

To Seek and to Save the Lost

On the Road to Emmaus

Luke 24:13-35

Rev. Freddy Fritz

May 29, 2016

On the Road to Emmaus

Scripture

Jesus was crucified on Friday, Nisan 14, 30 AD. He was buried in Joseph of Nicodemus' tomb before sundown on that same day. But, three days later, on the first day of the week, that is, on Sunday, at early dawn, several women went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared in order to anoint the body of Jesus. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus (Luke 24:1-3). Two angels told the perplexed women, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen" (Luke 24:5-6).

The first evidence that Luke provided for the resurrection of Jesus was the empty tomb (24:3). The second evidence was the angelic announcement (24:6). And the third evidence was Jesus' appearance to two disciples on the road to Emmaus (24:13-35).

Let's read about Jesus' appearance to two disciples on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24:13-35:

¹³ That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴ and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷ And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸ Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" ¹⁹ And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰ and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. ²¹ But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these

things happened. ²² Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, ²³ and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. ²⁴ Some 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 And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

²⁸ So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, ²⁹ but they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.” So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰ When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. ³¹ And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. ³² They said to each other, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?” ³³ And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, ³⁴ saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” ³⁵ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread. (Luke 24:13-35)

Introduction

Scripture records ten appearances of Jesus following his resurrection until his ascension into heaven. Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-18), to the other women (Matthew 28:8-10), to Peter (Luke 24:34), to ten disciples (Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-25), to eleven disciples, including Thomas (John 20:26-29), to two disciples on the road to Emmaus (24:13-35), to the disciples in Galilee (Matthew 28:16-20; John 21:1-24), to five hundred people (1 Corin-

thians 15:6), to James and the apostles (1 Corinthians 15:7), and, finally, to those who saw his ascension (Acts 1:4-12).

Of all Jesus' appearances after his resurrection, his appearance to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus is the most detailed and vivid. This appearance took place on Resurrection Sunday, Nisan 16, 30 AD, the day Jesus rose from the dead.

Lesson

Jesus' appearance to two disciples on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24:13-35 shows us how they came to recognize that Jesus was indeed alive.

Let's use the following outline:

1. The Reunion with Jesus (24:13-16)
2. The Request from Jesus (24:17)
3. The Reply to Jesus (24:18-24)
4. The Rebuke by Jesus (24:25-27)
5. The Recognition of Jesus (24:28-32)
6. The Report about Jesus (24:33-35)

I. The Reunion with Jesus (24:13-16)

First, let's begin by looking at the reunion with Jesus.

Luke said in verse 13, **"That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem."** **"That very day"** is of course Sunday, the day Jesus rose from the dead. But at this point the two disciples, Cleopas and his companion, did not yet know what had happened to Jesus. They **were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem**, although scholars don't know the exact location of **Emmaus**.

While the two disciples were walking along, presumably late on Sunday afternoon, **they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened** (24:14) concerning the death, burial, and disappearance of Jesus from his tomb.

Luke said that **while they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him** (24:15-16). Although Jesus was now in a glorified state (after his resurrection from the dead), it is clear that he had a body that was similar to his former human body. The two disciples walking to Emmaus thought he was just another traveler, and they did not recognize him. However, their lack of recognition was a divine act, as Luke says that **that their eyes were kept from recognizing him**.

God must open our eyes before we can know Christ (1 Corinthians 12:3) or the things of Christ (Acts 16:14; 1 Corinthians 2:9-16).

II. The Request from Jesus (24:17)

Second, notice the request from Jesus.

As they were walking along, Jesus **said to them, “What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?” And they stood still, looking sad** (24:17). The two were **sad** about what had happened to Jesus, but they were so surprised that someone from Jerusalem was unaware about all the recent news that they literally stopped in their tracks. Jesus, of course, was engaging them in a way that would enable him to share the good news about his resurrection with them.

III. The Reply to Jesus (24:18-24)

Third, observe the reply to Jesus.

Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?” (24:18). Apparently, everyone in Jerusalem was talking about what had happened to Jesus. There is such a delicious irony in Cleopas’ answer, as Philip Ryken notes, “In truth, *Cleopas* was the one who did not know what was happening in Jerusalem! Jesus knew it all, better than anyone, for it had

happened to him! . . . Instead of being the only person who did *not* know what was happening, Jesus was the only person who did!”¹

Nevertheless, Jesus asked another question, **and he said to them, “What things?”** (24:19a). Jesus wanted the two disciples to explain what they knew. By the way, asking questions is a good way to get people to clarify what they know about Jesus.

Luke wrote in verses 19b-21a the answer that the two disciples gave Jesus. They said:

“Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.”

The two disciples articulated what so many people in Jesus’ day were hoping for: **one to redeem Israel**. But, like almost everyone else they were hoping for a political or military redeemer from Roman oppression. Instead, Jesus was a spiritual redeemer from sin.

Luke continued with the answer of the two disciples in verses 21a-24:

“Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. Some 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.”

The two disciples told Jesus the astonishing news about the empty tomb and the angelic announcement about Jesus’ resurrection. But at this point they did not know what to make of all the news. Had

¹ Philip Graham Ryken, *Luke*, ed. Richard D. Phillips, Philip Graham Ryken, and Daniel M. Doriani, vol. 2, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2009), 645.

the body of Jesus simply disappeared? Or had Jesus really been resurrected back to life? They did not know.

The important point here is that the resurrection of Jesus is essential to the good news of the gospel. As Michael Ramsay said, “The Gospel without the Resurrection is not merely a Gospel without its final chapter; it is not a gospel at all.”² Philip Ryken put it this way, “There is no good news unless Jesus rose from the dead. The gospel is the crucifixion plus the resurrection, which equals forgiveness for our sins and everlasting joy in the presence of God.”³

IV. The Rebuke by Jesus (24:25-27)

Fourth, look at the rebuke by Jesus.

Jesus rebuked them **and he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!”** (24:25). The disciples had what we call the Old Testament, and had they believed what was written in there, they would have known that the Messiah would come as a spiritual redeemer.

Jesus continued, **“Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself** (24:26-27). Jesus preached to them the good news of the Gospel from the Old Testament. I agree with Philip Ryken who said, “What any preacher would give to hear *that* sermon, when the Word of God Incarnate explained the Word of God written!”⁴

So, what exactly did Jesus say were **“the things concerning himself”**? We don’t know, of course. But I love the way Bishop J. C. Ryle summarizes what Jesus may have said to the two disciples. He wrote:

² Michael Ramsey, quoted in Paul Beasley-Murray, *The Message of the Resurrection*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 17.

³ Philip Graham Ryken, *Luke*, 648.

⁴ Philip Graham Ryken, *Luke*, 649.

How shall we explain these words? In what way did our Lord show “things concerning himself,” in every part of the Old Testament field? The answer to these questions is short and simple. Christ was the substance of every Old Testament sacrifice, ordained in the law of Moses. Christ was the true Deliverer and King, of whom all the judges and deliverers in Jewish history were types. Christ was the coming Prophet greater than Moses, whose glorious advent filled the pages of prophets. Christ was the true seed of the woman who was to bruise the serpent’s head, – the true seed in whom all nations were to be blessed, – the true Shiloh to whom the people were to be gathered, – the true scape-goat, – the true brazen serpent, – the true Lamb to which every daily offering pointed, – the true High Priest of whom every descendant of Aaron was a figure. These things, or something like them, we need not doubt, were some of the things which our Lord expounded in the way to Emmaus.⁵

The Bible is not primarily a book about parenting or finances or relationships or morality or love or whatever. Instead, it is a book about Jesus Christ and God’s redemption that is found in Jesus alone.

V. The Recognition of Jesus (24:28-32)

Fifth, notice the recognition of Jesus.

So the two disciples and Jesus drew near to the village of Emmaus to which they were going. Jesus acted as if he were going farther, but the two disciples urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.” So he went in to stay with them (24:28-29). Luke did not say where Jesus was going when **he acted as if he were going further.** Jesus had other places to go and other people to see to continue his saving work before he ascended to his heavenly Father.

Yet, the two disciples wanted Jesus to stay with them. They **urged him strongly** to stay with them. How glad Jesus must have

⁵ J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on Luke*, vol. 2 (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1879), 501.

been to have two of his disciples urge him to stay with them! How it gladdens his heart when his disciples want to spend time with him. Of course the two disciples wanted this stranger to continue explaining the Word of God to them. And how thrilled they must have been when they finally realized who was actually in their home! As Norval Geldenhuys said, “If they had not invited Him He would have passed on, and they would have forfeited the inexpressible privilege of discovering that it was their risen Lord who had been with them and had instructed them.”⁶

When Jesus was at table with the two disciples, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him (24:30-31a). It was a divine act that enabled them to recognize Jesus because Luke said that **their eyes were opened.**

God must open the eyes of every sinner in order to see Jesus savingly. By nature we are spiritually dead, and we are unable to see who Jesus is. But God opens our eyes spiritually to see Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

As soon as they recognized Jesus, Luke said that **he vanished from their sight (24:31b).** In the days following his resurrection, Jesus was showing his disciples that he really had risen from the dead. Once they saw him, his visible presence was no longer necessary.

Then the two disciples **said to each other, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?” (24:32).** This is such a fascinating statement. Their hearts did not burn when they saw Jesus. No, their hearts burned within them while Jesus talked to them on the road, *and while he opened to them the Scriptures.* Jesus’ revelation of himself to them simply confirmed the Word of God to them.

The point is that every person today may have a similar experience as the two disciples in that it is the opening of the Scriptures that causes our hearts to burn. If you were converted to Christ as an adult,

⁶ Norval Geldenhuys, *The Gospel of Luke*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951), 634.

you will recall how God's Word came alive after your conversion. And after your conversion there have been times when you have studied God's Word and your heart burned within you. That happens when you see Christ in the Scriptures. That happens when you see how God's Word is all about Jesus Christ and God's redemption that is found in Jesus alone.

VI. The Report about Jesus (24:33-35)

And finally, observe the report about Jesus.
Luke said the following in verses 33-35:

And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

The journey back to Jerusalem would have taken them about two hours. By now it was dark, and it was dangerous to be out on the road after dark. But they were so excited that Jesus was alive that they had to share the good news with the others. In a very short space of time, the apostles also saw Jesus, and they too came to believe in the reality of Jesus' resurrection.

I like Darrell Bock's statement about what happened to them. He said, "While the apostles did not expect resurrection, once they saw it, they were ready to die for the faith because they knew that death could not conquer them."⁷ That is so true! In fact, scholars believe that all but one of the apostles were martyred for their belief in Jesus and his resurrection.

What about you? Do you believe that Jesus is alive? If you do believe that Jesus is alive, tell others about it!

⁷ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke: 9:51–24:53*, vol. 2, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1996), 1905.

Conclusion

Therefore, having analyzed Jesus' appearance to two disciples on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24:13-35, we should believe that Jesus is indeed alive and tell others about him.

Phil Callaway said that one sleepy Sunday afternoon when his son was five-years-old, they drove past a cemetery together. Noticing a large pile of dirt beside a newly excavated grave, his son pointed and said: "Look, Dad, one got out!"

Phil said, "I laughed, but now, every time I pass a graveyard, I'm reminded of the One who got out."⁸

Jesus is indeed alive! God raised him back to life on the third day.

I would like to conclude this message with two applications. First, if you are not a Christian, believe that Jesus is indeed alive. Turn to God in faith and in repentance. The apostle Paul concluded his sermon to the people of Athens with these words, "The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31).

And second, if you are a Christian, tell others about Jesus. Tell family members about Jesus. Tell neighbors about Jesus. Tell colleagues about Jesus. Tell friends about Jesus. Let us follow the example of the two Emmaus disciples who risked life and limb to rush back to Jerusalem to tell their friends and loved ones that Jesus is indeed alive. Amen.

⁸ See <http://www.preachingtoday.com/illustrations/2009/april/1040609.html>.

Mission Statement

The Mission Statement of the Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church is:

*To bring people to Jesus Christ
and membership in his church family,
develop them to Christlike maturity,
equip them for their ministry in the church
and life mission in the world,
in order to magnify God's name.*

Sermons by Rev. Freddy Fritz

This sermon, and other sermons, by the Rev. Freddy Fritz can be found at:

1. www.tampabaypresbyterian.org/sermons
2. www.sermoncentral.com/contributors/freddy-fritz-sermons-11181.asp
3. www.sermonaudio.com/source_detail.asp?sourceid=Fred-dyFritz

Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church (PCA)

Answers for Life!

Address: 19911 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., Tampa, FL 33647

Telephone: (813) 973-2484

Fax: (813) 973-4673

Email: Office@TampaBayPresbyterian.org

Web site: www.TampaBayPresbyterian.org

PRAYER:

Father, thank you for raising Jesus back to life again. Thank you for this marvelous narrative of Jesus' appearance to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. When they began their journey, they were so despondent and sad. But, when the Scriptures were opened up to them about Jesus, their hearts burned within them. Finally, hope was born within them when they recognized Jesus.

O God, may it be so for every one of us. May we study the Scriptures to see Jesus. May our hearts burn within us as we find Jesus in every passage of Scripture. And ignite our passion to tell family and friend, colleagues and neighbors the good news that the tomb is empty, Jesus is alive, and forgiveness of sins and hope for eternity is found only in Jesus Christ.

And for this I pray in Jesus' name.

BENEDICTION:

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and always. Amen.

CHARGE:

Now, brothers and sisters, go and serve God wholeheartedly!