

# Opened the Scriptures

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[ 0 : 00 ] Our text this morning is Luke 24, the final chapter, verses 13-35.

! They were talking with each other about everything that had happened.

As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them, but they were kept from recognizing him. He asked them, what are you discussing together as you walk along?

They stood still, their faces downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, are you only a visitor to Jerusalem? And do you not know the things that have happened there in these days? What things? he asked. About Jesus of Nazareth, they replied. He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people.

[ 1 : 15 ] The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel.

And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning, but didn't find his body.

They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see. He said to them, how foolish you are and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?

And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the scriptures concerning himself. As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going further.

[ 2 : 30 ] But they urged him strongly, stay with us, for it is nearly evening. The day is almost over. So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and began to give it to them.

Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the scriptures to us?

They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven and those with them assembled together and saying, it is true, the Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.

Then the two told what had happened on the way and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, send your spirit this morning so that we too may see your son and may understand what is revealed about him in the scripture.

In the name of that son, Jesus, we pray. Amen. This past year, Tom Brady has been working as an NFL commentator.

[ 4 : 03 ] He talks during the games and tells us what's going on. At the beginning of the season, Fox ran a series of ads to advertise to tell us that Tom Brady was going to be working in this capacity.

And that ad series was titled Tom Brady Knows Football. And if you're familiar at all with Tom Brady, you know that that's a very true statement.

Tom Brady is undisputably the best quarterback who has ever played professional football. He has more Super Bowl wins than any franchise.

And he is responsible for seven, right? Six when he played with the Patriots and then again when he played for the Buccaneers.

More wins and over his career, I mean, he was undisputably the best, right? But he was not the most naturally talented player.

[ 5 : 21 ] I think when we look at someone like that, someone who is so incredibly good, we want to think that there is something otherworldly, something supernatural about them.

And in a way, that relieves us of any responsibility, right? I could never do what Tom Brady does. And that's true. But I could be a lot better at football if I put in the work that he put in. He was not the best quarterback in the NFL, talent-wise.

But he worked harder by far than any other quarterback. He studied opponents' defenses. He understood every way that they might line up against him.

In one of those commercials, he's telling just an ordinary person, when the safety rotates down, just rip the seam, right?

[ 6 : 29 ] For those of you who haven't played football, the safety is somebody who plays defense and is in deep pass coverage kind of in the middle of the field. And what he's saying there is when that safety comes forward, there's a gap about a third of the way across the field and 20, 25, 30 yards down the field.

And that's where you've got to throw the ball, right? Everything that he saw, he knew what it meant and what he needed to do about it, right?

That's how well Tom Brady played. Tom Brady knows football. And I think when we read about Christ and we read the gospel narratives about Christ, we think that Jesus' understanding of what God's plan was, was the result of his divine nature, right?

God, in Jesus, is omnipotent. He knows all. And we get pictures of that throughout the gospels. But I think what we don't understand is how much of that plan is actually laid out in the scriptures.

There's nothing in the gospels that tells us that the only reason Jesus understood God's plan was his divine nature. And in fact, it's quite the opposite.

[ 8 : 03 ] Not only in our text today, but all throughout the gospels, it is emphasized over and over and over how Christ's work was a fulfillment of what was written in the Old Testament.

It was laid out all the plan. All the way along. And Jesus went through that plan.

We read it this morning, right? And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. But that's not the only thing it says, right?

In John 5, this is what Jesus says. You search the, he says this to the Pharisees. You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life.

And it is they that bear witness about me. Yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.

Jesus is saying, the scriptures that you care about, they're all talking about me.

[ 9 : 12 ] In John 14, Jesus promises the apostles, but the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to remembrance all that I have said to you.

All these things that Jesus was teaching them, we can read, actually. I mean, I would argue that all of these fulfillments of prophecy that the apostles talk about, not only in the Gospels, but also in all of the letters of the apostles.

These are the things that Jesus taught to them concerning himself. And then the Holy Spirit brought those back to their minds when they were looking back and reflecting on these things.

And in fact, the New Testament missionaries take great pains to emphasize that that's how it works, that they were teaching the Old Testament scriptures.

In Acts 17, we read, And Paul went in to the synagogue, and as was his custom, on three Sabbath days, he reasoned with them from the scriptures, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and rise from the dead.

[ 10 : 37 ] Saying, this Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ. And in Acts 18, we read about Apollos, right? Who was trained by Priscilla and Aquila to become a great missionary.

And we read, Apollos powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the scriptures that the Christ was Jesus. He wasn't saying, take my word for it.

He was showing them from the scriptures that they believe, that they put their trust in, that Jesus was the Christ.

And in 1 Corinthians 15, this is what Paul writes. For I delivered to you, as of first importance, what I also received.

That Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures. That he was buried. That he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures.

[11:42] In two verses, Paul repeats himself, right? It's that important. In accordance with the scriptures. This was laid out. God's character and his plan for salvation is already present in scripture, even before Jesus was born.

Jesus knew scripture. Tom Brady knows football. Jesus knows scripture. So what is the content of the scriptures?

What did he know? The New Testament writers are so clear that Christ's story is laid out in the Old Testament.

But when we talk about the gospel, we almost always go to the New Testament. Right? In fact, many Christians don't see a lot of value in the Old Testament.

It's a historical record. It shows us Israel as an example of how not to respond to God. Most people don't look at it as a preview of what God would do.

[12:54] So how clear is it? First, I think we do need to acknowledge it's not a complete revelation. Christ completes and clarifies God's revelation when he comes.

That said, God does not change. Right? What God reveals in the Old Testament remains true. And God works in clear patterns, in ways that carry through, not just the Old Testament.

It's not as though God went through the whole Old Testament and then changed his mind about how he was going to work. Right? That's not who God is. God does not change.

God works in consistent ways, in patterns. And Christ expected us to understand God and his work much more clearly.

[13:55] Not only did that come through in the text for this morning, but in many of the gospel texts, when he's questioned on resurrection, what does he say?

You are wrong because you do not know the scriptures or the power of God. Right? There's a repeated phrase that Jesus uses time and time again.

Have you not read? Have you not read the questions that he's asked? Have you not read? Why don't you know this already?

Haven't you read? So let's take a look at a couple of these patterns. One is that when God's plan appears to have failed, right?

When hope is burning low, God acts in this supernatural way to revive his work. Isaac is probably the shining example of this, right?

[15:06] At the end of Genesis 11, we have read through the line of Shem, right? The third son of Adam and Eve, who was the one to replace Abel, who was killed by his brother Cain, right?

So we have this arc from Genesis 3 to 11, where really we keep moving away from God, right?

Genesis 11 culminates in the Tower of Babel, where there is no one who is faithful. They are trying to make their way to heaven on their own. No one is a follower of God.

And at the end of Shem's line is Abraham, or Abram at the time, and his wife is barren. So it's the end of this line.

There is no hope. And God comes. And he calls Abraham. And he makes a covenant with him.

[16:17] And he promises a son. Right? A barren wife, but he promises a son. And he acts in a miraculous way to create life where it shouldn't exist.

Where we have no hope for life. God steps in and brings life. Once again, in Exodus, right?

Israel is enslaved. There's a Pharaoh who doesn't remember Joseph. And he orders all the baby boys of the Israelites to be killed.

This is the end. Except, Moses' mother hides him from the Egyptians as long as she can.

And she sets him afloat in the Nile. Probably not with an expectation that he's going to survive. But out of that death, God raises up him.

[17:28] He puts him in Pharaoh's palace. He raises him up to become the leader of Israel. To bring his people out of Egypt.

To rescue them from their slavery. Samson. Do you know the birth story of Samson? We don't even know his mother's name, actually.

Manoah's wife. That's all that we're told. But Israel was under the hand of the Philistines. They had been conquered by the Philistines. And were subject to them for 40 years.

A full generation. And Manoah's wife was barren. And yet, the angel of the Lord comes to her. And promises a son who would begin to deliver Israel from the Philistines.

And that's what happens. Out of death. Out of hopelessness. God works. Again.

[ 18 : 29 ] In Samuel. Right? Israel has forgotten God. The period of the judges has gotten worse and worse and worse. Eli, the priest, is faithful.

He cannot hear God's voice. He is deaf. Physically and spiritually. But Hannah. Comes and prays for a son.

She too is barren. And yet. God answers her prayer. And brings Samuel. A prophet. Who will call Israel back to God.

If this is how God works. Right? Over and over and over. Is it any surprise.

That when Israel is conquered by the Romans. Scattered. Around the world. Is it any surprise. That when her religious leaders are completely corrupt.

[ 19 : 32 ] That God would show up. With an act of power. Is it any surprise. That God would. Bring forth. A son. From a womb.

That could not bear a son. What about. Another pattern. That we see. Right? God. Gives life. God. Rescues his people. Through. His own. Sacrifice. He bears the cost. Of the salvation. When the Israelites.

Right? Are wandering in the desert. Wandering in the wilderness. They. Run out of food. And water. Right? And they come to Moses. And they say. We're dying. We don't have water.

We can't live without water. We are. Dying. And what does God do? He gives them.

[ 20 : 30 ] Water. From a rock. But in order for them. To get that water. What has to happen? Moses.

Strikes. The rock. With his staff. Right? The rock. Must be struck. To give life.

To Israel. And in 1 Corinthians 10. What does Paul tell us? The rock. That they drank from. Was Christ. Where does he get that idea?

Well. Maybe it's this pattern. When the Israelites. Are being punished. With venomous vipers. How does God rescue them?

Right? He instructs Moses. Make a serpent. And lift it up on a pole. So that everyone who looks at it. Will be saved.

[ 21 : 28 ] Will live. Everyone who looks at it. Everyone who turns toward it. In Isaiah 45. God says. Turn to me.

And be saved. Right? Same. Same image. Turning and looking at this snake. Turning and looking to God.

And then Isaiah 52. Right? When the suffering servant. Is introduced. This prophecy. Of God's servant. Who would bear. Rejection.

And pain. And suffering. And death. On behalf of Israel. Right? How is he introduced? Behold. My servant. My servant. Shall act wisely.

He shall be high. And lifted up. This is. What Jesus tells us. In John 3. Right?

[ 22 : 25 ] As Moses. Lifted up. The serpent. In the wilderness. So must the son of man. Be lifted up. That whoever believes in him. May have eternal life.

And again. In John 12. And I. Jesus. When I am lifted up. From the earth. Will draw all people. To myself. He said this.

To show. By what kind of death. He was going to die. Or what about. When Abraham. Brings Isaac. Up the mountain. To offer him. As a sacrifice. Now Isaac. Asks. The question. Where is the lamb. For the burnt offering. And Abraham's answer.

Is the most beautiful. Prophecy in scripture. God. Will provide. For himself. The lamb. For the burnt offering.

[ 23 : 23 ] And. We think. Often. It's easy. To get that story. A little confused. Because. At the end of the story. Abraham. Does find.

A ram. And he sacrifices it. But. That's not. The answer. To that. Prophecy. Right. God. Will provide. A lamb.

Not a ram. A lamb. Where. Is it. That we find. The lamb. That God. Will provide. In our place. In John 1.

We get the answer. As John the Baptist. Pries out. Behold. The lamb. Of God. Who takes away. The sin. Of the world. And this.

Also. Marks. Jesus. As the Passover lamb. As John. Also. Emphasizes. At his. Crucifixion. That none. Of Jesus. Bones. Were broken.

[ 24 : 19 ] Just like. The command. In Exodus. Twelve. About. The Passover lamb. That they should not. Break. Any of. His bone. And in. First Corinthians.

Five. Paul. Seizes. On this image. Too. As he. Too. Refers. To Christ. As our Passover lamb. All of these. Symbols.

Are waiting. For the reality. That they symbolize. A stone. Struck. To provide. To provide. Life giving water. A serpent.

Lifted up on a pole. To give life. To those. Who turn. To it. And a lamb. Who God will provide. To die. In the place.

Of God's people. The content. Of the Old Testament. Is Christ. In scripture. God reveals.

[ 25 : 13 ] To us. His character. And his work. He tells us. What matters. To him. Right. His hatred. Of sin. His tenderness. For the vulnerable. His care.

For the world. And his passionate. Love. For his people. And. He tells us. How he works. The way. That he works.

Is. The opposite. Of how the powers. Of the world. Work. Right. The gods. Of the nations. Require. Them. To sacrifice. Their children. But our God.

Requires. His people. To rest. And let him. Provide. And. God's mightiest. Acts of power. Use. The weakest. And most. Feeble. Instrument. So. When we encounter. Christ. Who is. The character. And the work. Of God. All of that.

[ 26 : 10 ] That. The old testament. Has told us about. Is present. All of scripture. Not just the gospels. They all tell us.

About the character. And work. Of God. That is Christ. So. What do we do about it?

Right. Well. Tom Brady. Knows football. Right. Whatever. He sees. On the field. He understands. What's happening. He knows.

How it's going to play out. And he knows. What he is supposed. To do about it. And Christ. Knew the scriptures. Right. He understood. He understood.

The things. That he saw. Going on. In his life. And in the world. He knew. How God's plan. Would play out. And he knew. What his role was.

[ 27 : 06 ] Maybe he didn't. Know the details. Scripture. Didn't reveal. The specific ways. That he would be insulted. But he knew. That he would be scorned.

And shamed. And abandoned. Right. God's revelation. God's revelation. Is for us. Too. Scripture. Is a miracle.

It reveals. The infinite. Transcendent. God. The creatures. Who are made. Of dust. And. And. And. And. And. And. Often. We think of.

Scripture. As. Virtual reality. Goggles. Right. Those big things. That. People put on their faces. And they see a totally different. World.

We. We read scripture. And it. Tells us about. Stories. In far away places. And long past. Events. And. Often.

[ 27 : 59 ] We think that the. Way. That we. Should honor. God's revelation. Is. By. Insisting on. Things like. Inerrancy. Right. Everything happened. Exactly.

That way. But then. We take off. Our virtual. Reality. Goggles. And. This is. Real life. Right. What we see. Around us. Is what's.

Actually. Real. Yes. Those. Things may have. Happened. A long time. Ago. But. This is. What's real. Our ultimate. Reality. Is the things.

Going on. Now. In our lives. In the news. And with the amount. Of information. Dumped on us. By our technology. We barely have time.

To understand. Things. In our lives. And we've got it. Exactly. Backward. Scripture.

[ 28 : 53 ] Tells us. The ultimate. Reality. It's not. About. The things. That happened. Millennia. Ago. It's about. The creator.

And sustainer. Of the universe. In scripture. God. Tells us. What he is like. How he made. The world. To work.

Who he made us. To be. And why. Neither. We. Nor. The world. Operate. According. To his instruction. And scripture. Tells us.

The ways. That he deals. With that problem. And how. His plan. Is unfolding. The parts. We can see. And the parts. We can't. And scripture.

Tells us. How the story. Ends. Every headline. That we read. And. In the news. And every encounter. That we have.

[ 29 : 49 ] They're just a small part. Of that. Grand. Narrative. If we want. To better understand. What is going on.

In the world. And in our lives. We need to spend. More time. In scripture. Listening to what God. Is telling us.

About. Reality. Jesus. Put it. Very simply. Have you not. Read. What was said. To you. By God. When you say it. Like that. It really does. Seem kind of dumb. That we wouldn't. Prioritize. The things. That God. Has said. To us. And yet.

The scriptures. Are not enough. This. Is just a book. No matter. How perfect. The words.

[ 30 : 47 ] Are. Human language. Cannot. Communicate. God. It's a category. It's a category. Error. Right. Like a pet turtle.

Doing algebra. Read verse. 32. With me. Again. They asked each other. Were not our hearts. Burning within us.

While he talked. To us. On the road. And opened. The scriptures. To us. Later. In Luke. 24. Jesus. Again. Appears. To his disciples.

We read this. He said to them. This is what I told you. While I was still with you. Everything. Must be fulfilled. That is written. About me. In the law.

Of Moses. The prophets. And the Psalms. Then. He opened. Their minds. So they could. Understand. Scripture. God's revelation.

[ 31 : 45 ] To us. Is. Something. He does. Through ordinary means. Through a book. Through. Listening.

Through. Eating and drinking. Through the waters. Of baptism. And yet. That's not. All. That they are. Because.

God's act. Of revelation. Is a miracle. For God. To. Reveal himself. To us. Requires. A divine. Act. Right. Not something. Natural. It requires. Something supernatural. We cannot. Understand. God. Unless. He.

Opens. Us. And opens. The scriptures. To us. It is. An act. Of the Holy Spirit.

[ 32 : 42 ] That's. Why. We always. Begin. Sermons. With a prayer. Because. This is not. An academic. Exercise. No matter.

How. Well. I speak. Or. How. How. Poorly. I. Speak. That. Is. Not. How. You. See. God. That. May. Be. Used. By. God. But.

The. Way. That. You. See. God. Is. By. The. Power. Of. The. Holy. Spirit. He. Acts. Through. The. Scriptures.

He. Opens. Them. To. Us. And. He. Opens. Us. To. The. Scriptures. Let's. Pray. Now. For. That. Heavenly.

Father. We. Want. To. Better. Understand. Who. You. Are. And. What.

[ 33 : 42 ] You. Are. Doing. In. The. World. We. Better. Want. To. Understand. Ultimate. Reality. We.

Want. To. Understand. Who. Christ. Is. What. He. Has. Done. What. He. Is. Doing. Now. How. We. Are. His. People. And. How. We. Are. To. Act. As. His. People. And. Father. We. Fail. So. Often. To. Understand. Because. We. Do. Not. Study. The. Scriptures. The. Way. That. We. Should. Father. We. Need. Need. Your. Help. Ignite. In. Us. Burning.

[ 34 : 41 ] Hearts. To. Consume. The. Revelation. That. You. Have. Given. Us. But.

Father. We. Know. That. We. Cannot. Understand. It. On. Our. Own. We. Cannot. See. You. Even. By. Reading. The. Scriptures. Unless. Your. Holy. Spirit. Reveals. You. To. Send. Your. Spirit. So. That. We. May. See. You. So. That. We. May. Understand. What. You. Have. Told. Speak.

To. Us. Give. Us. Hearts. To. See. You. In. The. Name. Of. Jesus. We. Pray. We.