

Luke 24: 13-35; “On the Road to Emmaus”, An Easter Sunday Sermon delivered online to the saints at the Reformed Baptist Church of Tama, Iowa, during the Coronavirus restrictions, by Pastor Paul Rendall on April 12th, 2020.

This reproof which was given to these two men who Jesus had walked with on the road to Emmaus, could have been applied to any of His disciples on that morning when He rose from the dead. “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!” Not just the two on the road, but many of Christ’s disciples were slow of heart to believe that He was really raised from the dead. We can only conclude that their faith had fallen very low since they had seen Him crucified and buried in the tomb. At this hour I would like us to take a walk spiritually with our Lord, in our minds and hearts, just as these two walked with Him literally and physically. I want you to walk with Him for a few minutes and have you meditate upon this passage, so that you can see how wonderfully and wisely He addressed all the unbelief and sorrow which had filled these disciple’s hearts. I would like to show you that the Lord’s remedy for them, then, is the same remedy which He has for you now.

The remedy for all of your unbelief and all of your sorrow of heart is to be found in your coming to remember, each and every day, that Christ really is risen from the dead. This fact is the basis of all of your spiritual joy and contentment. I want you to see what Christ was interested in, on that day that He rose from the dead. He was interested in building the faith of these disciples. His desire was to assure them that He really was intimately concerned with helping them to understand all of the powerful implications of His resurrection. But He knew that for this to happen that He and they must walk for awhile on the road to Emmaus. He would listen carefully to all of their concerns and then He would lead them to a better understanding of Himself, as raised from the dead. Beloved brethren, I pray that today you will see that the Lord Jesus walks with us, unbeknownst to us, when we are sad and disappointed. And He will in His good time, reveal Himself to us in the providential orderings that He brings for our joy and encouragement.

1st – When you fall into unbelief and sadness you must realize that the Lord Jesus is interested in your every conversation. (verses 13-18)

These two men were going from Jerusalem to Emmaus, a distance of about 7 miles. I think that they felt that they had to get away and think about things, now that Jesus had died. Now that He had gone, there was an uncertainty concerning the future of the “band of brothers”. Was Christ’s kingdom at an end? What should be done, now that the Master had died, and did not appear to be coming back? These two were overwhelmed with all that had happened, and they were a little downcast and disappointed that Jesus had not risen from the dead as He had said that He would, on the third day. Anyway, they felt that they just needed to go home and think about it for awhile. I believe that the home of a least one of these disciples was in Emmaus. They were journeying back the 7 miles distance, and they were communing together, it says in verse 15. They were conversing and reasoning with each other, as they walked along, about all that had happened and the possibilities of things, that they simply did not have answers for.

And then a stranger comes up from behind them somewhere, and He overtakes them, and joined them on their walk. He even joined in with their conversation. It was the Lord Jesus, but verse 16 says, “Their eyes were restrained, so they did not know Him”. In Mark’s gospel it says, “He appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country.” Both statements are no doubt true. Jesus assumed a different form of appearance than that which they were used to seeing when they looked at Him during the days before the crucifixion. And also their eyes were restrained from making the connection of recognition that this was Jesus. You know how it is; when you go to another city some distance away, and you see someone in that city that you know from your home town. You look, and you look again, and then there is joyful recognition.

This kind of recognition was blocked in their minds by the Lord the Jesus. These 2 men, Cleopas and his friend, were unable to perceive that this was their Lord, risen from the dead. Jesus was just a friendly stranger; and they didn't mind having Him join in on their conversation. It is indeed a good thing for disciples of the Lord to speak to each other about their joys and their sorrows, and their thoughts on spiritual matters. It is good to commune with one another and to have fellowship with one another. This is something that the Lord Jesus takes an interest in as well. You may think that it does not make any difference to the Lord whether you have holy conversation with the people of God, or not; but you are very wrong, if you think so. In the book of Malachi chapter 3, and verse 16 it says, "Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, and the Lord listened and heard them; so a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who feared the Lord and who meditate on His name."

I have a plaque on my wall in the dining room of our home that says – "Christ is the head of this house, the unseen guest at every meal, the silent listener to every conversation." This is the truth of the matter. The risen Lord Jesus Christ is able to listen in on all the conversations of all His disciples in every place. It is obvious that the Lord Jesus not only chose to listen, but He chose also to participate in this conversation; for He was going to draw out the thoughts of these disciples of His. He was going to give ravishing joy to their halting faith. But they did not know this yet. The Lord Jesus was going to have this very conversation written down in the Book of Books, the Bible, the Book of Remembrance, for every generation after that, to be able to read till the end of the world. But they did not know it. They feared the Lord, but they were very discouraged. The Lord Jesus knew this, as well. He says in verse 17 – "What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?"

We should remember when we are discouraged, that the Lord Jesus is concerned, He is interested in whether we are happy or sad. He is very tender and sympathetic when his disciples are sorrowful over anything related to Himself and kingdom, whether it is in regard to their hearts, or whether it is in relation to His gospel and kingdom flourishing upon the earth. He is concerned for what makes "the children whom God has given Him" weep. And He will minister to our sadness as well, through a passage such as this. If He cannot be here personally in your home today, in bodily resurrection form, He can be with you by means of His Spirit working through His Word being preached to you. The Lord Jesus is One who makes careful inquiry here, with these two, by means of a direct question. The question is put with a loving gentleness, so as not to offend. He knows that He is going to have to reprove their faith in just a minute; but He enters into the conversation by giving them His full attention to hear exactly what is on their hearts.

Cleopas says to Him – "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?" Jesus plays dumb at this point so that they will tell Him all about their concerns. Sometimes in our holy conversations with others we need to be those who listen as though we did not know anything about the things that are told to us, even though we may know more about those things than the person who is speaking to us does. Jesus' interest in this conversation was very real and very deep.

2nd – Jesus wants us to see that He is interested in our hope and faith, in relation to what we think He ought to do. (verses 19-27)

"What things are you talking about?" says Jesus in verse 19. They say 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 going to redeem Israel." "Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened." Jesus now knows that these disciples are both very pained in their hearts. They are pained that everything that Jesus had promised to do, to redeem Israel and to rise from the dead on the third day, had not been fulfilled. Or so they thought. Their boast had been in the Lord. He was "a Prophet mighty in deed and word before

God”. In their minds His good deeds even went before His good words, and they were declaring that He was mighty in both.

This was a good and commendation of Jesus. Jesus saw clearly that they had great hopes for the redemption of Israel, but He also saw that they did not understand the whole subject of His redemption rightly. They believed that He would deliver them from the Roman rule and domination as a nation. But they did not understand the things related to the spiritual redemption of their souls and bodies unto God; that those things would involve His sufferings and death. In a greater way than they could imagine. They were indeed hoping for Jesus to be raised from the dead. But then, they thought, if He was raised, He would restore the kingdom to Israel. They were looking at the things that Jesus came to do and to accomplish as applying more to their earthly state, than to their spiritual salvation and progress in holiness. This is an error that many people fall into in our own day. This is why the Lord reproved them in the way that He did. He is very interested in what His people hope for, from Him. He is very interested in our faith in relation to what we think that He ought to do.

I think that they were hoping that Jesus would do something far more impressive in a political sense for them than He did. I do not think that they were at all expecting His resurrection to be so private, and so personally related to only certain ones among His disciples at first. They seemed to be very reluctant to believe the testimony of women and their vision of angels. They seem to want to go along with the skepticism of the apostles, to be skeptical about the truth of His resurrection, in relation to the testimony of the women. They seemed to have been caught up in trying to be judges of how Jesus should reveal Himself in His resurrection. So Jesus says 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?” He is telling them that if things were supposed to be the way that they were saying that they should be, that then He should not have had to have suffered at all, which is a direct contradiction of the Scriptures which had prophesied these things from the beginning.

“And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” What a Bible Study this must have been. Not only were many, many verses of Scripture from the law and the prophets opened up to these men, but also they were opened up with convincing warmth and power to them. In what a wonderful and personal way did the Lord Jesus make the Scriptures concerning Himself come to life in their minds and hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit. There is an application here for us. It is this – that the Scriptures are not meant to be simply a systematic theology of objective truth. I am not deprecating systematic theology, but I am saying that we should hope to be taught and hope to study the Scriptures in such a way that Christ is seen in them in every book of them. This is what good preaching is, this is what good Bible study consists of. This is what makes being Christ’s disciple so very wonderful. It is that Christ is risen! And He by the power of His Spirit, makes Himself known to us through His Word so that we read Him and see Him throughout the Bible.

3rd – The Lord Jesus wants us to see that He is interested in our recognizing His power and presence in the everyday things of life.

(verses 28-35)

By this time, they are drawing near to Emmaus, the village where Cleopas and his friend were going. And when they drew near to the village, it says, Christ indicated that He would have gone farther. The Risen Lord, having all power in heaven and upon the earth, was on such a great mission in revealing Himself to His disciples, teaching them, and working in their lives by His grace, that He does not need to take time out for rest and food in the way that we would think that He should. He was going to go on further. But the text says, “But they constrained Him, saying, ‘Abide with us; for it is toward evening and the day is far spent.’” “And he went in to tarry with them.” Christ knows when we are longing that He stay with us. He knows, and He will respond to the urgent, longing prayers of His people that He “abide with them”. “Behold, I stand at the door

and knock.” “If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and dine with him, and he with me.” (Revelation 3: 20) O how I pray that you will understand that Christ is the lover of your soul, O believer! He will come to your soul and satisfy your longings for fellowship and communion with Him! It is because He is Risen from the dead! He is Alive forevermore!

It says in verse 30 – “And 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.” Christ lifted the restraining veil that He himself had placed upon their eyes until this point, and they knew Him in the way that He broke the bread. Will you not take notice of the fact that this incident was not a celebration of the Lord's Supper, but it was just a simple meal. It was something that they did a number of times in the day. But the common, the everyday, and the ordinary intake of food was sanctified by a blessing from the Lord. My friends, the Lord is interested in your recognizing His presence and power in the everyday things of life. Will you not look for Him there? Will you not see the importance of seeking His blessing in such a simple thing as having prayer before you take your daily bread?

You see, this is what causes us to know that He, as our strong and mighty Redeemer, is the One who will be with us until the end of the age. It is His resurrection power exerted toward us who are undeserving. But He does, and He will, give us great grace and power to live this Christian life to His glory. “Did not our hearts burn within us?”, they say after He had vanished from their sight. The question to ask ourselves as we read this, is this: Does my heart burn within me for more of the gracious experience of Christ coming to my soul to make His spiritual things real to me? This is what a taste of His resurrection power is like. We want Him to abide with us. And we long for others to have a sense of it as well.

“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.” Those who have this kind of understanding, that Christ is interested, that He is personally interested in them, interested in their conversations, their hopes and the strength of their faith in relation to what they think He ought do, they will come to recognize His power and presence in the everyday things of their life. These believers will not only find His grace to be sufficient, but they will know the reality of Christ becoming more personally precious to them as the days go by. And as they travel the road of life to the Celestial City where they will meet their resurrected Lord face to face, they will be joyful and content to walk with Him. And they will continually be asking Him to abide with them. May it be so with each of you.