

PM Luke 24:13-35 On the road to Emmaus

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Preacher: Rev David White

[0 : 00] This evening is found in Luke's Gospel, Luke chapter 24, reading from verse 13. Luke chapter 24, reading from verse 13.

That very day, two of them were going to a village named Emmaus. That very day being the first, the morning the Lord rose from the dead.

So that very day, two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. And they were talking with each other about these things that had happened.

While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

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.

[1 : 08] 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?

And he said to them, what things? And they said to him, concern him, 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.

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.

[2 : 10] 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.

And he said to them, O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken. 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 all the scriptures about the things concerning himself.

So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going further. But they urged him strongly saying, stay with us, for it is towards evening and the day is now fast spent. So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him.

[3 : 23] And he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us on the road? While he opened to us the scriptures.

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 bread. Amen.

May God add a blessing to this public reading of his word. Amen. This evening's Bible reading involves two journeys.

One from Jerusalem to Emmaus. And then one from Emmaus back to Jerusalem. And it made me think about why is Jerusalem so significant?

[4 : 35] In the Old Testament, Jerusalem is referred to, I don't know who counts these things, but apparently 669 times. As Zion or the holy city or God's holy hill.

The place where God dwells. The temple in Jerusalem specifically was regarded as the house of God. Or the house where God resided.

Jesus visited Jerusalem on a number of recorded occasions. He was there as a child, twelve years old. No, sorry, he was there as a child, as a baby.

Presented at the temple. And regularly attended the festivals. Ages 12 years old, Jesus attended the feast of Passover with his parents.

And remained behind when they left for home. When eventually his parents returned and found him. He was in the temple sitting among the teachers.

[5 : 36] Listening to them. And asking questions. There are numerous records in the Gospels of Jesus teaching in the temple courts.

After he cleansed the temple of those who would seek to turn the temple into a den of thieves. The Last Supper took place in the upper room in Jerusalem.

Prior to Jesus' arrest and subsequent crucifixion. And in the book of Revelation we read about the new Jerusalem. The heavenly city.

Revelation 21 verse 2. I saw the holy city. The new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. Prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

So Jerusalem is a place where God is. Whether we understand this to be spiritually. As in the Old Testament. Is dwelling in the temple.

[6 : 35] Physically. As in today's passage. Manifesting the person of the risen Lord Jesus. Or as a promise of that which is to come. Revelation 21.

Behold the dwelling place of God is with men. He will dwell with them. And they will be his people. And God himself will be with them. And be their God.

Jerusalem as a city is therefore highly significant. And as we think about this passage tonight.

We're all on a journey aren't we?

A journey called life. The road is not always well marked or straightforward. It can have twists and turns often with very poor visibility.

Our lives can be impacted by those around us. Sometimes in a negative way. Our own actions also get us into trouble.

[7 : 34] At least mine do. Our lives can become congested with unnecessary burdens and baggage. And we can find ourselves in cul-de-sacs and dead ends.

I read a wonderful book on this evening's passage written by a man called David Smith. And the book is entitled Moving Towards Emmaus. David states that many people are walking away from Jerusalem.

Downcast and troubled. In other words walking away from God. They're walking towards their own personal Emmaus. He says. Whatever that may mean.

Another theological writer. Frederick Boucher. Boucher suggests that Emmaus is the place we go to.

In order to escape. When we despair of the world. Emmaus is whatever we do. Or wherever we go to make ourselves forget. That the world holds nothing sacred.

[8 : 37] That even the wisest and bravest and loveliest of people decay and die. That even the noblest ideas that men have and have had.

Ideas about love and freedom and justice. Have always in time been twisted out of shape. By selfish people for selfish ends. We live in post-Christendom.

Post-Christendom. Post-modern. Pluralistic society. So how are we as believers going to reach the people around us.

Who are walking away from Jerusalem. Towards Emmaus. And I'd like that to be our main thought tonight. So how are we as believers going to reach people.

People around us who are walking away. From Jerusalem. Towards Emmaus. So what can we learn from this passage. This evening passage describes two men.

[9 : 42] Walking away from Jerusalem. They're downcast and dejected. They're full of grief and loss. So downcast are these pilgrims.

That they fail to recognize. That their traveling companion. Is the risen Lord. Verse 16. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. So Jesus comes alongside these men.

And identifies with their grief and loss. Cleopas. One of the pilgrims. Tells his story. Regarding the events that have taken place. In Jerusalem in these recent days.

He speaks about a person. He speaks about a person. In which they had placed. All their hopes for the future. But he speaks about Jesus. In a past tense.

Cleopas says. He was a prophet. We had hoped. And even his body. Has been stolen. These men. [10:44] Had high hopes. Of Jesus. But their hopes. Had been dashed. Their hopes. Had been based. On a one-sided reading.

Of scripture. They had anticipated. A Messiah. Who would restore Israel. In a worldly. And political sense. Their cultural expectation.

Does not allow. For a prophet. To be treated. Like criminal. Despite the fact. That the Old Testament. Is full of occasions. When prophets. Are treated badly.

By other people. So Jesus listens. To what they have to say. And then he gently. Directs them. To look again. At the scriptures. In many ways.

The predicament. These men. These two men. Find themselves in. Is of their own. Choosing. They have been told. By the women. That Jesus had risen. But they elected.

[11:43] To believe. The men. All that they really knew. Was that the tomb. Was empty. Verse 24. But him. They did not see. In the culture.

Of the time. Women were regarded. As marginalized people. So much so. That as in this morning. Passage we read. Their words. Seemed to them. As idle tales. Luke 24.

Verse 11. So these two men. Were not able. Or ready. To receive the revelation. Of the truth. That Jesus Christ. Had risen. As we read through that.

This passage. This evening. It appears that Jesus. Reprimands them. Gently. For their unbelief. For their unbelief. On the grounds. That the suffering. Death and resurrection.

Of the Messiah. Are written about. In the Old Testament scriptures. And he takes them. To those scriptures. He leads these pilgrims. Through the scriptures.

[12:37] From the writings of Moses. Through the prophets. And by doing so. Gives them. A different perspective. Verses 26 and 27. The Messiah.

Himself. The Lord Jesus. Is not. An earthly king. Come to restore Israel. But a heavenly king. And a suffering servant.

Who came to pay the price. For the sin of the world. God. This king. Came to redeem. And restore. A lost and fallen humanity.

So that we might all. Have the hope. Of heaven. Of a heavenly future. In the kingdom of God. So I think as Christians today.

We need to be aware. That we all read the Bible. Through our own cultural filters. And the filters of our society. How does our understanding of scripture.

[13:36] Affect our world view. And how does our world view. Affect the way we share our faith. Historically. The close relationship.

Between church and state. Has molded the gospel. Into a western world view. And this has been challenged. In recent times.

By people from the third world. A chap called Cardoza Orlandi. A South American theologian. States. That the western world view.

Of scripture. Has had a negative. As well as a positive. Influence. On the developing world. And he goes on. To explain some examples.

Of this. Colonialism. Cultural and religious superiority. The imposition of denominations.

Dependency on the western church. And exploitation of the peoples.

[14:31] In the developing world. And I just wonder tonight. I ask myself this question. Am I prepared to listen to other voices? It's interesting that everyone has an opinion.

About the Bible. But so very few people have actually read it. And before I became a minister. I was a volunteer with Gideon's. And we used to take Bibles into schools.

To give to children. And my colleague was at the front. And he was explaining about the Bible. You know. 66 books written by 40 different people. Over all these years.

And so on and so on. And two boys. To my right. Were just completely fooling about. And saying things. Like Bible bashes. And all this kind of stuff. And I thought.

To myself. I can't let that go. So I actually interrupted. What my colleague was saying. And I said to these two boys. You seem to have a lot of opinions.

[15:28] About the Bible. Have you actually read it? And of course. They hadn't. And so their view of the Bible. And their view of what is written.

In the Bible. Was picked up from the attitude. Of parents and others. And therefore they were behaving. In the way they were behaving. And it actually opened up.

A whole conversation. And the headmaster took over. And asked if anybody. Had read any of the Bible. And it turned into. A really interesting morning.

And those children. Were then given a copy. Of the Gideon's. New Testament. These opinions. May be based. On historical knowledge. Confused with other religious beliefs. As well. It's little wonder. That people here in the West. Ask the question. What hope can there be.

[16:22] In a crucified Christ. In the church. We lean towards. A belief. That the world. Has gone adrift. Not the church. The mistake.

These pilgrims made. Was to dismiss. The witness. Of those. Whose testimony. Was capable. Of transforming. Their situation. This is the testimony.

Of the women. In concern. In turn. In the angel. Who told them. That Jesus was alive. Why do you seek the living. Among the dead. He's not here. But he's risen. In today's world.

Are we willing. To listen. To those. Who might. We might consider. As marginalized. Other voices. That come from. The developing countries. Such as Africa. And Asia. And South America.

In many ways. The church. In the west. Is compromised. In relation. To fundamental. Biblical truths. The current rift. In the Anglican church.

[17:21] Is an example. Of this. By agreeing. To bless. Same-sex marriages. Is this not. The thin. End of the wedge. To agreeing. To marry. Same-sex couples.

And things. Are moving. In that direction. Another critical example. Of this debate. Took place. In recent times. At the General Assembly. Of the Church of Scotland.

Regarding practicing. Homosexuals. Serving as ministers. And pastors. Within the Church of Christ. It's the voices. Of those. In the third world.

Who are very clearly. Saying. We believe. In the inherency. Of scripture. We are not prepared. To compromise. On what God has revealed.

Through his spirit. In his word. Jesus taught. And he showed. By example. That we are to love. The sinner.

[18:16] But we should not. Condone. And encourage. The sin. And life choices. Have consequences. So we as Christians.

Need to defend. God's purposed. Marriage. Between one man. And one woman. The marginalized voices. Are often the voices. That need to be heard.

In the history. Of the Church. These voices. Have sought to maintain. Truth and righteousness. Often. At horrendous. Personal cost. And even martyrdom.

It's true. It's true. That the mainstream church. In the West. Is in decline. People. Are metaphorically. Walking away. From Jerusalem.

Many of them. Are experiencing. The pain. Of loss. And loneliness. All these people. Suffer. Because we're not listening.

[19:14] To the marginalized voices. These are very real questions. That demand. Our attention. And if we're to take our stand.

Concerning the inherency. Of holy scripture. We need to consider. These issues. So let's return. To this evening's. Beautiful narrative.

Because it is a beautiful narrative. Jesus by coming alongside. These dejected pilgrims. And by empathizing with them. He develops.

An empathetic relationship. As they approach Emmaus. Jesus acts. As if he's going further. But they urge him to stay. To eat with them.

They in fact. Emphatically. Urge him to stay. Verse 29. Strongly. Urged him strongly. To stay. These two travelers.

[20:09] Together with their new companion. Then gather. Around a table. To eat. And then comes. The moment of revelation. Jesus took the bread.

And blessed it. And broke it. And gave it to them. Then we read. Their eyes were opened. And they recognized him. How was it.

That their eyes were opened. Where we don't know. Were they. Were they at the meal. In the upper room. Were they at the feeding. Of the five thousand. When the Lord broke bread.

Gave thanks. And fed. A multitude. Of people. We don't know. But what we do know. Is that in the action. Of taking. And breaking.

And blessing. The bread. And giving it to them. They recognized. That it was the Lord. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. And then.

[21 : 06] These two men. Expressed the presence. Of the risen Lord. I love this verse. Verse 32. Did not our hearts. Burn within us. While he talked with us.

On the road. While he opened to us. The scriptures. One of the tantalizing elements. Of this story. Is the report. That as soon.

As these pilgrims. Recognized. It was the risen Lord. He disappeared. From their sight. Verse 31. And I thought about this.

Our awareness. Of God's presence. Is always. What is in my experience. Elusive. And fleeting. It's on the edge. Of our perception. And yet. For these two men. This experience.

Was first hand. And very real. And it's the same. For us today. There are moments. When we feel. In a very real sense. The presence. And touch.

[22 : 00] Of the Lord. But these are fleeting. Moments. As the Holy Spirit. Spirit moves among us. Our faith. Is not only based.

On scripture. But on the sense. Of Jesus presence. Which is as real. As it was. With these two pilgrims. In that meal. In Emmaus.

So what was the. Reaction. Of these two. Invigorated. Disciples. Well verse 33. Tells us. They rose. They rose. That same hour.

And returned. To Jerusalem. And they found. The eleven. And those who were gathered together. Saying. The Lord. Has risen. Indeed. These two.

Dejected. Downhearted. Travellers. Who were moving away. From Jerusalem. From Jerusalem. Just a few hours. Earlier. Have had their lives. Completely turned around. Their witness.

[23 : 00] At this stage. Is to the other disciples. Not to the wider world. The task of witnessing. To the wider world. Must wait. Until they're empowered.

From on high. Until they receive. The Holy Spirit. At Pentecost. The thing is. They've totally changed.

They've been turned around. They're walking away. From Jerusalem. Downcast. Dejected. Sad. They meet.

With the risen Lord. And they go back. To Jerusalem. Rejoicing. And so this analogy. Of people walking away. From Jerusalem. Towards Emmaus.

Gives us the opportunity. To get alongside. These people. And to share with them. Something of the amazing truth. Of the love of God. Praying. That God will work.

[23 : 53] In their hearts. And lives. And turn them around. So they too. Can return towards. Jerusalem. Rejoicing. That Christ is risen. And have the hope. Of eternal life.

Witness and proclamation. Of their place. Among believers. As well as unbelievers. This glorious gospel message. Is foundational. To the believing community.

And it needs to be heard. Again and again. By those. In our community. And as we do so. What we're doing. Is we're confirming. And strengthening.

And encouraging. And deepening. Our own faith. By returning to Jerusalem. These two disciples. Join their experience. With that of Simon Peter.

And with the other disciples. Gathered there. At Pentecost. The Holy Spirit. Descends on all those gathered. And the disciples together.

[24 : 52] Become a collective witness. To the fact. That Jesus Christ. Is risen. We have. We have. We have. An extraordinary. Gospel.

To share. With those. Who are moving away. From Jerusalem. And there are very clear lessons. We can learn from Jesus. About how to reach.

Out. To these lost. And hurting souls. With the glorious gospel. Let's look again. At this passage. As Jesus walked. With these two pilgrims.

He showed that. We can. He showed that we can witness. In a very real. And personal way. These are the lessons. I believe. He exemplified.

We need to develop. The ability. To get alongside. People. And to listen. To their stories. Before we share. The gospel. Really.

[25 : 50] Honestly. Caring. For people. Who have their own. Struggles. In life. Identify. With their pain. And their sense. Of hopelessness.

Be honest. And empathetic. And show. That we do. Genuinely. Care. And then. Take a fresh look. At our personal. Understanding. Of scripture. Recognizing.

Our cultural. Filters. So that we. Once again. See the suffering. Rejection. And pain. Of the cross. Of Christ. As the route. To glory.

I think. We need to recognize. Our tendency. Towards superiority. And be prepared. To listen. And learn. From those. We have previously. Considered. To be marginal.

And irrelevant. We need to live out. Our faith. With integrity. Acknowledging. Our foolishness. And sometimes. Our arrogance. Our arrogance.

[26 : 48] And the overconfidence. We place. In what we think. We know. Because the key. To witness. Is to be prepared. To learn ourselves. To have childlike faith.

And do we respect. And do we respect. Other travelers. On the road. Between Jerusalem. And Emmaus.

And consider the possibility. That it's the western church. That is as much. At fault. As the world. I love.

The Lord Jesus Christ. And it's my. Heart's desire. That other people. Come to a saving. Knowledge of Christ. Now I'm fortunate. In that I have opportunity.

From time to time. To preach the word of God. To others. But then I ask myself. Well how did I come to faith. I came to faith.

[27 : 43] Because people. Got alongside me. And shared with me. Their experience. Of the love of God. That's how I came to faith. Most people.

Come to faith. Through one to one. With people like ourselves. And then. They'll go to a big. Like Billy Graham. Type gathering.

And the things. That the friend. That are shared with them. Then someone like. Billy Graham. God bless him. Is no longer with us. Touches. And they're chained.

For God. And they're brought. Into the family of God. But we have great. Opportunity. I believe. To really. Make a difference. In the lives.

Of other people. Being confident. In what we're sharing. The risen Lord.

[28 : 39] The risen Lord. Meets with us. And with others. On our personal rope. To Emmaus. In the ordinary places. And experiences. Of our lives. And in the place. To which we retreat. When life gets too much.

For us. This story. Teaches us. That Jesus. May come to us. In an unfamiliar. Guise. Than we least. Expect him.

So let's bring. These thoughts. To a conclusion. The risen. Lord. Still comes back.

To meet with us. On our particular. Journey of faith. Through the study. Of scripture. We can find. Our hearts. Strangely warmed.

Like John Wesley was. We mentioned this. This morning. In this journey. There is a movement. From understanding. The understanding. Of scripture.

[29 : 38] To the sharing. Of bread. And wine. Then to witnessing. And returning. To Jerusalem. Rejoicing. It's the pattern.

Of what we do. When we meet. With the risen Lord. And remember him. In the way. He instigated. We remember. And recognize him.

As the one. Who loves us. And who gave. His life. So that we might. Have life. Life. In all its fullness. Not only here. But for all.

Eternity. Easter's not over. When the sun goes down. On Easter Sunday. It stretches. Into the rest. Of our lives. Christ is risen. Every day. Of our lives. Christ is risen. And because of that. We have. The hope. Of eternal life. We like these pilgrims.

[30 : 31] On the road. Back to Jerusalem. A call. To the. To witness. To the fact. That Jesus. Is alive. That God. Loves people. That Jesus.

Is alive. And wants to become. A part. Of their lives. For others. And it's a wonderful message. It's a real privilege.

To be able to share. With others. This truth. Amen.