

Foothills Christian Assembly Sermon October 17, 2021
Luke 24: 9 – 11 “When Faith Meets Unbelief”

1 Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. 2 But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. 3 Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. 5 Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? 6 He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, 7 saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.' " 8 And they remembered His words. 9 Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. 10 It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them, who told these things to the apostles. 11 And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them. 12 But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened.

13 Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. 14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened. 15 So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. 16 But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him. 17 And He said to them, "What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?" 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?" 19 And He said to them, "What things?" 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, 20 and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. 21 But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. 22 Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. 23 When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. 24 And certain of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but Him they did not see." 25 Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" 27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. 28 Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. 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. 30 Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight. 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?" 33 So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, 34 saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" 35 And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.

I. Introduction

- a. Recall from last Sunday our study of verse 8: “And **they remembered His words.**”
- b. Note how these women transitioned from perplexity and disbelief into understanding, joy and obedience. They had forgotten the Word of Christ. This placed them in confusion and fear, but then they remembered the Word of Christ and stepped into light, comprehension, rejoicing and obedience.
- c. Remember: to be mindful of; to be recalled.
 1. Note that we forget what we hear from God. Hence, we must build our lives on remembering His Word, day in and day out. We need to hear the Word of Christ every day because we forget every day.
 2. Henry “The women seemed to acquiesce; they *remembered his words*, when they were thus put in mind of them, and thence concluded that if he was risen it was not more than they had reason to expect; and now they were ashamed of the preparations they had made to embalm on the third day *him* who had often said that he would on the third day rise again. Note, A seasonable remembrance of the words of Christ will help us to a right understanding of his providence.”
- d. As we look at today’s text, we will see another example of unbelieving skepticism in action, this time expressed in the words and actions of the disciples themselves. This repetitive pattern of post-resurrection unbelief and perplexity stands out in Luke’s Gospel, clearly proving we fallen humans are forgetful creatures, and if left to ourselves, we will spiral off into all the destructive fruits of unbelief. If the disciples failed to believe, surely, we will also. What is our only hope? How can we learn from the confused women at the empty tomb? How can we learn from the unbelieving disciples who mock the resurrection upon first hearing of it from the women?
 1. 2 Cor 5:7 "So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. 7 For we walk by faith, not by sight."
 2. 1 Peter 1:3-9; "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy

inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls."

- e. Today's Sermon: Luke 24: 9 – 11 "When Faith Meets Unbelief"
 - 1. Faith Expressed in Evangelism v9
 - 2. Evangelists Honored v10
 - 3. Faith Meets Unbelief v11
 - 4. Questions to know, love and obey God
- II. Faith Expressed in Evangelism v9
 - a. 9 Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest.
 - b. The first action reported by Luke: they returned and told everyone about the empty tomb and the angelic message of resurrection. Note how faith in Christ's resurrection caused these women 1) to return to the disciples and 2) tell them all the things that occurred at the tomb.
 - 1. They returned to the disciples
 - 1. Disciples had separated from Christ at His Gethsemane arrest
 - 2. They had fled away from Him (except Peter and John)
 - 3. They were absent at His crucifixion
 - 4. They were absent at His burial
 - 5. They did not go to the tomb with the women
 - 6. The disciples didn't even meet the criteria for being apostles
 - a. Acts 1:21,22 ""Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become ***a witness with us*** of His resurrection."
 - b. A witness with us?! Yes, they saw the resurrected Christ, but they missed almost everything else we must believe in order to be saved. To this group the women returned.
 - 7. Note: the faithful do not give up on those with less faith. Real faith from God does not give up on the weak in faith. Ro 14:1 "Receive one who is weak in the faith"
 - a. WCF 14.3 "This faith is different in degrees, weak or strong; may be often and many ways assailed and weakened, but gets the victory; growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance through Christ, who is both the author and finisher of our faith."
 - 8. Note: faithful women are often used of God to fan the flames of faith in the men around them, by their faith, words and deeds of love toward God and others.

9. Note: the women did not divide from the disciples. Fleshly, prideful, spiteful response could have arisen from the women toward the cowardly disciples who took no risks, who loved their own necks above Christ. Yet, there is no evidence these women harbored or expressed bitterness toward the men who gave way to fear, not even after these same cowardly men mocked their joyful resurrection proclamation.
2. They told the disciples all the things that occurred at the empty tomb
 1. They told the whole story. They held nothing back, including their own lack of faith, their perplexity, and their fear at the angels' presence. They told of the empty tomb and the words of the angels quoting Christ. They told it all.
 - a. Are you ever tempted to hold back when you share the Gospel?
 - i. Note: these faithful women told it all, even though they knew it would sound like nonsense to others.
 - ii. Note: Joy opens our mouths for Christ, not a need to persuade, not a need for others to believe what we say.
 - b. Do you share your own trek from unbelief to faith when you share the Gospel? Do you humble yourself and acknowledge your own problems believing the Gospel? Do you recount God's faithfulness to give you faith?

III. Evangelists Honored v10

- a. 10 It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them, who told these things to the apostles.
- b. Luke saves the list of honor for after these women have faithfully demonstrated their faith by their evangelism, showing how intentions are much less important than actions.
 1. Note: when we care not what the evil forces think of our public acts of faithfulness to God, and walk on in faithfulness, the Lord takes note. He cares much. He delights in His faithful ones who do not give way to the empty threats of vanishing darkness.
 1. RC Sproul "It is significant, I think, that the first witnesses of the resurrection were the women who had stood by him when the men fled out of fear. There is a sense in which their loyalty and devotion to Christ was uniquely honoured by their being the first to get the message of the resurrection."¹

¹ Sproul, R. C. (1999). [*A Walk with God: An Exposition of Luke*](#) (p. 418). Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications.

- c. These good women must have understood the truths of God’s Word regarding the wicked, and regarding God’s faithfulness to His courageous saints, such as we read in Psalm 37:1-23.
 - 1. Do not fret because of evildoers, Nor be envious of the workers of iniquity. 2 For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, And wither as the green herb. 3 Trust in the Lord, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. 4 Delight yourself also in the Lord, And He shall give you the desires of your heart. 5 Commit your way to the Lord, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass. 6 He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, And your justice as the noonday. 7 Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass. 8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret--it only causes harm. 9 For evildoers shall be cut off; But those who wait on the Lord, They shall inherit the earth. 10 For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more; Indeed, you will look carefully for his place, But it shall be no more. 11 But the meek shall inherit the earth, And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. 12 The wicked plots against the just, And gnashes at him with his teeth. 13 The Lord laughs at him, For He sees that his day is coming. 14 The wicked have drawn the sword And have bent their bow, To cast down the poor and needy, To slay those who are of upright conduct. 15 Their sword shall enter their own heart, And their bows shall be broken. 16 A little that a righteous man has is better than the riches of many wicked. 17 For the arms of the wicked shall be broken, But the Lord upholds the righteous. 18 The Lord knows the days of the upright, And their inheritance shall be forever. 19 They shall not be ashamed in the evil time, And in the days of famine they shall be satisfied. 20 But the wicked shall perish; And the enemies of the Lord, Like the splendor of the meadows, shall vanish. Into smoke they shall vanish away. 21 The wicked borrows and does not repay, But the righteous shows mercy and gives. 22 For those blessed by Him shall inherit the earth, But those cursed by Him shall be cut off. 23 The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, And He delights in his way.”

IV. Faith Meets Unbelief v11

- a. 11 And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them.
- b. The disciples are in total disarray at this point, filled with such thick darkness of unbelief that they mock the story told by the women.
 - 1. Henry “They thought it was only the fancy of the women, and imputed it to the power of imagination; for they also had forgotten Christ’s words, and wanted to be put in mind of them, not only what he had

said to them in Galilee some time ago, but what he had said very lately, in the night wherein he was betrayed: *Again a little while, and ye shall see me. I will see you again.* One cannot but be amazed at the stupidity of these disciples,—who had themselves so often professed that they believed Christ to be the Son of God and the true Messiah, had been so often told that he must die and rise again, and then enter into his glory, had seen him more than once raise the dead,—that they should be so backward to believe in his raising himself. Surely it would seem the less strange to them, when hereafter this complaint would justly be taken up *by them*, to remember that there was a time when it might justly have been taken up against them, *Who hath believed our report?*²

- c. Note the only possible response of the flesh when reality arrives is to treat reality as fantasy. Self-deception unto delusion.
 1. Bock “The women’s account does not gain immediate acceptance. In fact, Luke uses a unique graphic *hapax legomenon* to describe the reaction: λῆρος (*lēros*, nonsense or idle talk; BAGD 473; BAA 960; 4 Macc. 5:11; Josephus, *Jewish War* 3.8.9 §405), ***a term used in medical settings of the delirious talk of the very sick*** (Plummer 1896: 550). The apostles are not looking for any reversal of the tragic situation. Their dreams about God’s kingdom have been shattered. ***The women’s story looks like an absurd effort to challenge reality.*** Apparently no one believes them.”³
 2. Do you see how our flesh, apart from Christ, creates a non-reality, a fantasy world, and demands others accept the fantasy as reality? The disciples not only disbelieve, but they go on to openly mock reality and its messengers.
- d. Note: evangelists of the Gospel need to remember these disciples’ lack of faith at first hearing.
 1. 1 Cor 2:14 “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”
- e. Note: evangelists of the Gospel also need to remember these disciples eventually believed. Keep preaching the Gospel to all who will hear it. God gives faith to His elect.
 1. Ephesians 2:1-8 “And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who

² Henry, M. (1994). [*Matthew Henry’s commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume*](#) (p. 1910). Peabody: Hendrickson.

³ Bock, D. L. (1996). [*Luke: 9:51–24:53*](#) (Vol. 2, p. 1898). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.”

V. Questions to know, love and obey God