

Thursday 14 May 2026, Ascension Day

Luke 22.44-end

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'Then he opened their minds so they could understand the scriptures.'

Imagine for a moment you're one of Jesus' first disciples. You've known him for a couple of years, followed him around Galilee, Judea, and Samaria. You've seen him do things no one else has ever done. And you've heard him teach- strange things no one has ever said.

If you are like the other disciples, despite what you've seen you still don't really understand who Jesus is or what he's trying to teach; some things make sense while others don't. Having witnessed Jesus' death and yet seen him alive again, you find yourself questioning everything you thought you knew about God, humanity, and God's relationship with humanity.

And now Jesus is about to go away. You don't know this, but you feel things are drawing to a sort of close. And Jesus teaches you.

Now, if you recognise yourself today in my description of the anonymous disciple, you're in good company. Not understanding was a key marker of the disciples, even after the resurrection. Jesus knew this about those who loved him. He knew they would struggle to see him for who he is and struggle even more so with who he was trying to teach them to be.

So Jesus starts again. He says, *'This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.'* I've taught you this already but let me go over it again, he says. *'Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.'*

Everything you've been through, he says, that's the fulfilment of the scriptures. The psalms, the prophets, the Law of Moses... it was all about me. And you've seen it, lived it. You are my witnesses.

It is the job of a witness to speak about what they have seen. They testify to the truth of events. They provide evidence for an argument to be made and won. Jesus' disciples then spoke, testified, and made an argument: Jesus who is God was crucified, died, and buried. Death could not hold him and he is alive.

We make that same argument today as his witnesses in our time. It is our duty and our joy to speak about Jesus and to do our best to live as he taught his disciples. Disciples past and

disciples present are united in proclaiming this truth. And we are united too by the Holy Spirit Jesus promised to send, the power from on high.

Be unsure, be confused, have difficulties. All disciples do. But do not hesitate to speak. *'You are my witnesses of these things.'* May the Holy Spirit give you voice and words to proclaim, *'This is what is written: The Messiah has suffered and has risen from the dead on the third day. Repentance for the forgiveness of sins is offered in his name to everyone who hears.'* Amen.