

# **BEDWELL GLOBAL MINISTRIES**

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## **Easter Meditation Two**

### **The Hands of the Risen Christ**

Scripture Reading – Luke 24:35-49.

#### **Introduction**

On Easter day we celebrate the most amazing event in the history of this planet. Jesus Christ crucified on a Cross, buried in a sealed tomb, was raised from the dead three days later, and the passage we read is an account of one of His resurrection appearances to His disciples. While this does not happen on a regular basis, one has pointed out that Jesus was not the only one to rise from the dead. Lazarus did! Dorcas did!, but Jesus arose from the dead never to die again. Of course there have been skeptics down through the years who have tried to cast the chill of doubt upon it and have said that He really didn't rise from the dead. The disciples probably saw a ghost or maybe an apparition and possibly they had an hallucination, but as PHEME PERKINS said "Ghosts, apparitions and various psychological

hallucinations may do a lot of things, but they don't fire up the charcoal grill and cook fish for breakfast as Jesus did on the sandy shores of Galilee. The many appearances of Jesus to His followers are clear evidence the death had no power over Him. It was impossible for death to hold Him in its grip. And Andrew Blackwood wrote that "there is not a single pessimistic note anywhere in the New Testament after the resurrection. And why should there be? He brushed aside the vain attempts of death to hold Him in the grave. He strode out of the tomb with irresistible power and indisputable authority to declare to the world that He is alive for evermore and in His "Hands He holds the keys of death and Hades." Clarence W. Hall wrote that "Easter says "you can put truth in a grave but it won't stay there." His truth is marching on. It has spread across the world down through the years and is moving forward with unprecedented power because Jesus is alive forevermore. John S. Whale tells us that "belief in the resurrection is not an appendage to the Christian faith. It is the Christian faith." And in the selected of scripture, we have one of the resurrection encounters of Jesus with His disciples. He appeared suddenly, so much so that they were startled and frightened thinking they had seen a ghost, but Jesus said very gently said to them. "Look at My Hands and Feet. It is I myself....when He had said this

“He showed them His Hands and Feet. This was a very simple yet significant act. It came at moment of confusion, and most certainly a moment of crises in their lives. They had seen Jesus humiliated and crucified in agony on a Cross. They had seen him die a terrible death and then buried in a sealed tomb. What were they to do now? What was the next step to be taken. This was not an easy decision, for their world lay in ruins about them, and who was going to put the pieces together again. It was into this dilemma that Jesus stepped and His presence transformed the whole scene. The power of that presence transformed their despair into delight, their sadness into gladness, their confusion into comfort. “Look,” He said, “Look at My Hands and Feet. It is I Myself.” This encounter made a powerful difference in their lives. Subsequent events revealed that this unforgettable encounter was to change their lives forever. Their Master was definitely alive and that was a life transforming encounter. Courage and triumph replaced fear and defeat.

Now why did Jesus show them His hands and feet? Every action Jesus took had purpose to it. Why then did He show them His hands? I suggest that those hands were,

**1 THE MEANS OF RECOGNITION.**  
Luke 24:36-41.

The words of Jesus were,

**a. Comforting Words.** Luke 24:36,38,41.

The disciples were deeply troubled at the death of Jesus. Their minds were full of doubts and their hearts full of fear and in verse 38 Jesus asks “why are you troubled and why do doubts arise in your minds. Look at my hands and feet. It is I myself.” It is important to remember that something exceedingly precious had been cruelly crushed in the hearts of the disciples by what took place at Calvary. The citadel of their hopes which had been built in three years with Jesus, had suddenly been flattened in those dark devastating hours on Golgotha’s hill, and it lay in crumbles ruins at the foot of the Cross. The darkness of the hour had put out the light and fire that had burned with fiery intensity in their souls. Their joy had gone. Their hearts were filled with fear and foreboding. The question was “What were they to do now?” Then Jesus stepped into all of this boiling pot of emotions, and said “peace be to you. Why are you troubled and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my Hands and my feet. It is I myself.” These words are justification for joy and a foundation for peace. They are words of comfort. But they are also,

**b. Convincing Words.** Luke 24:29.

“Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself.”

Now if Jesus had just returned from a trip to Galilee or come from praying in the hills there

would be nothing extraordinary about these words. But Jesus had not come back from Galilee or the hills or even Jerusalem. He had come from the dead. That was significant. The disciples had seen Him die an agonizing death on a Cross. They had seen to it that He had been buried. They knew that a Roman seal had been put on the tomb and that it was guarded by a Roman soldier. They knew all of this and now Jesus stands before them alive and well. That was a lot to take after all they had seen happen to Him. It is certain the disciples wanted to be sure of one thing. Was this the same man with whom they had kept company for three years, or was this just an apparition or a ghost? Was this the same Jesus who experienced their sorrows and shared their joys? Are these the same hands? Are they those strong toil worn hands that fashioned the tables and chairs in the carpenter's shop in Nazareth? Are they the beckoning hands which called them to the service of their Master? Are they those compassionate hands that healed the sick, those authoritative hands that commanded the winds and the waves into submission? Are they those powerful hands that pushed aside the death barrier, breaking its deadly grip to call Lazarus from the grave to him life and liberty? Are they those pain filled hands which had been fastened to the Cross by cruel nails? Are those the same hands? Is this the same man? Is this the Jesus who hung on a

Cross and was buried in a tomb? That was what they wanted to know. That was the issue to which Jesus spoke, and He said very simply don't you recognize me. "Look at my hands...it is I myself." Surely this would convince them for was it not Thomas who said "Except I see in His hands the print of the nails, I will not believe." In this moment of encounter with Jesus, it was the nailed scarred hands which drove the last remaining fears, doubts and questions from the hearts of bewildered disciples.

John Dall wrote, If God raised Jesus from the dead, why didn't God fix Him up? Why scars. Why the print of the nails that you could feel with your fingers? Can it be that the Gospel word is saying to us in our waiting "You will not see Jesus Christ unless you see the wounds? Somehow we must understand that the resurrected Christ is forever the wounded Christ. Living, but never fixed up - Nor bound by death, yet scarred for eternity." The deaf have a sign for Jesus. Quickly they make this sign many times during worship: the middle finger of each hand is placed into the palm of the other. They worship Jesus, the one with wounded hands. When they touch the place, they remember they remember the Cross. They hear the name in their flesh." The nail scarred hands are the means of recognition. They are also,

***2. THE SYMBOLS OF REDEMPTION.*** Luke 24:39-43.



They are the marks of a Savior. The significance of those hands did not lie in their perfection, but in their imperfection. The importance of those nail scarred hands did not lie in their beauty, but in their disfigurement. The scars of the nails spoke symbolically but eloquently, of the Cross and its supreme and magnificent purpose and accomplishment in providing salvation for the human race. The nail prints tell us that “loves redeeming work is done,” for those hands are the hands of a Savior.” It is only the Christ with the nail scarred hands who has the power to redeem. Jesus showed them who He was and what He was and is. These nails scarred hands speak to us of three solemn truths. Firstly,

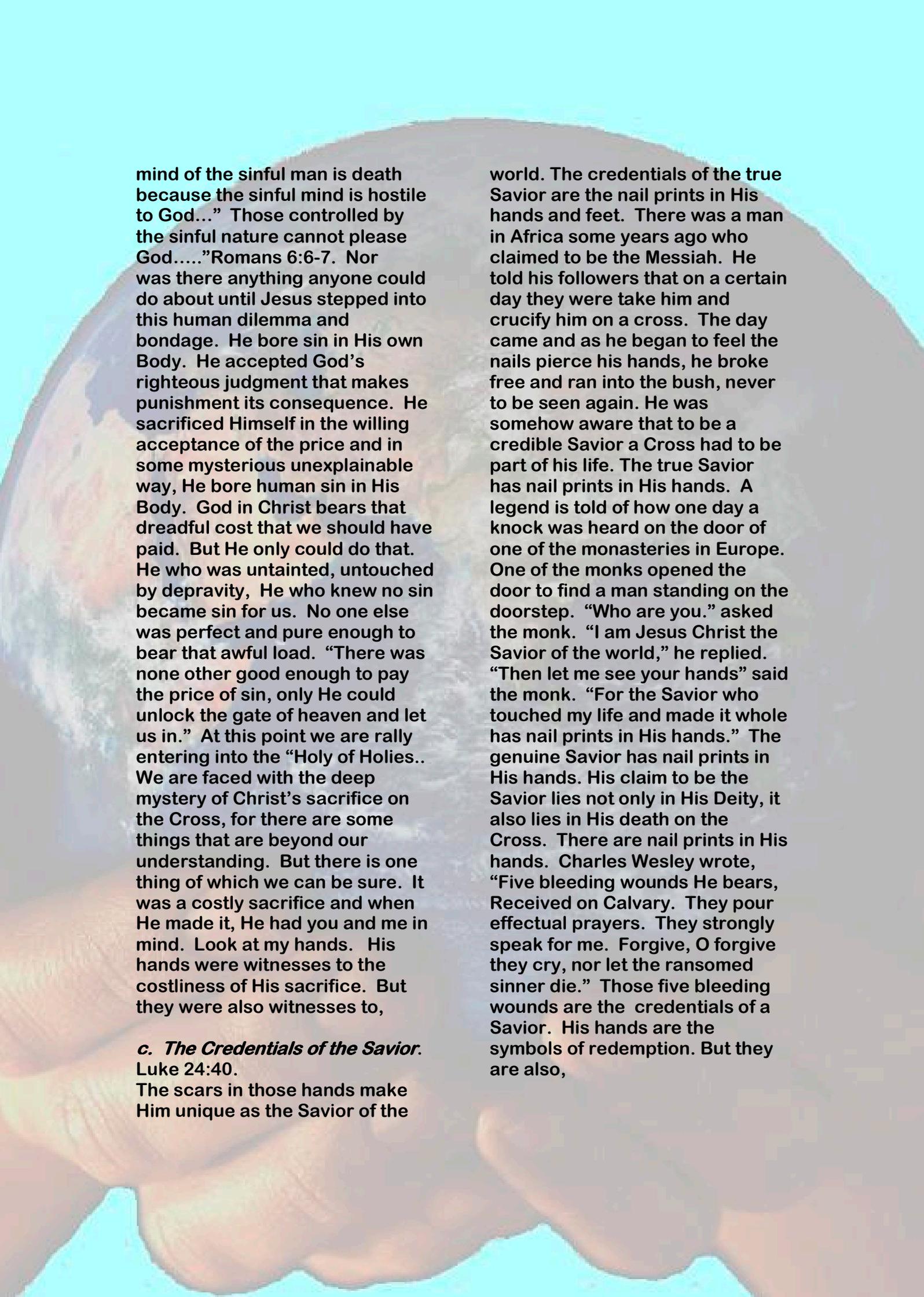
**a. *The Deadliness of Sin.*** Luke 24:39.

The nail prints were the result of sin – our sin. They reveal something of the awfulness of that sin. They speak of His awful death on the Cross. The Cross, itself, is not only a revelation of the love of God in Christ to men and women. It is not only the exhibition of the power of God in active and decisive action against the forces of darkness, it is also a manifestation of the deadliness of sin. One has written that the “:human reason is never the measure of sin’s severity or seriousness – the Cross is.” Ian Macpherson is right when he wrote, “I hate sin when I see what it does to human beings. I hate

sin most when I see what it did to Christ! It turned the fairest face that ever was, into a bruised and bloody thing. When sin did that to the Son of God....how can anyone play with it again.” The question is not how sin looks to us, or to worldly people or to liberal theologians. The question is: how does sin appear to God?” so wrote Ken Barrington and John Wesley said it well when he wrote, “remember there can be no little sin till we can find a little God.” In the cross there is an unmasking or the unveiling of sin in its most appalling manifestation and its ugliest expression in the whole of human history. The Cross reveals sin for what it is. It is deadly and damning. The nail prints reveal the deadliness of sin. But they also gave witness to,

**b. *The Costliness of His Sacrifice.*** Luke 24:40-46.

He showed them His hands feet. He then proceeded to remind his disciples that He had told them in v.46, “that Christ would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day. There is infinite cost at the heart of those nail prints. The Bible tells us that the consequence of sin is death, not just the punishment of it, but the consequence of it also. One has said that “sin carries death in its nature more certainly than does the virus of the most terrible plague. Infected with this foul disease the whole human race treads the path of spiritual death.” Paul declared that the



mind of the sinful man is death because the sinful mind is hostile to God..." Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God....."Romans 6:6-7. Nor was there anything anyone could do about until Jesus stepped into this human dilemma and bondage. He bore sin in His own Body. He accepted God's righteous judgment that makes punishment its consequence. He sacrificed Himself in the willing acceptance of the price and in some mysterious unexplainable way, He bore human sin in His Body. God in Christ bears that dreadful cost that we should have paid. But He only could do that. He who was untainted, untouched by depravity, He who knew no sin became sin for us. No one else was perfect and pure enough to bear that awful load. "There was none other good enough to pay the price of sin, only He could unlock the gate of heaven and let us in." At this point we are rally entering into the "Holy of Holies.. We are faced with the deep mystery of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, for there are some things that are beyond our understanding. But there is one thing of which we can be sure. It was a costly sacrifice and when He made it, He had you and me in mind. Look at my hands. His hands were witnesses to the costliness of His sacrifice. But they were also witnesses to,

***c. The Credentials of the Savior.***

Luke 24:40.

The scars in those hands make Him unique as the Savior of the

world. The credentials of the true Savior are the nail prints in His hands and feet. There was a man in Africa some years ago who claimed to be the Messiah. He told his followers that on a certain day they were take him and crucify him on a cross. The day came and as he began to feel the nails pierce his hands, he broke free and ran into the bush, never to be seen again. He was somehow aware that to be a credible Savior a Cross had to be part of his life. The true Savior has nail prints in His hands. A legend is told of how one day a knock was heard on the door of one of the monasteries in Europe. One of the monks opened the door to find a man standing on the doorstep. "Who are you." asked the monk. "I am Jesus Christ the Savior of the world," he replied. "Then let me see your hands" said the monk. "For the Savior who touched my life and made it whole has nail prints in His hands." The genuine Savior has nail prints in His hands. His claim to be the Savior lies not only in His Deity, it also lies in His death on the Cross. There are nail prints in His hands. Charles Wesley wrote, "Five bleeding wounds He bears, Received on Calvary. They pour effectual prayers. They strongly speak for me. Forgive, O forgive they cry, nor let the ransomed sinner die." Those five bleeding wounds are the credentials of a Savior. His hands are the symbols of redemption. But they are also,

### **3 THE EMBLEMS OF THE SAVIOR.** Luke 24:38-49.

“Look at my hands, It is I myself. Touch me and see: a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see me have.” Do you have anything here to eat? They gave Him a piece of broiled fish and He took it and ate it in their presence.’ Ghosts and apparitions do not do that sort of thing. You see Jesus had risen from the dead and stood before them in power. “Look at my hands. It is I myself.” The gloom of Good Friday had given way to the glory and joy of Easter Sunday. The simple act of showing them His nail prints in His hands confirmed His resurrection from the dead. But what does it say to us. It says very clearly that here is,

#### **a. A God Who is in Control** Luke 24:39,44.

“Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself.” But that is impossible!. How can this be? He was buried in a tomb three days before, furthermore it was sealed with a Roman seal and guarded by a Roman soldier. How could He escape? How could this Jesus with whom they had walked for three years be alive? But they had forgotten the Divine factor - God was still in control. Did they really think that a few Roman guards would intimidate Him, or that a Roman seal would deter Him. The resurrection of Jesus had been planned for He said to His disciples in Luke 24: 44-46.

This is what I told you while I was still with you: the Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day.” Peter on the day of Pentecost said it well. “But God raised Him from the dead, freeing Him from the agony of death because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on Him.’ Why was it impossible? Because God was in control. This is the message of this day. If God was for Him who could be against Him? God was in control. And the clinging clutching hands of death could not confine Him to the dark dingy domain of death. It was “impossible for death to keep its hold on Him.” “Look “said Jesus “Look at my hands and feet. This is the powerful message of Easter. It tells us that He is a God who is in control. But He is also is,

#### **b. The God Who Commissions.** Luke 24:45-49.

Note will you that Jesus in Luke 24:45-47, tells us that He suffered on that Cross and was raised from the dead and that repentance and the forgiveness of sins will be preached in His Name to all nations beginning at Jerusalem.” Then He says “you are witnesses of these things. Stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high. There is a twofold emphasis in this command. Firstly He told them to wait for,

#### **i. An Energizing Presence.** Luke 24:19.

The command is clear, “stay in the city until you have been clothed with power and the presence of the Holy Spirit. Jesus reinforced this in Acts 1:4. Do not leave Jerusalem but wait for the gift my Father promised...v.8 “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you.” You cannot divorce the power of the Holy Spirit from the presence of the Holy Spirit. We make a mistake to seek the power of the Spirit apart from the presence of the Spirit, for it is not there. It is, however scripturally correct to pray for Him to come upon us and in receiving Him we receive His power. Jesus said, “you will receive power when or after the Holy Spirit has come upon you. This was the promise of Jesus who had risen from the dead.

The plan of salvation was now complete. It had to be told across the world. After all Jesus had died for it. But lined up against the great mission of the church were the forces of darkness. Paul said that is where our struggle lies. Flesh and blood are not the main enemies. There are forces more powerful with which we are to contend in our mission in the world Far more potent are they than human forces. They are spiritual forces in heavenly realms. They are forces that are not only seeking to destroy the church, but to disrupt every effort of the church to get the message of the gospel into our communities. Jesus knew the power of the enemy and commanded the disciples to “stay

in Jerusalem until they were clothed with power from on high.” In order to overcome the dark evil supernatural powers, the disciples needed supernatural help. The power of the Holy Spirit which is resurrection power, is our greatest need. The church or the Christian cannot do God’s work without God’s power. The Old Testament has a relevant word to say to us on this Truth. We conquer “not by might or by power but my Spirit says the Lord God Almighty.” Jesus commanded His disciples to wait for the promise of the Father until you are clothed with power of Holy Spirit’s presence. He also commissioned them to declare

*ii. An Exciting Proclamation.*  
Luke 22:29

Part of resurrection responsibility is the spreading of resurrection message. The resurrection of Jesus made possible what Jesus did for us on the Cross. And the concern of the resurrected Jesus, after He had risen from the dead, was that His followers be witnesses to what He had done on the Cross and what they had heard Him say. Jesus tells what it is - It is the gospel. This good news has been placed in our hands for the world to hear and know. Myron Augsburger wrote “to many in the Christian church have become keepers of the aquarium instead of fishers of men.” George Smith said that “when a Christian is winning souls he isn’t messing around

**with sin. The church has many tasks but it only has one mission. We are to be involved in that mission.”**

