

TITLE: "Why Did Jesus Have to Go Away?" (Slide #1)

TEXT: Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:1-11; John 14 (Slide #2-3 - the Luke 24 passage only)

DATE: April 29, 2007

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. (Slide #4) Wouldn't life be so much easier if we went through it always saying hellos and never ever saying good-byes?
1. It's great to say hello - to a friend we haven't seen in a long time, to our parents who have been away from us, etc.
 2. The problem is that even as we say hello, we already know that we will soon have to say good-bye.
 3. Often I can remember even as we were driving down the road on a vacation thinking how horrible it will be when we have to say god-bye - that's pitiful!
- B. When we think about it, all through life we face a series of good-byes, each with a purpose:
1. The first time we drop our child off at the nursery and actually leave him/her there in spite of the cries - good for child or infant as they learn Bible stories together.
 2. First time our child gets on a school bus - good for child's education.
 3. First time our child goes away to camp - good for the child's spiritual training.
 4. First time our child goes away to college - good for their education and job training.
 5. When our child is married - good in beginning a new family.
 6. Or when a loved one leaves this earth - good for those who receive their eternal reward in heaven.
- C. Perhaps as the disciples met with Jesus for that last time and watched Him ascend into heaven, within their hearts they were saying, "Life sure would be a lot easier if we only could say hello and never say good-bye."
1. (Slide #5) Why did Jesus have to leave anyway?
 2. Why couldn't He just stay with them forever?
 3. Perhaps even their question of *Acts 1:6* had in it the yearning, "please don't leave us.": ***Lord, are you at this time going to restore the Kingdom to Israel?***
- D. Jesus had repeatedly warned them that a day was coming when He would leave them, but none of us like to say good-byes, so they put it out of their minds.
- E. But as with most good-byes, as sorrowful as they may be, there is a reason for departing - the same is true with Jesus!
- F. Not only did
1. Jesus rise from the dead.
 2. Jesus in His Resurrection declares His desire to walk with us, talk with us, and fellowship with us.
 3. But even in His ascension He offered to us blessings of great magnitude.
- G. This morning the question of the hour is: (Slide #6) Have you ever stopped to consider how much Jesus gave to us, simply because He chose to say good-bye?

II. THE BLESSINGS OF CHRIST'S ASCENSION.

- A. (Slide #7) Jesus had to leave us so that He could pave the way for all who follow Him to enter into Heaven.
1. As Jesus met with a discouraged group of disciples in *John 14*, He tells them of heaven, a place being prepared for them.
 2. At Thomas' priding concerning how it was that they were to find their way to heaven, Jesus answered convincingly, ***"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."***

3. Jesus had to go so that He might break the power of death and open the door of heaven to all who would believe in Him. - He took the sting away.
 4. **ILLUSTRATION: "I've Taken Your Sting"**
 - a. "A little boy and his father were driving down a country road on a beautiful spring afternoon. Suddenly out of nowhere a bumblebee flew in the car window. Since the little boy was deathly allergic to bee stings, he became petrified. But the father quickly reached out, grabbed the bee, squeezed it in his hand, and then released it. But as soon as he let it go, the young son became frantic once again as it buzzed by his head. His father saw his panic-stricken face. Once again the father reached out his hand, but this time he pointed to his hand. There still stuck in his skin was the stinger of the bee. 'Do you see this?' he said. 'You don't need to be afraid anymore. I've taken the sting for you.' That is the blessed message of hope for the Christian. Christ faced death for us. And by His victory, we are saved from sin. Christ has taken the sting. I Cor. 15:22 asks, 'Where, oh death, is your sting? Christ has taken the stinger for us. He rose and ascended into heaven that we might no longer fear death. Eternal life is ours!!'"
 - b. Jesus had to leave so that he might complete the work of the cross and pave the way so that we might follow Him into heaven.
 5. Over the years many of us have lost dear loved ones to death. But there is hope in this truth: Jesus took the sting away; He paved the way so that all who die in Him would find their way to heaven. Christ's ascension is our hope.
 6. But there's more.
- B. **(Slide #8)** Second, Jesus had to leave us so that He could prepare a place for us.
1. What powerful and potential is contained in these words of **John 14:2** - "*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!*"
 2. As I read these words, several truths become evident to me:
 - a. First, I delight in the inclusion of God's preparation - there are many rooms.
 - b. Second, I rejoice in the expectancy of Christ's work - He's preparing a room for everyone, including you and me.
 - c. Third, I celebrate the personalness of Christ's work - "*I am going to prepare a place for you.*"
 - (1) You, _____
 - (2) You, _____.
 - (3) You, teenagers.
 - (4) You, precious children.
 - (5) You, Don Lain.
 3. How I hate good-byes; but how glad I am that Jesus said good-bye for in so doing he paved the way into heaven being prepared just for you and me.
- C. **(Slide #9)** Third, Jesus had to leave so that He could become our intercessor and propitiation for sin.
1. Mark tells us in his account this powerful truth in **Mark 16:19** - "*After Jesus had spoken to them, He was taken up into heave and He sat at the right hand of God.*"
 2. Why did He go to God's right hand? Listen to the powerful words of **Hebrews 9:24** - "*For Christ did not enter a manmade sanctuary that was a copy of the true one; He entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence.*"
 3. Jesus had to leave, so that as Paul puts it in **1 Tim. 2:5**, He might become our mediator.
 4. Jesus had to leave to become, as John so effectively writes, our advocate: "*If anyone does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense - Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. (1 John 2:1b)*
 5. The power of **Hebrews 5:1-10** is earth shattering:
 - a. Jesus is one who is our lawyer, who understands our fleshly needs (**5:1**) - and His record is better than even Perry Mason.

- b. Jesus is One who deals gently with us, even when we act in ignorance. (5:2)
 - c. Jesus is One who has experienced the weakness of men and women. (5:3)
 - d. Jesus is One who offers up for us prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears. (5:7)
 - e. And then listen to *verse 8*: "***He learned obedience from what He suffered, and once made perfect, He became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him. . . .***"
6. The departed Lord sits at the Father's right hand, with pierced hands and feet, pleading our case 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year.
 7. **ILLUSTRATION: John Vannorsdall writes:** "If God raised Jesus from the dead, why didn't God fix Him up? Why scars? Why the prints of nails that you could feel with your fingers? Can it be that the Gospel words are 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. Not bound by death, yet scarred for eternity
- D. (Slide #10) Fourth, Jesus had to leave so that He could give to us the Holy Spirit.
1. Jesus could not have been more specific than He was in the demands of *Acts 1:4, 7 and 8*.
 2. Earlier Jesus had spoken of in *John 14:15-21*.
 - a. This Holy Spirit will come as one who will be with us forever (vs. 15)
 - b. He will be called the Spirit of Truth, always guiding us into all truth (vs. 17)
 - c. He will no longer be an eternal presence – He will become an abiding presence that we can carry with us where ever we go – more than Jesus did while on earth.
 - d. He is a gift of infinite value.
 3. And what a powerful fulfillment in *Acts 1 & 2*.
 - a. Jesus said to the disciples that when the Holy Spirit came He would give to them power.
 - b. This Holy Spirit would embolden them to speak truth to the nations.
 - c. Acts 2 confirms this promise – what power, what witness, what results.
 4. Much more could be said, but we get the point. Christ's ascension paved the way for the Holy Spirit to come.
 5. Jesus had to go so that we might receive the Holy Spirit.
- E. (Slide #11) Finally, Jesus had to leave us so that one day He might come again and take us to heaven to be with him forever.
1. There is no greater news to Christians living in a troubled world than the news that not only is Jesus going to prepare a place for us, but ***He will doubtless come again to take us home with Him.***
 2. And what a home it will be. Listen to it described:
 - a. **Rev 21:1-7**
 - 1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.
 - 2 I saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.
 - 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.
 - 4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."
 - 5 He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."
 - 6 He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life.
 - 7 He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son.

Rev 21:9-23

- 9 One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come,

I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb."

10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.

11 It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.

12 It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.

13 There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west.

14 The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

15 The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls.

16 The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long.

17 He measured its wall and it was 144 cubits thick, by man's measurement, which the angel was using.

18 The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass.

19 The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald,

20 the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst.

21 The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass.

22 I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

23 The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.

Rev 22:1-5

1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb

2 down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

3 No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him.

4 They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads.

5 There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

3. What a day that will be:

- a. the dead will rise
- b. the righteous will follow
- c. we'll gather around the Lamb of God
- d. we'll see deceased loved ones
- e. we'll rejoice together
- f. and we'll never have to say good-bye again.

III. CONCLUSION

A. How we hate to say good-bye, but good-byes always have a purpose.

B. Why did Jesus have to leave:

1. So He could lead the way into heaven.
 2. So He could prepare a place for us.
 3. So He could become our intercessor.
 4. So He could send His Holy Spirit.
 5. So He could come again.
- C. **(Slide #12)** What a glorious inheritance we have in Jesus, even in His leaving.