

Traveling with the Risen Lord on the Emmaus Road

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We open the Scriptures this morning to the gospel of Luke chapter 24 and we begin reading at verse one and we will read through verse 35 and the text is going to be from verse 13 through verse 35. We won't read those verses again.

Luke 24 beginning at verse one.

Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.¹

And that is the women in verse 55 of the previous chapter saw where Jesus was buried.

Verse four.

And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

And they remembered his words, And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.

¹ Luke 24:1-3.

Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.²

And then begin the words of the text for this morning.

And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.

And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?

And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?

And he said unto them, What things?

And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which 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 have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not.

Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. 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. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it,

² Luke 24:4-12.

and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.³

We read thus far in God's holy and inspired Word.

Boys and girls, you would hardly find a Bible passage, a Bible story so exciting as this one. And so this morning you, especially, pay close attention.

Here are two men who are very sad walking home from Jerusalem. It is almost like they are going home from a funeral. And they are very sad because their friend and Savior Jesus has been put to death and they don't understand it. They don't understand why.

And while they are walking and talking suddenly there walking with them is a stranger who, it seems, doesn't know anything about what has happened. And so they explain it all to him. And he answers their questions and this stranger who is walking with them is Jesus who had died. And they realize that later on.

So this story is one of the most exciting in all the Scriptures. This morning let's look at it under the theme as we remember the resurrection of Jesus Christ under this theme: Traveling with the Risen Lord on the Emmaus Road.

And we will notice three things. First, the traveler's problem, these men have a problem that they need resolved. And then notice, second, Jesus' sermon. He preaches a sermon, really, that answers their problem. And then, third, their burning hearts and their open eyes.

In verses 13 and 14 in the evening of the day in which Jesus arose we are introduced to two men who are walking—or maybe it is a man and a woman, we don't even know that for sure—who are walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus, about seven miles, about two hour's walk. We don't know anything about these disciples except that one of them is called Cleopas and that they live in the town of Emmaus.

These are not prominent followers of Jesus. These are followers of Jesus who mingled with the multitudes that had followed him. These are ones who came to hear his teaching when he was in the vicinity of Jerusalem. These disciples had witnessed the mighty miracles that Jesus had done. And on this particular weekend they knew that Jesus was in

³ Luke 24:13-35.

Jerusalem again. And so they had come to Jerusalem to hear his teaching and to see his mighty works. But, instead, things had gone totally different than what they expected.

Instead of seeing Jesus teaching the multitudes, they heard the multitudes crying out, “Crucify him, crucify him. Away with him.”

Instead of seeing Jesus do mighty works, miracles and raising people from the dead, they saw Jesus put to death.

And when people cried, “Come down from the cross. He saved others. Himself he cannot save,” he stayed there. He didn’t come down from the cross.

What happened to their mighty Lord?

That was Friday. And now it is Sunday. And these two men need to get back to their village of Emmaus. They had intentions to get home, but as they are ready to leave they start hearing stories, rumors concerning Jesus who had died. They hear a rumor from some women, a group of women who had gone to the sepulcher and they... the stone, they said, had been rolled away from the sepulcher and Jesus’ body was gone. And they are amazed.

Verse 22 says these rumors were such that made them astonished. They made them astonished.

And there were more rumors than just those women. There was the story that came back from the disciples Peter and John hearing what these women said could hardly believe it so they themselves went down to the sepulcher to see and they came back with their own story. They saw where Jesus had lain. They saw the linen clothes, but he was gone.

And then there were other reports, too, report from Mary that she had actually seen Jesus and then a report that had come from the Sanhedrin, from the rulers of the city that his disciples had come at night and stolen his body away.

But these men need to get home and so late in the day they head off for Emmaus. And as they go, they are talking about all these things. These are the things that are on their mind.

Verse 14 tells us, “They talked together of all these things which had happened.”⁴ They are trying to put them all together and make sense of them. What had happened last Friday in the crucifixion of Jesus and now these stories that they are hearing that Jesus is risen and what the rulers are saying and what the rulers had done. It didn’t all fit together in their mind.

So they are talking animatedly about this. What a conversation that must have been. And they are sad.

⁴ Luke 24:14.

Jesus notices that they are sad. They are stunned with grief that Jesus had been killed.

So what about all these reports? And they can't put it all together. It is to these two disciples traveling, walking on the road to Emmaus from Jerusalem, late in the day that Jesus comes and appears.

When Jesus comes to them they don't recognize him.

Now in order for us to understand that, we have to understand something about the appearances of Jesus, the appearances of Jesus after his resurrection and there are about 11 or 12 of them recorded in the Scripture. They vary from one another. And some of them or in each of them Jesus comes with a specific purpose. And so in some of them Jesus comes and he can be recognized. When Jesus comes into the upper room the disciples recognize him as their Lord.

When Jesus appears to Thomas he appears to him and shows to him his hands and his feet through which the nails had gone in his crucifixion. And he says to Thomas, "Touch me."

But when he appears to Mary and Mary falls down at his feet and grabs him by the feet he says to her, "Touch me not. Don't cling to me."

Another time when Jesus comes to prove to his disciples that he is living he eats with them. He has got a physical body. And yet in that same body he goes through closed doors in the form of a spirit.

And so in each appearance Jesus has a purpose in his appearance, but there is a variety of appearances. And here he appears as a stranger.

Mark chapter 16 tells us more about this appearance. Mark 16 and verse 12.

"After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country."⁵

And you notice there it says, "In another form." And the idea is that Jesus came in a variety of forms in his appearances. And his form here to these two travelers on the road to Emmaus was that he came as a stranger, as someone that they wouldn't recognize. And so here in Luke 24 and verse 16 it says, "their eyes were holden that they should not know him."⁶

They didn't recognize him. He appeared as a stranger, a sympathetic stranger who came to help them with their problems and in their grief, a naïve stranger who it seemed didn't know what had happened and what was going on in their life and in their thoughts. He

⁵ Mark 16:12.

⁶ Luke 24:16.

doesn't come here—and this is the difference, the reason for the difference—he doesn't come here to these two to prove his resurrection. He does that to Thomas. He does that to Peter. But he comes here really to answer the question of their grief.

Had he come in a recognizable form, they would have forgotten all about their question. But he came to answer the question that they have in their grief.

Now these two are so engrossed in their conversation that suddenly this stranger is with them. The text gives us that idea.

Suddenly Jesus himself, in verse 15, drew near and went with them. How did that happen?

Well, they were so engrossed in their conversation that suddenly there was this third man walking with them.

And he overhears their conversation and in verse 17 he asks the question, “What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?”⁷

And he is saying, “What are you talking about?”

And notice also that he notices their grief. He says, “As ye walk, and are sad?”⁸

He realizes that what they are talking about weighs heavily on their hearts. It affects their feelings. They are passionate about this. And he comes to answer their question and answer their grief. He is very sympathetic, this stranger. But for his sympathy and his sympathetic question he is rebuked.

“And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?”⁹

And it is Cleopas that is saying in effect to him, “What is the problem with you? Don't you know what has been going on here in Jerusalem here in this last week? Where have you been?”

And he rebukes this man who asks him this question.

But this stranger isn't deterred. He is not put off by their attitude. Instead he says in verse 19, “What things? What things have come to pass? What are you talking about?”

⁷ Luke 24:17.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Luke 24:18.

And he draws them out. He asks them questions. He doesn't press them. He doesn't come immediately with answers to their problems. They have a problem, that is very obvious. But this is what he does to draw them out.

“Give me the pieces of your problem.”

And Jesus answers their question by really showing back to them the questions that they have given him, asking them back so that they have these, as it were, puzzle pieces that they can't put together and he shows them, this is the key. This is the central piece to the puzzle and he shows them how it all falls together. He listens.

And very often that is the way, the important way to help people.

Let's look at these puzzle pieces that they have. They explain them to Jesus in verses 19 through 24. In verse 19 they tell him, “We are talking about Jesus of Nazareth, a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people.”

And in those few words they sum all of their wonderful experiences under the teaching and in what they witnessed of what Jesus did, a man mighty in deed, his miracles and the wonders that he performed. And a man mighty in word. He was such a great teacher to hear him. What an experience. They sum their experience of the richness of being under the ministry of Jesus.

In verse 21 they tell this stranger, “But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel.”¹⁰

And they mean by that, “We thought that this was the promised Messiah. He seemed so much to be that one, that one who would come and deliver Israel. And he even sometimes would play into that thinking and mentality. It was just a week ago that he came riding into Jerusalem to the shouts of the people, “Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” That is what we thought. But now,” and here is the piece of the puzzle that doesn't fit.

Verse 20.

“The chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.”¹¹

This is the bit that doesn't make any sense. That word “our” in that verse is important. “The chief priests and our rulers delivered him.”¹²

“Our Jewish rulers who are under this Roman tyranny, who want to be... who want the shackles of Roman tyranny broken, who could have put their confidence in him and he

¹⁰ Luke 24:21.

¹¹ Luke 24:20.

¹² Ibid.

could have been the one to deliver us from this Roman tyranny. Our Jewish rulers, this is what they have done to him who could have been their Messiah and leader. They have handed him over to the Romans so that the Romans would crucify him. It doesn't make any sense."

And in all their thinking, of course, they are thinking about what Jesus did, his voluntary suffering. He didn't want his disciples to stand up against the Jews and the Romans. Why they heard stories about what Jesus told the disciples at the time of his arrest when the soldiers come to capture him he tells Peter, "Put up your sword."

And he tells Pilate when he is on trial, "My kingdom is not of this world, else would my disciples fight for me."

He goes willingly.

Not only do the Jewish rulers hand him over. Not only did the Romans crucify him, but it seemed that this is the way he wanted it. And it doesn't make any sense to us.

And then on top of all of this, more confusion and they tell the stranger about this in verses 22 and following or half way through 21.

"Beside all this, to day is the third day..."¹³ And, they say, "Certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive."¹⁴

"And so, you know, these are the things that had happened and he has been crucified and we don't understand it and now we are hearing that he is not there and we are hearing all of these different reports concerning what has happened to his body. And it doesn't make any sense to us."

That was their conversation. And central to it all is the suffering and the death and the cross of Jesus Christ. They don't understand it.

And so this is why they are sad and this is what they are telling this stranger who is walking with them. And they remember, too, that he said something about the third day. The angels said to the women, "Remember? The third day he said he would rise."

And they remembered his words. They come back and they tell the disciples and now these men... something about the third day. He said something about the third day. Now it is the third day.

But they can't put it all together.

¹³ Luke 24:21.

¹⁴ Luke 24:22-23.

And this sympathetic stranger listens. Of course, they would have said much more than what is just here in these few words as they walked for a couple of hours and poured out their hearts to him. He listens.

And then suddenly in verse 25 he speaks. And you have here Jesus' sermon, Jesus' answer to the problem of these men. They don't understand the cross. They don't understand the death and the suffering of Christ and he comes and he answers them and it is really you could say a three part sermon.

In verse 25 you have his introduction which is a rebuke of these men. He says, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken."¹⁵

Now Jesus doesn't mean that these men are unbelieving fools like Psalm 14.

"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."¹⁶

These are not men who have denied the reality of God. That is the folly of unbelief. No, these men believe. But they want an explanation from the Word of God for what they are dealing with. They see parts of the Word of God. They believe it, but they want to put it all together. They see these different experiences in their life and they want an explanation from God for what has happened.

Their folly is this that they are slow of heart. They are slow of heart to believe.

And so Jesus rebukes them.

"O fools, and slow of heart."¹⁷

The content of his sermon you find in verse 27. He begins at Moses and all the prophets and he expounds unto them in all of the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

Now, that is just a summary statement of what Jesus preached to him and what a sermon that must have been. He began at Moses. That means he began with the books of Moses, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. He began with Moses.

Where do you think he began? He began in the very beginning to show them from all the Old Testament that this was all about him.

Genesis three verse 15, the great promise that was made to Adam and Eve in the garden after they had sinned.

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed."¹⁸

¹⁵ Luke 24:25.

¹⁶ Psalm 14:1.

¹⁷ Luke 24:25.

And he spoke of the seed of the woman that was going to come to crush the head of the serpent, the sacrifices of Cain and Abel, circumcision and the shedding of blood, the altars of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the land of Canaan, the children of Israel in their captivity in Egypt and the instituting of the Passover lamb and the blood of the lamb and the deliverance of the people through the blood of the lamb, the passage through the Red Sea, the angel of the Lord throughout the Old Testament, the conquests of Canaan and the Promised Land and the leaders that God gave to the people, the judges, the kings, all concerning himself, all types in the Old Testament and they knew it of the Christ.

And so he opened to them and he explained to them himself from the Scriptures. He went also to the prophets. And that is not just Isaiah and on, but it includes especially the book of Psalms which is full of prophecy of Christ. He showed them from the prophets the things concerning himself.

So this was the whole content of his sermon. What a sermon it must have been. And the thrust of his sermon, the theme of his sermon you have in verse 26 in this powerful question that he puts to them.

“Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?”¹⁹

You see, that was their question. Why the suffering? And he opens the Scriptures to prove to them not just that all of the Scriptures are about the Messiah, that they all looked ahead to his coming, but to show them that all of the Scriptures reveal a suffering Messiah.

You can hear him talking about the sacrifices that were made in the Garden of Eden to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve and all the sacrifices that were made throughout the Old Testament, all the suffering of the people of God and their pain in order to be kept close to God, in order to inherit the Promised Land. A powerful question. That was the point of everything that Jesus showed them. And he must have showed them the meaning of the Old Testament sacrifices, that the purpose of the sacrifices was the payment for sin.

The victories of the Old Testament were not simply victories over political dominions, but were victories over sin and its power, those opposed to God.

Verse 25, again.

“Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?”²⁰

And the idea is this, that Christ who had suffered had now entered into glory. But this is the way for him to come to glory. He had to go through this suffering and this pain in

¹⁸ Genesis 3:15.

¹⁹ Luke 24:26.

²⁰ Ibid.

order to come to glory. And they began to see that the glory of Christ and the victory of Christ and the power of Christ wasn't Jews over Romans. It wasn't political. But the great enemies of the people of God are spiritual.

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood.”²¹

Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world.”²²

And they started to see the cross and the suffering not only as necessary, but as the culmination of a battle and the moment of victory. The glorious message and sermon that must have been that Jesus preached.

They listened. And we read that their hearts burned. That means they hung on to every word. How well this stranger understood the Scriptures, how well he explained passages of the Old Testament that they could never fit into their thinking and they had never understood. He drew from Scripture all kinds of things that were associated with the Messiah. He explained to them who the Messiah should be and what his work should be.

How their hearts burned as they listened to this. And the cross, the suffering of Christ was central to it all.

This was the way Christ enters into his glory. This is why he came. And they began to see it. Yes. Their hearts began to believe. They burned. Their hearts burned as new things were opened up to them.

And then suddenly, quite suddenly, they were home.

And how disappointing for them. They could have kept listening and kept walking with this man. But now they are home. But it is late in the day. Maybe this man needs a place to stay. Maybe he needs some food, but he doesn't seem to want to stay.

But verse 29 says they constrained him. And the idea is that they put pressure on him to stay. They not only invited him, but they put pressure on him to come and eat with them and stay at their place and he consented. He came into their home.

Verse 30.

After he comes into their home he sits down with them to eat. Weary travelers, hungry and they sit down of a meal. But this is more than just a meal with a new friend. This new friend and this stranger turns this meal into a memory. He breaks bread and gives it to them.

And there is something strikingly familiar in what he is doing. Suddenly they remember the miracles in the breaking of the bread and the feeding of the multitudes. And they had

²¹ Ephesians 6:12.

²² John 18:36.

heard about the last supper and the breaking of the bread. And this is all tied to what he has just been talking about, the necessity of the cross and the suffering and the Savior and putting it all together. They recognized who this is.

And you can see them reaching out to touch him, to grab him. And suddenly he vanishes from their sight. He is gone.

The purpose of this appearance has been accomplished. Now they understand the Scriptures. Now they know that Jesus must have suffered in order to enter into his glory.

Are they disappointed? Are they sad because he is gone? That is not what the text tells us there. They are filled with joy.

Verse 33.

“And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem.”²³

And verse 35.

“And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.”²⁴

And verse 32.

“And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?”²⁵

They are overjoyed because of the understanding that they now have. Their eyes have been opened. Their hearts burned for the words that he spoke. There is joy on the way back to Jerusalem.

“He is risen.”

That very same night they got up and in the darkness of the night came to Jerusalem with this great news to share with the other disciples and the apostles who were rejoicing and other appearances of Christ. They are filled with joy because now they understood the Scriptures and the necessity of the suffering of Christ.

What a realization, what an understanding for them to come to.

It reminds us of the book of Acts when Paul went on his missionary journeys and he went into the synagogues and he reasoned from the Scriptures concerning Christ. And these Jews had all their practices and all their knowledge of the Old Testament Scripture and

²³ Luke 24:33.

²⁴ Luke 24:35.

²⁵ Luke 24:32.

the word that Paul preached by the power of the Holy Spirit would open their hearts and they rejoiced and believed the gospel and received it with great joy.

That is what has happened here. These men believe. They understand the necessity of the suffering and the cross of Christ.

Now why did Christ have to suffer? We have really looked at all that in Isaiah chapter 53. I said the gospels record for us when and where and how Christ suffered. Isaiah 53 is beautiful because it tells us what the suffering of Christ was and why Jesus had to suffer. And central to it is the truth that he is the substitutionary Savior, that he bore our sins and so this is a part of their faith and their understanding here, their relief, the burning of their hearts.

“Our sins have been covered and paid. That is why he had to suffer. He didn’t come for political reasons to deliver us from the power of Rome, but to deliver us from our spiritual enemies.”

Their hearts burned within them. This is why Christ had to suffer.

What a marvelous passage.

Let’s, as we close, draw some points of application from it and first is this that if your hearts are open to understand the Scriptures as Christ explains them here to these disciples, praise God and thank God for such an understanding of his Word.

There are so many people who hold this book, the Bible, in their hands, who revere it as a sacred document, but they have no understanding of what the Scripture is. And what is missing is their understanding of the necessity of the suffering of Jesus Christ.

This is the central theme of the Scriptures. Ought not Christ to have suffered? And as our eyes are opened to see that it is the overwhelming sense of our own guilt and sin and need of Jesus Christ that brings us to see God has to open our eyes to see that. Thank God that he has opened our eyes to see and to understand the suffering Savior and the cross as the message of the Scripture.

And then, second, let this live not just in your mind, but in your hearts. May our hearts burn as the hearts of these burned as Jesus preached to them the cross.

Like these disciples we can very often be confused by our earthly circumstances. We can very often looking at our own circumstances, wonder why the pain and why the suffering. That was part of their problem. They were sad. Why the suffering? Why the pain? They didn’t understand it. God seemed to be weak. And this is a part of what Jesus relieves, their grief. He comes to them to show them that suffering is the way to glory. That was true for him.

He had to suffer in order to come into his glory. And that is an important principle for us in our lives, too. This is the way of the Christian life, not the happy clappy, you pray, God will give it to you. No, the Christian life is a life of bearing a cross and following after Christ. And it may mean much suffering and rejection and persecution and perhaps even death. But this is the way to glory.

And that is what their faith grasps. The suffering was necessary.

May God give us to see that this morning as well so that it lives in our hearts.

Romans eight verse 17.

“If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.”²⁶

This is the answer to Christian living in this world.

And then, third, we have here encouragement to take our needs in prayer to the Lord. He appears here as the risen Lord. He is received, you might say, the beginning of his exaltation when he ascended. Then he sits at God’s right hand. But he is already in that state of exaltation here. He has conquered death. He is victorious. He is risen. And as the risen Lord he comes to these in their grief and listens.

And as you think about the risen Lord today who is he? Where is he? He is, Hebrews tells us, a merciful and faithful high priest touched with the feeling of our infirmities, sympathetic with us in our misery and our pains, but exalted at God’s right hand.

And so take your needs to the Lord. We may bring them sometimes—and this is the beauty of his intercession—we may bring them sometimes out of even sin. We can’t express our desires to God perfectly. But this is the beauty of his intercession and his love. He brings them perfectly to God for us.

And he shows that sympathy here in his recognition of their sadness. Let us listen to him. Let us not wrestle with him or with the Scriptures as we go through our lives, but let’s put our faith in this risen Lord.

Amen.

Father, we thank thee for the risen Lord, for this glorious, wonderful message that he spoke to these two confused and sad disciples. And we thank thee that we have opened eyes. We pray give us burning hearts of the Word. Be with us in the rest of this day. Pardon our sins, we pray, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

²⁶ Romans 8:17.