

## **Dashed Hopes Revived**

Call to Worship: Psalm 2

1st Scripture: Luke 24:1-12

2nd Scripture: Luke 24:13-35

Hymn Insert- *Christ the Lord is Risen Today*

Hymn Insert- *The Power of the Cross*

Hymn #206- *Low in the Grave He Lay*

### **Introduction:**

[Don't read main text yet...]

When God had pronounced judgment on Adam, and all of mankind through Adam, following Adam's eating of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden, two profound realities must have weighed heavily upon his shoulders from that point forward:

1) The weight of regret, incurred by his sin; the unchangeable reality of having taken mankind out of the glorious sphere of God's blessing, and plunging him into the state of curse, darkness and judgment, must have squeezed many a tear out of Adam. No doubt, there were many, many days, where Adam awoke in the morning and cried aloud, "What have I done!"

2) The weight of longing for the promised Messiah to come and remove the curse; the anxious desire for the Anointed one to make right, what Adam has grossly defiled, must have found a prominent place in the mind and heart of Adam.

And as thousands of years had past, long beyond the time of Adam, these two realities found their constant place of anguish and longing, in the hearts of God's people. The nation of Israel, the chosen people of God, out of a world gone mad during the time of the building of the Tower of Babel, found themselves carrying these burdens. When would the Messiah come, and set up a righteous kingdom, rescuing the people of God from a constant pattern of rebellion and judgment, because of their sin-infected, wayward hearts? When would He come and bring light, back into a world of utter darkness? When would he bring life into their death and hope into their despair? And when would He deliver them from the oppressive kingdoms of this world, and establish His own kingdom of peace, where righteousness dwells forever?

And now, in the first century AD, at a time, when Israel has been constantly under the rule of tyrannical leaders, since the time they had been completely exiled out of their land for their constant rebellion, gross idolatry and rejection (persecution and murder) of God's holy prophets, the hope of Messiah ever coming seemed dim and unrealistic. To be sure, many of them (not all) were back in their land, but they were presently under subjection to the rule of

Caesar and Rome. They were taxed, abused and treated like foreigners in their own land. And all of this, was ultimately a consequence of their own rebellious ways.

But then, suddenly, a spark glimmers out on the horizon. A hairy man; a reputable prophet, breaks God's silence, as it were, and makes a bold proclamation in the wilderness! It is the "voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord.'" "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" "I baptize you with water, but the One coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose, He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire!" This John; John the Baptizer, prepares the way for the Messiah, who is now to arrive! And when He comes, after being affirmed by the Holy Spirit (descending as a dove upon His head), John proclaims, "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

The Messiah has finally arrived! He is affirmed by many witnesses; by the Baptist, by many signs and wonders, by the fulfilling of Prophecy, and by the voice of God from heaven! For three and a half years, His glory shines through His flesh. His words, His actions, His miracles and His love, take His people by storm. They leave everything behind and follow Him. They are ready and prepared for the new, glorious kingdom of righteousness, and they gladly submit to His authority and reign. Rome's days are numbered. Israel's woes will soon be eradicated. The curse will be lifted, and never ending joy will sprout up in its place. The excitement is high among those who have come to know and love Him. It only remains for Him to take His seat upon the throne of David. The flag of hope is raised to the top of the pole. Rest and relief and joy have swept away all doubt and fear and despair.

But wait...something's gone terribly wrong. The religious leaders have turned against Him. And they have taken Him and delivered Him over to the Romans. Surely, God will deliver Him and give Him back to us, so that He can redeem Israel in accordance with the prophecies. But, at the hands of a man-fearing, spineless Pilate, who is more concerned with sustaining his title than pursuing justice, He is mocked, beaten, marred and crucified. And as He hangs there on the cross, and the people shout aloud, "He saved others, can He not save Himself? Let us see if God truly delights in Him, and saves Him," there is yet hope that He will be delivered...as long as He still has breath. But then, He shouts aloud, "Father, into Your hands, I commit My spirit," and His head plummets downward. He is motionless...lifeless. And the Roman Centurion

thrusts Him through with a spear, to ensure that He is indeed dead. And blood and water pour out. Surely, He has truly been killed, and the great hope of Israel has been put out.

The excitement, the joy, the hope, the anticipation of redemption and deliverance; everything that His people had hoped for...have all been dashed to pieces. Nothing but confusion, sorrow and despair now. Dashed hopes! And then, to add to the confusion, after He is buried, His body is taken from the tomb and there are some fantasy reports by those who have gone to the tomb, that they have seen angels, who have informed them that He is yet alive.

Our text carries us into this context. A context of a crucified, dead Jesus, who was expected to be that glorious Messiah, prophesied about from the beginning...the hope of making right what our first parents made wrong, and to deliver His people from bondage, bringing them into a new, righteous, glorious kingdom of peace. A context of great sorrow, energy draining despair and utter confusion about recent events, surrounding this Jesus.

And then, this happens...

### **I. Dashed Hopes (vs. 13-24)**

"Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him. And He said to them, "What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?" 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?" 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, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. 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. 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. 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."

And so, here, two of the Lord's followers, one Cleopas and the other (whose name we are not given), walk alone together, away from Jerusalem and toward Emmaus. And as they do so, their heads hang low, and they despair over all of the events that have just taken place, concerning this Jesus. And a Stranger approaches them and enters into their discussion of defeat. And we are told that this Stranger was the risen Jesus, but the eyes of the two disciples were kept from recognizing Him, so that He might interact with them and tenderly deal with their unbelieving hearts.

And the Lord questions them about their conversation: "What are you talking about and why are you so sad?" The public execution of Jesus, and all of the confusion surrounding His empty tomb, being the great talk of the city, the disciples are quite baffled that this Stranger is unaware of all that has transpired. "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem, who has not heard about all that has taken place?" "What things?," He responds, feigning ignorance. And then they explain who Jesus was and all that has happened to Him, and within their response, the great expression of their dashed hopes and dreams is found in these words, "But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel." "We were hoping that He would be the Messiah, the great hope of Israel, promised from the beginning, who would redeem His people and deliver us from the bondage of our enemies." "We had great expectations and hopes and dreams, but they are now dashed. And this is why we talk this way, and are sad."

And then, our Lord responds by taking them to the school of OT Christology, which we all wish we could have attended with them!

## **II. Dashed Hopes Revived**

"Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (vs. 25-27).

Here, our Lord begins to lift off the blinders of their dashed hopes, affirming that this Jesus is indeed the Messiah, and that His suffering and death were, in fact, right in keeping with the will of God, revealed in Scripture, unto the very purpose of securing the redemption of His

people! "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" "You have been selective in your understanding of the Scriptures. You have neglected the many texts, which speak of the Messiah as the suffering servant, whose heel would be bruised by the seed of the serpent, and who would bear the iniquities of His people, being forsaken by God, and then enter into His glory! The way to His reign and throne; the way of His securing the redemption of His people; the way of redeeming His subjects (a people for Himself) and being exalted King over the nations, was via the way of death. And He would be raised three days later, as the women have testified to you already." "And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." And as He did this, their hearts burned within! The truth, driven hard by the Holy Spirit, enflamed their once downcast spirits, and brought faith back into their hearts!

"Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. 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. 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. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight. 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?" So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread" (vs. 28-35).

Their dashed hopes were forever revived!

### **III. Concluding Thoughts and Applications**

Having walked through the text, brethren, let us then conclude our time this morning, by considering a few closing thoughts and applications:

1) We have considered the hope of the Messiah, primarily within a Jewish context, in keeping with the thoughts expressed by the two disciples in our main text. But I want to expand this hope into the broader, worldwide context, which was bound up in the great mystery that is unveiled in the New Covenant.

To be sure, Jesus, the resurrected Messiah is, and always will be, the great and only hope of the Jewish people. But, there was a great misunderstanding among the Jews, concerning the substance of the redemption that He would bring, and the distance to which this redemption would expand. You see, God is not only the God of the Jews. He is the God of all creation. And His intentions, right from the beginning, before there was any difference among the races, was to redeem a people out of the entire world for Himself. This came in the prophecy given to Adam in the Garden. This came in the promise given to Abraham, that all nations would be blessed in him, and this came in many other prophetic and promissory forms given throughout the OT.

And when Jesus came, the full unveiling and fulfillment of this promise had arrived. And so, while most in Israel had their eyes fixed on a physical redemption from the tyranny of Rome (and like heathen, ungodly empires), God was dealing with a far greater enemy...our sins! Will God ultimately deliver His people from all of their physical and demonic opponents? Yes. All of them will be condemned and eternally judged at the final judgment. But, if that is all that God did, then no single Israelite or Gentile would ever have fellowship with God, because the sins of all of mankind are what truly separate us from God. And so, Jesus died, as a substitute, on behalf of His people, both Jews and Gentiles, so that all who truly believe in Him will have fellowship with God and eternal life.

You see, the misery of a rebellious, fallen Israel, infected by the sins of Adam, is the misery, which is shared by every single human being in the world. Our greatest enemy is ultimately us. And the collective "Us," which makes up the societies and cultures of this world, produce the collective problems that we see all around us in the world. Mankind is corrupt. Mankind lies and steals and murders and cheats and rapes and lusts and worships idols. Mankind desires to dethrone God, wants worship, basks in pride and arrogance and envy and jealousy. Mankind...*we*, are the problem. And the out working of our evil, is the chaos that is dispersed in every direction throughout this world.

And the Messiah; the Messiah, which was prophesied about from the beginning, Jesus, who was carried forth in the Jewish oracles, is the only hope; the universal hope for all of mankind. And therefore, His death brings life, and His resurrection brings hope to all who embrace Him by faith. Dashed hopes are revived in Jesus Christ! Are you in Christ?

2) Don't miss the significance of why Jesus, at first, did not reveal Himself to Cleopas and his fellow disciple. Yes, He engaged their hearts in a way that perhaps would not have been possible, had He immediately revealed Himself to them. Yes, in opening up the Word to them, He enabled them to lay hold of Him by faith, as their hearts burned, upon hearing what they heard. Surely, that is a good testimony of the presence of Christ, among His people, in the expounding of His Word. The revelation of Christ in His Word, highlighted by the Holy Spirit, has replaced the visible presence of Christ, as a means of sanctifying and growing the church, and the individuals who make up the church.

But, we don't want to miss one key phrase, which they reiterated to the other disciples, when they told them all that had transpired. Hear again verses 30-35, "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. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight. 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?" So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread."

What indelible mark did our Lord leave with these disciples, which would most remind them of His presence with them? What did He want them to utilize by faith, as a remembrance of Him? I'll give you a hint...it's not an empty cross. It was in the breaking of bread. Why? I believe there are at least two reasons for this:

1) In the breaking of the bread, we are reminded of our Lord's New Covenant with us; the covenant secured by the breaking of His body and the shedding of His blood. It is the constant reminder of our identity with and in Christ, as we proclaim His death until He comes, in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. It is His way of saying, "Remember our covenant together, and My sacrifice, which has secured it."

2) In the breaking of the bread, we are reminded of our fellowship together, one with another, in the Gospel. We are reminded that we share in this meal together, in union with each other and Christ; one body, together forever. Such a reminder would do much to compel us to

further secure that unity outwardly, which has already been secured inwardly. Look around you, brethren. This is your forever family. We are partakers of Christ together. His resurrection is the first fruits, and together, we are the ingathering of the harvest, represented at Pentecost.

[Note: The reversal of the judgment, which separated the nations, at the Tower of Babel]

Amen!!!

Benediction: Jude 1:24-25