

The Hard to Recognize Jesus

Luke 24:13-32

¹³ And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And they were talking with each other about all these things which had taken place. ¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing, Jesus Himself approached and began traveling with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him. ¹⁷ And He said to them, "What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?" And they stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸ One of them, named Cleopas, answered and said to Him, "Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?" ¹⁹ And He said to them, "What things?" And they said to Him, "The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people, ²⁰ and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to the sentence of death, and crucified Him. ²¹ But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened. ²² But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning, ²³ and did not find His body, they came, saying that they had also 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 exactly as the women also had said; but Him they did not see." ²⁵ And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" ²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures. ²⁸ And they approached the village where they were going, and He acted as though He were going farther. ²⁹ But they urged Him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is getting toward evening, and the day is now nearly over." So He went in to stay with them. ³⁰ When He had reclined at the table with them, He took the bread and blessed it, and breaking it, He began giving it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight. ³² They said to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?"

Acts 1:9-11

And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; ¹¹ Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

Introduction: Yesterday I was at a funeral. I was asked to, among other things give the eulogy, different people later were invited to chime in and speak to the life of the person and to remember them. It was in many ways a meeting similar to what happens in our churches every Sunday. We gather week after week and we talk about the life that the Lord Jesus lived. And as we talk someone listening in could think that we were reminiscing about the dead. We recollect all His actions some 2000 years ago in Israel. From those stories we extract examples and directions on how we too can live as he lived. But from the beginning of the church this was not how it was. They didn't gather to celebrate the life that Jesus lived. Neither should we. They came together under the certain fact of His resurrection. They came and celebrated the life He was living; the life He was living in their very midst, at that very moment. They taught us not to say "Jesus did" but to say, "Jesus does." Because He rose again from the grave we are not to ask the question so commonly asked, "what would Jesus do." Instead we can ask, "What would

Jesus do through me.” The word’s Christ spoke are the words Christ speaks. **He has risen. Past is but prologue to the present, promise to the future.** Because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, we go back to this Word not to gather in our memories and to extract some wisdom trickling down from the ages. No. We go to it because in it Christ still speaks to reveal Himself to us.

The account of Christ meeting these two disciples along to road to Emmaus suggests a number of wonderful new realities introduced for us all because of His raising again from the Dead. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead changes everything for history. But more anything else it keeps Christ in history. He has never left the scene. He is alive and he is here.

These two men for the moment are speaking of Christ the way we too often are tempted to speak of him ourselves. They speak of him as one who is no longer on the scene. **Luke 24:19-21** - *they said to Him, “The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who **was** a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people,²⁰ and **how** the chief priests and our rulers **delivered** Him to the sentence of death, and **crucified** Him.²¹ But we **were** hoping that it was He who **was** going to redeem Israel.* The irony is that they are speaking in this way right in his face and to his presence and in his ear... as if he weren’t really there at all. What a contemporary moment. There is a regular eulogizing of Jesus that goes in lives of people. We speak of Him as if He were not really among us. But He is... He has risen.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ as these men will learn means among other things that **WE CAN KNOW THE LORD JESUS NOW... WE CAN LIVE WITH HIM TODAY.**

I. Knowing Jesus now...

It has been almost twelve years now since my father died. I can’t tell you how many times I find myself in the day wishing we could just sit down and talk with one another. I’d like his thoughts on any number of decisions that face me in the week. I wish we could share meals together. I’d like to share with him exciting moments or just some of the new funny and entertaining things that come my way. I enter my office from my house to take up study and thought and I remember how many times I entered into his study to talk and dream and plan and learn and discuss things and as I enter the doors of my study I wish at times that he could pass over the threshold with me. But he is not here now. He left 12 years ago.

They didn’t know it but they were in the moment enjoying the wisdom this one who was walking with them was imparting to them. He was opening up the word to them and teaching them in a way that was just like the way Jesus had taught them. And though they didn’t realize it... at that moment they were with Him... talking to Him... learning from Him... Knowing Him... Living with Him. ...*they urged Him, saying, “Stay with us, for it is getting toward evening, and the day is now nearly over.” So He went in to stay with them.³⁰ When He had reclined at the table with them, He took the bread and blessed it, and breaking it, He began giving it to them.³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him...*

Because Jesus has risen understand— You can ask Him to stay with you. You can ask Him to sit at your table and break bread with you.

Ex. I remember when growing up those times when family or friends would come into town. The dinner table took on such a great dynamic of fond conversations. Dad would

steal a little extra time from his work and we would all go take our guest for a drive into the mountains. While they were there the long summer days seemed shorter and sweeter. And then came the day they had said they would leave and the lobbying would begin. “*Stay another day, don’t leave yet.*” Do you have those friends who you love to have come visit you and when they say, “*I have to be going*” you honestly say, “*No, stay a little longer. Stay and let’s keep this going?*”

Jesus is alive. And He is just such a friend. You want Him to, He stays with You. You can know Him now. Talk to Him now. Live with Him today.

Revelation 3:20 “*I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door I will come into Him and sup with Him and He with me.*” This is why He came. Christ came to die for your sins— To provide by his own suffering in your place a just basis for your forgiveness. You are forgiven your sins because He paid their debt. **And then He rose again to live with you and in you and for you and from you His Holy, good, loving fellowship.** He has come so that you can know Him now... and live with Him today.

Now let share with you something about the Jesus you can know now...

II. **Jesus as they knew Him and we can know Him too...**

Maybe you have had a friend who has had a good friend you had not yet met. And that friend liked to talk of his buddy. He described them in a way that you just couldn’t help but enjoy. You hoped you would meet them one day. And one day you did. And the great part of the meeting was that you found them to be just like they were described and their company did not disappoint your expectations. Some of you might have that bent towards match making. You promote a young man to a young girl and vice-versa. And you feel victory when they discover that your good words about the other were true. My wife’s sister spent some time promoting a young man to one of daughters... Abby and Kevin will get married this summer... Aunt Rhonda is happy that Abby found out she was right.

These two men on the way to Emmaus described Christ as *a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people.* And as they recounted to this stranger, they walked with, the description of Jesus... their minds would have run through the past three or four years in which they been with him. They would bring to their thoughts his footsteps along the Sea of Galilee, and his voice echoing teachings to hushed crowds on the hillsides and in the temple precincts. They would have recalled his healing touch upon the sick; His nurturing embrace of little children. They thought of His friendship with sinners and His reproach of the smugly self righteous.

If you have ever wondered how God would live if he lived as a man... you have answer in Jesus. When Christ walked on the earth those **33** years or so, He walked among men and women having His great glory and power veiled. He came in human flesh and lived His life as a man.— But as a perfect, sinless man. The Lord kept the law perfectly because the law was patterned after himself. The Lord feed the hungry multitudes because as God He had always been their provider. The Lord loved His own because God is love, and He had always loved them. And the Lord Jesus’ walk on earth, as described in the Gospels, gives us a starting point from which to know Him. It gives us

something to anticipate from Him. If you ask *what is life with the Lord Jesus like now to those who know Him* I would say that it is much like it was then. He is as advertized.

When you meet Him you will know that you are with the greatest person history has ever known. And as you read the New Testament accounts of Christ, once you receive Him and begin living with him today, you'll say... *Yes He is still just like that.*

- You will know that you are with a friend of sinners and you will know that you are the sinner he is with.
- You will know that he feeds the hungry and has compassion on the lonely.
- You will know him as the one who said then, "I will never leave you or forsake you." And that he keeps the promise.
- You will know his indignation against your willful pride and his patience with your stubborn ways.
- You will know him just as he was and as they knew him...
- You will read these accounts and not read them as a record of days past but of character present. You read of this Christ and you will be able say that the mystery of the good news is, "*Christ in me... Christ with me... me with Christ.*"
- You will know him as they knew him. And He won't disappoint...

But still there will be surprises!

III. Jesus not so recognizable...

Remember they didn't recognize on that day... along the way.

Read the accounts of the encounters after his resurrection...

- **Mark 16:9** tells us that first He appeared to Mary Magdelene... **John 20:14** tells us that at that time she "*did not know that it was Jesus.*" Then he spoke her name and she recognized Him.
- **Luke** tells us that when He first appeared to His disciples they were "*startled, frightened, they thought they saw a spirit.*" He invited them to touch him and showed them the wounds in his hands and feet. **Luke 24:41** says, "*While they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling he said to them, 'do you have anything to eat.'*"
- **John 21:4** reveals to us that for the 40 days after his resurrection and before his ascension Christ was not always with his disciples. They would be with him for a period of time and then he would be somewhere else... likely with someone else. At some point in time they moved from Jerusalem to the Sea of Galilee. There they were fishing all night. Just as the day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. But soon they heard his voice. He told them to throw their net in one more time. They did and the net was full of fish. This same miracle had happened to them when first they began following Christ. They knew it was him. Peter swam ashore. They came ashore. He feed them fish that was waiting there for them. **Verse 12** says, "*Now none of the disciples dared ask him, 'Who are you?' They knew it was the Lord.*" But do you get the idea... something has changed... he is what he was then but he is something more... something marvelous, wonderful, something more.
- Matthew tells us of the moment when he commissioned them to go into all the world to preach his good news. It says they arrived at the Mount where he had told them to go to meet with him. When they arrived they he appeared before them arriving out of the invisible world... and **Matthew 28:17** says, "*They worshiped him.*" This was a new

thing... they were not found worshipping him before his resurrection. Now they did. They prostrated themselves before him in recognition of his deity and adored him as the Son of God. But actually vs. 17 says, *“They worshiped him, and some doubted.”* Now they were not doubting his resurrection. It was this appearance of Jesus that mystified them. One commentator by the name of Besser, I think, gives us the reason for these questions in their minds, *“So beautiful, so unfadingly beautiful was his appearance and yet so mild, so entirely human and brotherly; so almighty and powerful, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Conqueror of death and hell, and yet so entirely the Lamb of God with marks of the slaughter upon him. The dim eyes of human flesh could not at once accommodate themselves to the blessed vision of the Resurrection and the Life.”*

In fact if all we are to do is try to reconstruct an image of Christ from the past we won't have an accurate picture of who He is. Today He is not dressed in sandals. His eyes don't drip with sentimental sweetness in which He is so often portrayed. He is not wearing the same garments. Those who gambled away at the foot of His cross. He is all that he was in those days of his earthly ministry... and yet he is now shining out so much more of his glory and power that when you meet him... as you meet him he will overwhelm you. John the Apostle who at one time rested his head on his chest saw him again... **Revelation 1:13-18** He saw Christ standing in the temple of heaven...

I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash. ¹⁴ His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. ¹⁵ His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. ¹⁶ In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength. ¹⁷ When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, “Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, ¹⁸ and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

Christ is more than you know from this word alone... He is almost unrecognizable in his glory... familiar and yet fearful and awesome... He has fully taken up His Divine power to reign and rule and so when He comes in your life He comes to overcome...

Do you know Him in this way? Do you know him in this day? Really are you living with Jesus now or simply recounting old tales? Have you found in Him that friend you read of? Have you discovered He is awesome and fearful and mysterious as well, and to be worshipped and obeyed and adored? This is the purpose of Salvation... this is the application of the cross... just this... that you may know Him. This is the Savior who has risen for you. If you have not met Him you can. If you have met Him I encourage you all more to live in Him today.