

The Walk To Emmaus

Luke 24:13-35

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We read that Jesus was crucified, Jesus was buried, Jesus was risen from the dead. Now we will see what is known as the post-Resurrection appearances of Jesus Christ, in which He appeared to others. The angel's Easter message was, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen!" (Luke 24:5-6). And the angel said, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay" (Matthew 28:6).

Yet the followers of Jesus did not believe at first that Christ had risen. The first unbelievers were the believers. The disciples were unbelievers. They should have believed all that the prophets had spoken; that the Messiah must suffer and die, and then He would enter His glory through His Resurrection.

The followers "were greatly perplexed," verse 4; "Their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them," that is, "the women," verse 11; and Peter "departed, marveling" or scratching his head, wondering what happened, verse 12. Peter saw the empty tomb and the grave clothes lying there, but instead of believing, he wondered what was going on.

What was it that brought the followers from unbelief to belief? From fear to faith? The answer is that they saw Christ alive, risen from the dead. Luke wrote the book of Acts, and in Acts 1:3, he recorded that Jesus "presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." Forty days after Jesus rose from the dead on Resurrection Sunday, the first day of the week, Jesus appeared and disappeared.

So what we have is that Jesus actually died, He actually was buried in the grave, the tomb was empty, the angels testified that He was risen and the women arrived at the tomb at sunrise on Easter morning finding Jesus' body gone. He was then seen alive for 40 days in His appearances, proving Himself alive.

Of all the post-Resurrection appearances of Christ, one of my favorites is His appearance to the two on the road to Emmaus. George H. Morrison said, "Of all the appearances of the risen Christ, none has a stronger hold on Christendom than this one. It has brought light to many darkened hearts and comfort to innumerable souls."

Like all the post-Resurrection appearances, this one involves a story line. It has three gripping dramas or scenes. The first scene is the sorrowful walk, verses 13-16, as the two disciples of Christ go from Jerusalem to the village of Emmaus.

Luke says, "Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem." In verse 18, we find that one of them was named Cleopas. We don't know anything about him. John 19:25 does mention "the wife of Cleopas,"

so some feel it was Mr. and Mrs. Cleopas who were walking on the road to Emmaus. But there is no evidence of that. So I'll just call them the two followers of Christ. They weren't two of the original twelve; they weren't apostles. They were just believers in Jesus. They had been in Jerusalem for the Passover. Now that Jesus had been crucified, they were on their way back home to Emmaus discouraged, despondent, dejected and all hope was gone. They felt like the whole Jesus movement was over. Jesus was crucified, so their hopes were dashed.

So they were on their way to Emmaus. It is about seven miles northwest of Jerusalem. We don't know for sure where Emmaus is today. Archeologists have not been able to uncover what was the ancient city of Emmaus.

Verse 14, "And they talked together of all these things which had happened." And what were all the things they talked about? Jesus Christ, who rode in triumphantly on Palm Sunday, He was arrested, tried, crucified and buried and now there were rumors that He had risen from the dead. "So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them."

How many times do we walk on life's road discouraged, despondent, downcast, and we think that hope is gone? Little do we realize that Jesus is with us. He said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).

Right now you may feel abandoned by God and that you're walking along life's highway without God. I like Psalm 23 where David said, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death..." in the Hebrew, it's "the valley of deepest darkness" "...I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me."

So Jesus was with the two on the road, but they didn't know it. Verse 16, "But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him." I believe this was a supernatural blinding of their eyes. They could not see that it was Jesus walking with them. "And He said to them, 'What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?'"

I like this story; it's so cool. I can't help but think that Jesus is going to mess with them a little. Jesus showed up and asked them a question. Any time Jesus asks a question, He knows the answer to it. He's not asking for information; He's asking to get these two students to question why they were so disheartened and discouraged. It's going to be because they did not believe the Word of God; they did not believe all the prophets had spoken. Had they believed what Jesus said would happen and what all the prophets had spoken, they wouldn't have been so discouraged. So Jesus asked them why they were so sad.

Verse 18, "Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, 'Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?'" Everyone had known what happened to Jesus. Everyone was talking about the Crucifixion of this great Man they thought was the Messiah, the Redeemer of Israel.

"And He said to them, 'What things?'" Jesus was messing with them. This is Jesus saying,

“What happened?! Tell Me about it.” “So they said to Him, ‘The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people.’”

I like their description of Jesus. They’re telling Jesus about Jesus. Isn’t it cool that the Lord wants us to unburden ourselves to Him? The Bible says, “Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7).

So as they’re walking and are sad, Jesus appears and pulls them out. “Why are you so sad?” They said, “Haven’t you heard about the things that happened?” And Jesus said, “What things?” So they said to Him, “The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth.”

Their view was that Jesus was a prophet. He was indeed a prophet, but much more. Deuteronomy 18:15 said, “The Lord your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me...” like Moses “...from your midst, from your brethren.” He would be a deliverer and lead them out of bondage into redemption. He would be “mighty in deed and word before God.” He was; He performed many miracles. The phrase “before God” indicates that God was well pleased. When Jesus was baptized, the Father said “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17).

They continued saying, in verse 20, “...and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him.” Notice where they placed the blame for Jesus’ death: on “the chief priests” and “rulers.”

You ask, “Well what about all the people who cried, “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!”? They were being influenced and led by their spiritual leaders. So they blamed them totally. Yes, the Romans were guilty. Yes, we’re guilty because of our sin. That’s why He went to the Cross. But here we see “the chief priests” and “rulers” are to blame.

Verse 21, “But we were hoping...” using the past tense “...that it was He who was going to redeem Israel.” Jesus will redeem Israel, but that is a future event. Romans 11:26 says, “So all Israel will be saved.” He did have to die to redeem them. They weren’t looking for a crucified Messiah, but the Old Testament made it very clear that in order to redeem Israel and all mankind from their sins, the Messiah had to pay the price of redemption, which was the blood of Jesus Christ. They were “not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:18-19). They didn’t see that. Rather they were looking for a conquering, reigning Messiah. So they stumbled over the idea that the Messiah would come to suffer and die.

Their hope was gone. Their hope was dashed. Jesus was dead; they didn’t believe He was risen.

“Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened.” Why did they mention the third day? Because Jesus had actually mentioned that on the third day He would rise from the dead (Matthew 17:23). It was the third day, late in the afternoon, they checked

their watches and nothing had happened. It was all over, so they were heading home.

Verse 22, "Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive." When you read that you think, Well, why didn't they believe them?! "And certain of those who were with us..." referring to Peter and John "...went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but Him they did not see."

It's no wonder that in the next few verses, Jesus will say, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!" The reason they were so despondent was because their hopes were gone. Jesus did not meet their false expectations. Their expectations were based on not knowing the Scriptures or not believing the Scriptures.

Sometimes we feel that God has failed us. Sometimes we have false expectations. Maybe a loved one is sick, and you're praying, "God, please heal them!" But they get sicker and die. Then you say, "Where were you, God?! We prayed. Lord, why didn't You answer?!" They have expectations that God has to do certain things. And when God does not do what we think He should do, we get discouraged, despondent and hope is gone.

God's ways are best. Romans 8:28 says, "All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." So make sure that your expectations of what God should do are rooted and grounded in Scripture. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6). Sometimes God has seemingly disappointed us, but He will not disappoint us.

When John the Baptist was put in prison, he was in the grip of a giant despair. He sent his disciples to Jesus to ask, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?" He was asking, "Have we been wrong? Are You really the Messiah? Why am I in jail? I hear about all the miracles You're doing, but here I am languishing in prison!" Then Jesus responded, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: the blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed...the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me" (Matthew 11:3-6).

So we need to put our faith and trust in God, even in the darkest times when we don't understand. We need to realize that we might have a false expectation.

They also didn't understand God's Word. "But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel." They thought Jesus would absolutely sit on the throne right then, right there and reign on David's throne, fulfilling the Davidic covenant, and the Roman government would be overthrown. What we know to be the Second Coming, they thought would happen when He came the first time. They didn't realize He would first come to suffer and die.

And they didn't believe the evidence, so they lost their joy. The fact that the tomb was empty could have brought them great joy. The angel's message through the women could have

brought them great joy. But unbelief is a thief. Often because we do not believe God or trust God or rest on God's Word, we're despondent.

The second scene or movement in the story is in verses 25-27. It's the wonderful talk. We go from the sad walk to the wonderful talk. "Then He said to them, 'O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!'" They believed the Word of God. They believed the prophets but not "all" the prophets. They took out the part about the suffering Messiah.

We err when we do not believe all the Scriptures. We don't pick and choose what we want to believe and not believe. We need to believe that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable" (2 Timothy 3:16).

Then talking about Himself, Jesus said, "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" That is a rhetorical question that expects a "Yes" answer. And I like what Jesus did, verse 27. "And beginning at Moses..." which would be the Pentateuch, or the first five books of the Bible "...and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."

Jesus Christ did expositional teaching. Why do I commit myself to preaching the Bible expositionally? Jesus did it. He read from the Old Testament, and He expounded or pulled out the meaning. This is where we get the word "exposition," as in expositional teaching and preaching. It means to read the text, explain the text and apply the text in its historical, grammatical, theological context.

So Jesus was teaching them all through the books of Moses and the Prophets, which was the Old Testament. It would be called the Law and the Prophets. All the Old Testament would fit into those two designations.

This is what I call the first of three openings. This is where Jesus opened the Scriptures to them, verse 27. And we learn in verse 32 that "He opened the Scriptures to us" as He talked to them on the way. And they will go on to say, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road?"

Have you ever read the Word of God and had the Spirit of God open your eyes and open your heart, so it just jumped off the page and gripped your heart? What an experience that is! I believe that God speaks through what He has spoken. The Bible says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." That means it is God-breathed. But even now when we read the Scriptures, it is actually God speaking. The Spirit of God takes the Word of God to transform the child of God into the image of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Where Jesus said, "O foolish ones," the word "foolish" is kind of harsh in our English translation, but it means "You simple ones." It is spoken with great emotion.

I understand that today many people say they believe the Bible, the Word of God, but they take

chunks of it out. That denies the Scriptures. They say it's a myth; it's not true. They like to take out the first few chapters of Genesis; that "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). They like to take out the story of Noah and the ark and the wrath of God destroying mankind in the flood. They say it's not true. They like to take out the miraculous from the life of Jesus; He didn't really rise from the dead, He wasn't really the Son of God.

You can't pick and choose what you will believe in the Bible. That's called eisegesis. Exegesis is what Jesus is doing here in the Scripture. It means He takes the text and pulls out—that's where we get our word "exit" from—what it means. Eisegesis is reading into the text or imposing into the text what God never intended the text to say or to mean. Don't do that. You always take it in context, you historically look at it, look at the grammar and look at how it ties in with other theological truths in the Bible. So make sure you "rightly divide the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

If anyone was doing the job of expounding Scripture, Jesus was doing it. This is the only disappointment I have with the story: why wasn't it recorded what Jesus said?! Cleopas probably was the source of the story told to Luke, because there were only two of them on the road. Luke should have asked Cleopas what Jesus taught and then had written it down! When I get to heaven, I'm going to ask Jesus to repeat this teaching. We'll all get together and listen to Jesus expound from Scripture all the Bible says about the Messiah suffering and dying. It's so important that we believe all that the Scriptures have recorded.

No doubt Jesus went to Genesis and pointed out that Jesus, the Messiah Himself, would be the seed of the woman who had bruised the head of the serpent (Genesis 3:15), and that He would be the promised seed of Abraham (Galatians 3:16). No doubt He went to Genesis 22 and said that He was the beloved Son who would be offered on Mount Moriah. No doubt He went to Exodus to show them He was the Passover Lamb, the manna from heaven. No doubt He went to Leviticus to show them He was the High Priest. No doubt He went to Numbers to show them He was the lifted up serpent on the brass pole. No doubt He quoted Deuteronomy: He is our true Prophet like Moses. No doubt He went to the Psalms and pointed out Psalm 22:1, where Jesus cried, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

He must have pointed out Psalm 16:10, which says, "You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption." And no doubt He quoted Isaiah 53 and said to them, "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities....And by His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). And He ends up in Malachi. There Jesus is seen as "the Sun of Righteousness...with healing in His wings" (Malachi 4:2).

This means that when you read the Bible, you should look for Jesus. He is the theme of all Scripture. Jesus said to the religious leaders of His day, "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life" (John 5:39-40). So when you read your Bible, it should lead you to Jesus, to put your faith and trust in Him. Romans 10:17 says, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

I think it's interesting that Jesus didn't rebuke them. He didn't say, "What didn't you believe the women? Why didn't you believe Peter and John? They saw the empty tomb! Why didn't you believe what the angels said? Look at the scars!" He said, "Why don't you believe the Scriptures? Open your Bibles. Let's talk about Scripture." Jesus was all for going back to the Scriptures. Why? Because they are authoritative, undeniably true. They are inerrant, infallible. He was always taking people back to the authority of God's Word. And that's where we must land.

Now we move to the third scene or movement, verses 28-35, the surprising revelation. They finally come to understand that this Bible-teaching stranger is none other than Jesus Himself. And He's alive! "Then they drew near to the village..." that is, "Emmaus" "...where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther." Again, I think Jesus is messing with them; He might have said, "Nice Bible study, but I gotta go." He was walking along like He was going to go further.

Verse 29, "But they constrained Him, saying, 'Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.' And He went in to stay with them." Know that Jesus comes when He is invited. They probably invited Him to stay and continue to teach the Bible to them. "Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them..." which probably was the house where one of them lived "...that He took bread..." Jesus now becomes the host "...blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight."

Verse 32, "And they said to one another, 'Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?'" He opened the Scriptures to them, and now He opened their hearts. So He immediately manifested Himself to them. The minute He broke the bread, their eyes were opened. Some theorize when He did that, they saw the scars in His hands and realized it was Jesus. I don't know. But since their eyes were supernaturally blinded, I think their eyes were supernaturally opened. God supernaturally opens our blinded eyes. He comes to save us by His grace. He opens the Bible to us, our hearts begin to burn and we see Jesus and walk with Him.

If you're going to grow in sanctification, it will be through your knowledge found in Scripture. You came to salvation through the Word, you become sanctified through the Word and you become equipped to serve through your knowledge of the Word.

"Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight." Can you imagine that?! "Oh, that was Jesus! We didn't even know it! Oh, the stupid things I said!" Have you ever been with someone you didn't know, and you said some dumb things you wish you hadn't said? They must have thought, Oh, that was Jesus, and we didn't even know it!

So they had burning hearts. But they also had burning mouths, verses 33-35. "So they rose up that very hour." Think about that. They had just walked seven miles to get to Emmaus. It's now dark. There are no flashlights, no street lights, no cell phones and they couldn't jump in the car

and listen to music on the way back. But what they discovered was so important that they hightailed it right back to Jerusalem.

I have never walked seven miles in my life! If someone said, "Let's go on a hike," I sit down until the thought goes away. I don't do that. Sometimes when I'm driving my car and see people walking or running, I think, Why?! We have cars! Why are you doing that?! God, have mercy!

They walked seven miles back to Jerusalem?! Yes; it's because their hearts were burning. Isn't it cool when God opens your heart, opens your eyes, opens the Scriptures? And then He opens your lips; you can't help but tell others what you have seen and experienced.

"So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them..." meaning the 11 apostles, because Judas is not there, and other believers "...gathered together..." probably the next morning "...saying..." to the two from Emmaus "...The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" or to Peter. "And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread."

So they said to Peter and the others, "You think you've seen something! Wait till you hear what happened to us tonight!"

I think that the rest of their lives the two from Emmaus told everyone their story. Have you ever been around someone who had cool stories about life's experiences? Can you imagine? "Let me tell you what happened when we were on the way to Emmaus! It was amazing! It was Jesus!" What a story they had!

Jesus opened the Scriptures. He opened their eyes. He opened their lips. Peek at verses 45-47. It says, "And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.'"

Now they began to understand the purpose of the Crucifixion and the purpose of the Resurrection. They began to understand the purpose of their preaching; that they could preach repentance to God and the forgiveness of sins.