
Russian Do svidaniya, means until the seeing  
Or the only language I studied German  
Auf Wiedersehen until we see each other again.

When we hear Jesus say goodbye to his disciples,  
we hear his wish that God would be with them in a new beginning.  
But since he is God, he promised to be with them always.  
But it is time to go. Time to say “Goodbye. Farewell and Amen.”

**Today, as we hear Jesus say farewell,** may we  
also recall his finished work and the  
work he has called us to do,  
his promise to stay in touch with us,  
and his plans for a future visit.

With our heads up and our eyes open  
we wait for Jesus to say hello and never say goodbye again.  
And we wait once again for the Holy Spirit to come.

If you're brave enough to say goodbye,  
Life will reward you with a new hello.

Where do you need to say goodbye to something?  
And where do you need a new hello from God?