

³¹ Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished.

³² For He will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon.

³³ They will scourge Him and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again.” ³⁴ But they understood none of these things; this saying was hidden from them, and they did not know the things which were spoken.

Text: Luke 18:31-34 A 3-22-26 Passion History, part 5 Psalm 147 Responsive Psalm: 33
Hymns: 155 (alt. tune), 284, 291, 46

LISTEN TO GOD’S WORD

Dear fellow believers in Christ,

“I should have listened.” Who of us has never thought that? If only we would have listened more carefully at the time, we would have saved ourselves a lot of grief. Today we’re going to hear about something Jesus told His disciples that they didn’t listen to, and that caused them much grief.

Jesus told His disciples that He would suffer and die, and that He would rise from the dead three days later. The Bible tells us that the disciples understood that Jesus would die, and that made them sad. But they didn’t understand it when Jesus told them that He would rise again from the dead.

The disciples misunderstood the Messiah and what He would do. At first, the disciples believed what most of the Jews believed about the Messiah. The Jews thought that the Messiah would be a great earthly leader who would make their nation free and prosperous and powerful. (Who wouldn’t want that for their country?) That idea of the Messiah didn’t include a suffering, dying Messiah. So Jesus’ disciples were sad and confused when He told them about His suffering and death.

We need to be careful that we don’t let wrong ideas lead us to misunderstand something God tells us in His Word. Psalm 119:105 says, “*Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.*” We need to listen to what the Bible says, and ask God to help us understand what He’s saying.

Think how heart-broken the disciples were when Jesus died! They thought Jesus was dead and gone. And at the time they didn’t know what to think about that. Before they understood that Jesus had risen from the dead, two of Jesus’ followers lamented, “*We were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel.*” (Lk. 24:21)

It was three days between Jesus’ death and resurrection. For three days Jesus’ followers suffered in shock and deep sorrow. Thinking about all Jesus suffered, and His death, makes us sad, too. But the disciples could have saved themselves so much grief if they would have paid attention to what Jesus told them. Yes, Jesus would suffer and die. But He would rise again! You and I know that Jesus rose from the dead three days after He was crucified. Lent always makes us sad

when we think of all that Jesus suffered because of our sins. But we know that after Lent comes Easter: the celebration of Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

Even after Jesus rose from the dead, it took awhile for the reality of Jesus' resurrection to sink in to the disciples. Jesus told the women who saw Him alive again early on that first Easter, "*Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me*" (Mt. 18:10). When the disciples were told the wonderful news, they didn't believe it (Mk. 16:11). Instead they hid themselves in a locked room, sad, confused, and afraid (Lk. 24:37; Jn. 29:19). Again, had the disciples really listened to what Jesus had told them, they would have saved themselves a lot of grief.

It's a good thing that we're never sad or confused or afraid.... Jesus takes away our sorrow and confusion and fear through His Word. We need to keep studying our Bibles. We need to keep coming to church. We need to keep hearing and studying God's Word.

People search and search to find the answers to the big questions in life: "Who am I?" "Why am I here?" "What is the meaning of life?" If they search apart from the Bible, they'll never find the right answers. God speaks to us in His Word. God's Word says that Jesus Christ is "*the wisdom of God*" (1 Cor 1:24). The Bible reveals that our reason for existence centers in Jesus Christ. We are sinful beings. God created us to love and serve Him, but we chose to disobey Him instead. In His grace, God promised and sent His Son, Jesus. Jesus earned our forgiveness through His perfect life and His innocent death on the cross for our sins. By faith in Jesus, we are forgiven, saved, restored children of God. God has a definite purpose in life for each of His believers. We're called to serve Him and our neighbor in love, directing others to Him by our lives and by our words. These are some of the ways in which the Lord speaks to us in the Bible.

When God made Adam and Eve He commanded them not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God didn't say that if they did it would be "really, super bad." God didn't send lightning and thunder when He spoke to them. God simply said, "*In the day that you eat of it you shall surely die*" (Gen. Gen. 2:17). Adam and Eve disobeyed God. After they sinned, they had to live for hundreds of years with the terrible consequences they had brought upon themselves, upon our whole human race, and upon the whole universe. We need to listen to God's Law.

God tells His people in His Word, "*I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more*" (Jer. 31:34). "*If we confess our sins, [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*" (1 Jn. 1:9). "*Be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven*" (Mt. 9:2). "*And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose*" (Ro. 8:28). We need to listen to God's Gospel – to all of His beautiful promises and assurances to us in His Word.

The disciples were really struggling. God gave them the assurance they needed, and they could go forward with confidence and joy. When things are looking bad for us, when we're struggling, when we're confused, especially then we need to know what God says so that we can go forward with confidence. God gives us what we need in His Word.

I would like to conclude with two quotes from Martin Luther about God's Word.

“We should not take offense at the Word of God even though it may sound strange, unlikely, and impossible, but we should firmly insist that if God has said it, it must also come to pass. For no one should ask whether it is possible but should only determine whether God has said it. He is mighty and faithful enough also to do it. Therefore we should believe it.”

“Learn, yes, learn, I say, what a treasure you have in the Word of our Lord Jesus Christ: that there is no other help against the devil, sin, and eternal death than to cling to the Word of Christ, that is, to believe His promise and make bold to take Him at His Word.”

LISTEN TO GOD'S WORD. Amen.