

Connecting Through the Word
Walking and Talking with Jesus
Luke 24

Luke 24:13-33

¹³ Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem.

¹⁴ And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

¹⁵ So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them.

¹⁶ But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.

¹⁷ And He said to them, "What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?"

²⁵ Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!

²⁶ Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?"

²⁷ And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

²⁸ Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther.

²⁹ 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.

³⁰ 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.

³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.

³² 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?"

³³ So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together,

"Christianity is in its very essence a resurrection religion," says Dr. John Stott. "The concept of resurrection lies at its heart. If you remove it, Christianity is destroyed."

The message of the Gospel rests on the death of Jesus Christ and His resurrection (1 Cor. 15:1-8). The Apostles were sent out as witnesses of His resurrection (Acts 1:22), and the emphasis in the Book of Acts is on the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

This explains why Luke climaxed his book with a report of some of the appearances of Jesus after He had been raised from the dead. He first appeared to Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-18), then to the "other women" (Matt. 28:9-10), and then to the two men on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-22). At some time, He also appeared to Peter (Luke 24:34) and to His half brother James (1 Cor. 15:7).

That evening, He appeared to the Apostles (Luke 24:36-43), but Thomas was not with them (John 20:19-25). A week later, He appeared to the Apostles again, especially for the sake of Thomas (John 20:26-31). He appeared to seven of the Apostles when they were fishing at the Sea of Galilee (John 21). He appeared several times to the Apostles before His ascension, teaching them and preparing them for their ministry (Acts 1:1-12). When the believers discovered that Jesus was alive, it made a tremendous difference in their lives.

In this final chapter of Luke, we find believers with four different heart conditions:

There were some with perplexed hearts
There were some with discouraged hearts
There were some with troubled hearts
Then there were many with joyful hearts

Perplexed Hearts: He Opens the Tomb (Luke 24:1-12)

We do not know at what time Jesus arose from the dead on the first day of the week, but it must have been very early. The earthquake and the angel (Matt. 28:2-4) opened the tomb, not to let Jesus out but to let the witnesses in. "Come and see, go and tell!" is the Easter mandate for the church.

Mary Magdalene had been especially helped by Jesus and was devoted to Him (Luke 8:2). She had lingered at the cross (Mark 15:47), and then she was first at the tomb. With her were Mary the mother of James; Joanna; and other devout women (Luke 24:10), hoping to finish preparing their Lord's body for burial. It was a sad labor of love that was transformed into gladness when they discovered that Jesus was alive.

"Who will roll the stone away?" was their main concern. The Roman soldiers would not break the Roman seal, especially for a group of mourning Jewish women. But God had solved the problem for them; the tomb was open *and there was no body to prepare!*

At this point two angels appeared on the scene. Matthew 28:2 and Mark 16:5 mention only one of the two, the one who gave the message to the women. There was a kind rebuke in his message as he reminded them of their bad memories! More than once, Jesus had told His followers that He would suffer and die and be raised from the dead (Matt. 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:17-19; Luke 9:22, 44; 18:31-34). How sad it is when God's people forget His Word and live defeated lives. Today, the Spirit of God assists us to remember His Word (John 14:26).

Obedient to their commission, the women ran to tell the disciples the good news, but the men did not believe them! (According to Mark 16:14, Jesus later rebuked them for their

unbelief.) Mary Magdalene asked Peter and John to come to examine the tomb (John 20:1-10), and they too saw the proof that Jesus was not there. However, all that the evidence said was that the body was gone and that apparently there had been no violence.

As Mary lingered by the tomb weeping, Jesus Himself appeared to her (John 20:11-18). It is one thing to see the empty tomb and the empty graveclothes, but quite something else to meet the risen Christ. We today cannot see the evidence in the tomb, but we do have the testimony of the witnesses found in the inspired Word of God. And we can live out our faith in Jesus Christ and know *personally* that He is alive in us (Gal. 2:20). Keep in mind that these women did not expect to see Jesus alive. They had forgotten His resurrection promises and went to the tomb only to finish anointing His body. To say that they had hallucinations and only thought they saw Jesus is to fly in the face of the evidence. And would this many people hallucinate about the same thing at the same time? Not likely. They became excited witnesses, even to their leaders, that Jesus Christ is alive!

Discouraged Hearts: Jesus Opens Their Eyes (Luke 24:13-35)

Emmaus was a small village eight miles northwest of Jerusalem. The two men walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus were discouraged disciples who had no reason to be discouraged. They had heard the reports of the women that the tomb was empty and that Jesus was alive, but they did not believe them. They had hoped that Jesus would redeem Israel (Luke 24:21), but their hopes had been shattered. We get the impression that these men were discouraged and disappointed because God did not do what they wanted Him to do. They saw the glory of the kingdom, but they failed to understand the suffering.

Jesus graciously walked with them and listened to their "animated heated conversation" (Luke 24:17, wuest). No doubt they were quoting various Old Testament prophecies and trying to remember what Jesus had taught, but they were unable to put it all together and come up with an explanation that made sense. Was He a failure or a success? Why did He have to die? Was there a future for the nation?

There is a touch of humor in Luke 24:19 when Jesus asked, "What things?" *He had been at the heart of all that had happened in Jerusalem, and now He was asking them to tell Him what occurred!* How patient our Lord is with us as He listens to us tell Him what He already knows (Rom. 8:34). But we may come "boldly" ("with freedom of speech") to His throne and pour out our hearts to Him, and He will help us (Ps. 62:8; Heb. 4:16).

The longer Cleopas talked, the more he indicted himself and his friend for their unbelief. What more evidence could they want? Witnesses (including Apostles) had seen the tomb empty. Angels had announced that Jesus was alive. Witnesses had seen Him alive and heard Him speak. The proof was there! "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17, NKJV). This explains why Jesus opened the Word to these two men as the three of them walked to Emmaus. **Their real problem was not in their heads but in their hearts** (see Luke 24:25 and 32, and note v. 38). They could have discussed the subject for days and never arrived at a satisfactory answer. What they needed was a fresh understanding of the Word of God, and Jesus gave that understanding to them. He opened the Scriptures and then opened their eyes, and they realized that Jesus was not only alive *but right there with them!*

What was their basic problem? They did not believe all that the prophets had written about the Messiah. That was the problem with most of the Jews in that day: they saw Messiah as a conquering Redeemer, but they did not see Him as a Suffering Servant. As they read the Old Testament, they saw the glory but not the suffering, the crown but not the cross. The teachers in that day were not unlike some of the "success preachers" today, blind to the *total* message of the Bible.

That was some Bible conference, and I wish I could have been there! Imagine the greatest Teacher explaining the greatest themes from the greatest Book and bringing the greatest blessings to men's lives: eyes open to see Him, hearts open to receive the Word, and lips open to tell others what Jesus said to them!

Perhaps Jesus started at Genesis 3:15, the first promise of the Redeemer, and traced that promise through the Scriptures. He may have lingered at Genesis 22, which tells of Abraham placing his only beloved son on the altar. Surely He touched on Passover, the Levitical sacrifices, the tabernacle ceremonies, the Day of Atonement, the serpent in the wilderness, the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53, and the prophetic messages of Psalms 22 and 69. **The key to understanding the Bible is to see Jesus Christ on every page.** He did not teach them only doctrine or prophecy; He taught "the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:27).

These men had talked to Jesus and listened to Jesus, and when He made as though He would go on alone, they asked Jesus to come home with them. *They had been won by the Word of God,* and they did not even know who the Stranger was. All they knew was that their hearts were "burning" within them, and they wanted the blessing to last.

The more we receive the Word of God, the more we will want to fellowship with the God of the Word. The hymn writer expressed it perfectly: "Beyond the sacred page/I seek Thee, Lord."

Understanding Bible knowledge can lead to a "big head" (1 Cor. 8:1), but receiving Bible truth and walking with the Savior will lead to a burning heart.

Jesus opened the Scriptures to them, and then He opened their eyes so that they recognized Him.

Now they knew for themselves that Jesus was alive.

They had the evidence of the open tomb, the angels, the witnesses, the Scriptures and now their own personal experience with the Lord. The fact that Jesus vanished did not mean that He abandoned them, for He was with them even though they could not see Him; and they would see Him again.

The best evidence that we have understood the Bible and met the living Christ is that we have something exciting to share with others. The two men immediately left Emmaus and returned to Jerusalem to tell the believers that they had met Jesus. But when they arrived, the apostles and the others *told them* that Jesus was alive and had appeared to Peter! What a difference it would make in our church services if everybody who gathered came to tell about meeting the living Christ! If our services are "dead" it is probably because we are not really walking with and listening to the living Savior.

The "breaking of bread" (Luke 24:30, 35) refers to a meal and not to the Lord's Supper. As far as we know, the Apostles were the only ones Jesus had instructed about the Lord's Supper; and it was not likely that our Lord would celebrate it at this time. Jesus revealed Himself to them during a common meal, and that is often how He works.

We must learn to see Jesus in the everyday things of life. However, as we do celebrate the Lord's Supper from time to

time, we want Jesus to reveal Himself to us in a new way, and we must not be satisfied with anything less.

Troubled Hearts:

He Opens Their Minds (Luke 24:36-46)

So many exciting things had happened that day and so much was unexplained that ten of the Apostles, plus other believers, met together that evening and shared their witness with one another. While Cleopas and his friend were telling their story, *Jesus Himself appeared in the room!* And the doors were shut! (John 20:19)

You would have expected the believers to heave a great sigh of relief and sing a hymn of praise, but instead they became terrified, frightened, and troubled (Luke 24:37-38). They thought a ghost had appeared! It all happened so suddenly that they were totally unprepared, even though several of them had already seen the risen Christ. Mark 16:14 suggests that the condition of their hearts had something to do with the expression of their fears.

Jesus sought to calm them.

The first thing He did was to give them His blessing: "Peace be unto you!" He even repeated the blessing (John 20:19-21). "The God of peace" had raised Jesus from the dead, and there was nothing for them to fear (Heb. 13:20-21). Because of His sacrifice on the cross, men and women could now have peace with God (Rom. 5:1) and enjoy the peace of God (Phil. 4:6-7).

The next thing He did to calm them was to show them His wounded hands and feet (Ps. 22:16) and assure them that He was not a ghost. Songwriters sometimes mention His "scars," but the record says nothing about "scars." The "prints" of Calvary were on His glorified body (John 20:24-29), and they are still there (Rev. 5:6, 9, 12). It has well been said that the

only work of man now in heaven is the marks of Calvary on the body of the exalted Saviour.

Jesus even ate some honey and fish to prove to His doubting followers that He was indeed alive and real, and He even invited them to feel His body (Luke 24:39; 1 John 1:1).

With our limited knowledge, we cannot explain how a human body can be solid flesh and bones and still pass through closed doors and appear and disappear, or how it can be glorified and still carry the marks of the cross. We do know that we shall one day be like Him and share His glory (1 John 3:1-2).

Luke 24:41 describes a perplexing emotion: "they believed not for joy." It was just too good to be true! Jacob had this same feeling when he got the news that Joseph was alive (Gen. 45:26-28), and the nation of Israel experienced it when God gave them a great deliverance (Ps. 126:1-3). Jesus had told His disciples that they would rejoice when they saw Him again, and the promise was fulfilled (John 16:22).

The final source of peace and assurance is the Word of God, so our Lord "opened their understanding" of the Old Testament Scriptures, just as He had done with the Emmaus disciples. After all, the believers were not being sent into the world to share their own personal experiences but to share the truths of the Word of God. We today cannot touch and feel the Lord Jesus, nor is it necessary that we do so; but we can rest our faith on the Word of God (1 John 1:1-5).

Jesus not only enabled them to understand the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, but He also reminded them of what He had taught them, and He explained how it all fit together. Now they began to understand the necessity for His suffering and death and how the Cross related to the promise of the kingdom (see 1 Peter 1:10-12).

What a privilege it was for them to listen to Jesus expound the Word!

**Joyful Hearts:
He Opens Their Lips (Luke 24:47-53)**

But privilege always brings responsibility; they were to be witnesses of all that He had said and done (Acts 1:8). A witness is somebody who sincerely tells what he has seen and heard (Acts 4:20), and the word *witness* is used in one way or another twenty-nine times in the Book of Acts. As Christians, we are not judges or prosecuting attorneys sent to condemn the world. We are witnesses who point to Jesus Christ and tell lost sinners how to be saved.

How could a group of common people ever hope to fulfill that kind of a commission? God promised to provide the power (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8), and He did. On the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon the church and empowered them to preach the Word (Acts 2). After Pentecost, the Spirit continued to fill them with great power (see Acts 4:33).

Witnessing is not something that we do for the Lord; it is something that He does through us, *if* we are filled with the Holy Spirit. There is a great difference between a "sales talk" and a Spirit-empowered witness. "People do not come to Christ at the end of an argument," said Vance Havner. "Simon Peter came to Jesus because Andrew went after him with a testimony." We go forth in the authority of His name, in the power of His spirit, heralding His Gospel of His grace.

Luke 24:50-52 should be compared with Mark 16:19-20 and Acts 1:9-12. For some reason, our Lord's ascension is not given the prominence in the church that it deserves. Think of what it meant *to* Him to return to heaven and sit on the throne of glory! (John 17:5, 11) His ascension is proof that He has conquered

every enemy and that He reigns supremely "far above all" (Eph. 1:18-23).

In heaven today, our Lord ministers as our High Priest (Heb. 7:25) and our Advocate (1 John 2:1). As High Priest, He gives us the grace we need to face testing and temptation (Heb. 4:14-16); and if we fail, as Advocate He forgives and restores us when we confess our sins (1 John 1:6-10). As the glorified Head of the church, Jesus Christ is equipping His people to live for Him and serve Him in this present world (Eph. 4:7-16; Heb. 13:20-21).

Through the Word of God and prayer, He is ministering to us by His Spirit and making us more like Himself. Of course, He is also preparing in heaven a home for His people (John 14:1-6), and one day He will return and take us to be with Him forever.

The last thing our Lord did was to bless His people, and the first thing they did was to worship Him! The two always go together, for as we truly worship Him, He will share His blessings. He not only opened their lips to witness, but He also opened their lips to worship and praise Him!

Dr. Luke opened his Gospel with a scene in the temple (Luke 1:8ff), and he closed his Gospel the same way (Luke 24:53). But what a contrast between the unbelieving, silent priest and the trusting, joyful saints!

Luke has explained how Jesus went to Jerusalem and accomplished the work of redemption. His book begins and ends in Jerusalem. But his next book, The Acts of the Apostles, would explain how that Gospel traveled from Jerusalem to Rome!

Is the Gospel going out to the ends of the earth from your Jerusalem?