

Everything Fulfilled

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[0 : 00] This is the morning service at Holy Trinity on the 27th of April 2003. The preacher is Paul Dudley. His sermon is entitled Everything Fulfilled and is based on Luke chapter 24 verses 36 to 49.

I have a bittersweet relationship with physical challenge puzzles.

You know the ones. You get them at Christmas time usually and you've got to try and undo the knot without actually removing it from the bit of wood. Or you have to move one ball to another particular place but there's a big bit of wood in the middle of it.

Or you have to undo a wooden bits and pieces. And then you have to put it back together again. I love trying to work them out.

I just spend hours doing it. My mind loves solving problems and I love to try and work out the problem of trying to put those pieces back together. Last Christmas time one of my brother-in-laws received one of these puzzles.

[1 : 15] And we spent hours trying to work it out. I could try and visualise what I had to do in my mind. I had to take the rope back underneath and if I could get it over the other side of it and take it back through again then possibly I might be able to solve this puzzle.

My brother-in-law who didn't really visualise things just kept on fiddling with it and it fell out. Much to my frustration. I find it a bittersweet problem.

I just can't put them down. It infuriates me. I have to try and get to the bottom of it. I have to understand it there. And so I work so hard pulling it apart, putting it back together again, trying to work it out and to do it in the quickest time as well.

So when I come to the chapter 24 of Luke I feel a certain frustration here. Jesus has risen from the dead. He spoke about it.

He told his disciples that he would. And yet the disciples time and time again fail to see it. They can't put the pieces together of Jesus' resurrection and he's dead.

[2 : 34] They can't understand how it all fits together. But I feel the frustration of it that they don't get it, that they don't understand what Jesus came to do.

The question is, do we understand Jesus' death and resurrection? Do we understand how it all fits together? Do we understand the importance of Jesus' death and resurrection?

And does it impact on our lives? Is it seen clearly in our lives? Well, let me pray as we come to today's passage that we may have minds that are open.

That we may come to understand the significance of Jesus' death and resurrection. And we may apply it to our lives. So let me pray.

Father, we pray that you will indeed open our minds to your scriptures. That we may hear your word clearly. That we may understand it.

[3 : 36] That we may accept it. And that we may put it into practice in our lives. We ask this through your Son's name. Amen. Amen. You can imagine the excitement in the room where the eleven were and their followers.

Two who were on the road to Emmaus have just arrived back. And they're extremely excited about what has happened. And they start telling the eleven and the others gathered there, plus an extra person who happens to be there.

They start telling them the exciting news of what had happened. How they were travelling along the road feeling sad about all that had happened. on the way to Emmaus. But on the way a stranger came along beside them.

And the stranger then declared to them the things in the scriptures that pointed to Christ. When they got to Emmaus, they encouraged the stranger to stay with them.

The stranger stayed. And at the meal time he broke bread. And all of a sudden the two understood that it was Jesus who was there in their midst. That's why they were back there with the eleven and the apostles.

[4 : 46] That very hour they picked up from Emmaus and they headed straight back to Jerusalem. They were there to tell the other apostles and the other company that had gathered there all about it.

You can just imagine the excitement in the room. Telling the story. The women also would have been reminded of them seeing Jesus on that morning.

The great excitement. But the bewilderment at it all. What had happened? In the midst of all this, someone started speaking.

If you have your Bibles, you might like to open at Luke chapter 24. Today's reading, verse 36. While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, Peace be with you. They were startled and terrified and thought that they were seeing a ghost. After all they had been told, after the two had explained all that had happened to them on the way to Emmaus, after the women had declared that they had seen Jesus, sorry, after the angels had told them that Jesus was alive, after all these things, after the teaching that they received at the Last Supper, after the many predictions that Jesus made, after all these things, when they were face to face with the risen Lord Jesus, they were startled and terrified.

[6 : 19] They thought they were seeing a ghost. The puzzle is just laying there before them. All the pieces scattered. They just can't put it together.

They can't understand what is going on. They think it is a ghost. So Jesus begins to unveil the truth to them. He starts to help them to understand the actuality of his resurrection and the meaning behind it all to his disciples.

The first way is, he tries to explain that he is not a ghost. Look there in verses 39 and 40. Look at my hands and my feet. See that it is I myself.

Touch me and see. For a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have. There was Jesus standing in front of them. And he tells them, look, look at me.

Look at my hands and my feet. It is I. It is Jesus. He showed to them that he was not a resuscitated corpse, that he had not made a quick recovery, but that he was indeed one who had died and rose again.

[7 : 39] He had the marks of death on him. He also showed that he was not a ghost, not a figment of their imagination. He tells them to touch him.

A ghost or a figment of imagination cannot be touched. But Jesus says, here, touch me. Know that I am alive.

I once was dead, but I am now alive. So Jesus showed them his hands and his feet and they touched him.

At this point, you would expect them to leap with joy. Seeing is in believing. Surely they had seen Jesus. Surely they would fall down now and worship their risen Lord.

While in their joy, they were disbelieving and still wondering. The puzzle still lays before them.

[8 : 41] Could they really dare to believe that Jesus was risen from the dead? Could they dare to hope that he was alive? For them, even the physical appearance of Jesus being there in front of them was not enough for them to believe.

It was just too much to hope in that he would be in fact alive. So Jesus goes some additional steps to help them understand.

He goes beyond just the physical appearance. He goes beyond the attitude of seeing and believing because these disciples were not believing even though they were seen.

So Jesus goes on to explain again. He gives them another example that he is indeed physically alive. Have you anything here to eat?

They gave him a piece of broiled fish and he took it and he ate it in their presence. Jesus takes a piece of food, some fish and he eats it.

[9 : 53] A ghost cannot do this. He shows yet again that he is indeed not a figment of their imagination, not a ghost but the risen Lord Jesus. But after this brief meal he then goes on to explain the events that have just taken place.

His death and resurrection. He instructs them yet again on what has happened. He reminds them of his words that he spoke to them. Then he said to them, these are my words that I spoke to you

while I was still with you that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.

He reminds them yet again that everything that was spoken about in the Old Testament pointed to him was fulfilled in him. And at that moment as he was saying this we notice in verse 45 their minds were opened and they understood the scriptures.

At that moment the fog lifted. At that moment the veil was lifted. They were able to understand the significance and the meaning behind Jesus' resurrection.

They saw that he was there in fact in front of them the risen Lord but the meaning became clear. Jesus reveals it to them through the scriptures.

[11 : 22] When we look back through the scriptures we do indeed see that this Old Testament points forward to Jesus. When we go right back to the beginning of Genesis when God speaks about the serpent he declares that one would come from Eve someone who would crush the head of the serpent the one who would defeat Satan in Genesis chapter 3 verse 15 this is Jesus.

In Genesis chapter 12 we see the promises to Abraham being made. There God promises to Abraham that he would have a great people that there would be a great land and that they would be back in relationship with God that there would be blessings that would flow out through to the rest of the world.

These are fulfilled in Christ. The sacrificial system the temple all pointing towards Jesus. The promises made to David that a Messiah a king would come from his family a great king that would set up a kingdom that would last forever to fill in Jesus.

The suffering servant of Isaiah predicted there that one would come and suffer and take the penalty of sin of the world upon himself. This suffering servant Christ the king in Psalm 2 Christ the one to suffer predicted in Psalm 22 the Christ the one who was raised in Psalm 110 verse 1 Christ the one that would draw in the nations to himself Christ all of it the law of Moses the prophets the Psalms all pointing to all longing for Christ all longing for him to come and fulfill all the promises and all that was spoken about the disciples finally understood.

Jesus goes on to say in verse 36 and he said to them thus it is written that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day. At the heart of what Jesus came to do is his death and resurrection.

[13 : 50] But this is the reason why we've been taking so long for them to understand. It is the centrality of Jesus' death and resurrection that the scriptures point to.

It is here that fulfillment comes. The 3D picture that is on a wall you stare at it and you keep on looking at it trying to bring that 3D picture out but you can't just get it until someone explains to you how you have to blur your eyes and cross your eyes and all of a sudden the 3D picture comes out at you.

The 3D picture comes out for the disciples. Their mind is open. Their sinful minds that want to cloud the truth are open and they come to understand the centrality of Jesus' death and resurrection. resurrection. For once they have finally understood and accepted the necessity of Jesus' death and resurrection that it was central to God's plan once they have understood that Jesus then goes to tell them about the future.

He gives them their mission. He tells them what is about to happen. For you see although we have come to understand that we have come to see that the prophecies that Jesus spoke about his own death and resurrection have come to fruition.

[15 : 16] There are some things that we haven't seen come to fruition. The disciples have understood but what about Jerusalem? They haven't understood. They crucified him.

How are they going to come to understand about this? Simeon right back in the beginning in chapter 2 spoke about how this baby Jesus would one day be a light to the Gentiles.

How is the message to be preached to the Gentiles? It is here that Jesus gives the mission to his disciples. It is after they have understood his death and resurrection that he sends them on their mission.

Let me read to you verse 46 and 47 through the end. And he said to them Thus it is written that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations beginning from Jerusalem.

You are witnesses of these things and see I am sinning upon you what my Father promised. So stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.

[16:28] after they have understood Jesus' death and resurrection it is now time to go and declare God's forgiveness and repentance to proclaim it to the nations.

This was the apostles' role. This was the extension of Jesus' ministry. They were the ones to be the divine witnesses the ones to declare that forgiveness of sins could be had.

That a relationship with God was possible through Jesus Christ and his death and resurrection.

Jesus gives some details of how this is to take place.

That it was to start in Jerusalem. That they were to wait there. And not only were they to wait there but it was there that God would empower them for their mission. For their task it was there that God would pour out his Holy Spirit upon them.

Well the book ends with the question what happens? The answer is taken up in Luke's second book that he writes in Acts. There we see the fulfilment of these things.

[17:42] We see that the disciples do indeed wait in Jerusalem. That they do indeed receive the power from on high. That at Pentecost they receive the Holy Spirit that God empowers them for mission.

And we see them starting from Jerusalem and going out to the ends of the earth declaring forgiveness of sins and repentance. We see them working out in great power.

We see the church coming to life. the disciples coming to an understanding. The puzzle comes together for them.

They come to understand all that had taken place. But not only that, they came to understand what was about to happen in the future and their role in the midst of all that.

There are two important messages that they had to come to understand and there are two important messages that are significant for us today. The first thing that they needed to come to understand was the necessity of Jesus' death and resurrection.

[18:51] chapter 24 gives us a lot of detail about the way they came to understand. A lot of detail for such a short period of time.

Luke writes this down purposefully helping us to understand the way the disciples failed continually to understand what Jesus came to do.

It's recorded so that we may see the importance of understanding what is at the heart of the scriptures, the centrality of Jesus' death and resurrection, that they came to understand that this was a part of God's plan.

For the disciples it needed to be central in their thinking. They needed to be clear about it. Is it clear in your minds? Do you understand fully what Christ came to do upon the cross?

Do you understand the message of Easter? Jesus died upon a cross taking the punishment for us, taking the punishment that we deserve the penalty of our sins of rejecting God, that he nailed them to a tree but that he rose again that we may have new life as well?

[20:11] Is it central to your thinking? Do you understand that? look at the way that the disciples understood this. God's divine way of bringing them to an understanding.

He could have just opened their minds for them to see Jesus but he did it through the scriptures.

This is God's divine way, God's chosen way of bringing understanding.

Through his word, understanding comes. God's word, God's word, are you immersing yourself in it, reading it daily, being encouraged by it, spurred on by it?

Are you being shaped by it? Are you asking God to open your minds every time you open it, that our sinful minds don't just gloss over the words but we don't see the truth, the word of life that it breathes?

Are we applying it to our lives? Luke also writes these things in a lot of detail as a warning for the early church that they don't miss out on the centrality of Jesus' death and resurrection.

[21:28] May it be a warning for us also that we don't miss out on the centrality of Jesus' death and resurrection. That's the first thing of importance that we see from this passage. The second thing is the motivation that comes from having this understanding that we are to be people who proclaim Jesus' death and resurrection.

We are to reclaim repentance and forgiveness of sins to all the nations. Disciples once they understood this they went out and did it.

They were called to take the gospel to all the nations. What a great privilege it was for them. They were to be divine witnesses extending God's kingdom.

There is no greater call, no greater commission than to help people come to an understanding of God's promises. There is no better news, better than Richmond being at the top of the table, better than the Sydney Swans winning yesterday.

This is the message of life and God is calling his disciples to proclaim it to the ends of the earth. I had the great privilege when I was at Moore College to go on four Moore College missions.

[22 : 47] Moore College Mission Week was a fantastic week where we went away for a whole week. Both of them happened to coincide with the birth, or two of them happened to coincide with the birth of our children.

So it was terrible being dragged away after only a short time of knowing my children to go on one of these Moore College missions. Once to Canberra, to many other places around New South Wales. It was a great time for us. I will not forget the woman in Canberra who went around to every single parent in the childcare and got their signature so that I could take in some puppets and declare the good news.

She was so excited about the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection, she wanted the kids to know it, she wanted the teachers to know it. So she made sure she went around to every single parent to get their signature to make sure that we could go in.

You should have seen the look of delight on her face when we went in there. Or my friend who was being billeted out in another place, the great delight that was on his face, one of the billets wasn't a Christian and towards the end of that week he wanted to open up the scriptures, he wanted to know more about Christ and he became a Christian.

[24 : 16] I spoke in a school one day, there would have been probably 200 kids there, and I talked about how Jesus came to bring the forgiveness of sins, that Jesus took the punishment for them upon the cross, that they could now be God's friends forever.

father, I prayed that perhaps some of it might sink in. Later that day some of the other team were travelling around doing door knocking and they knocked on a door and a man came to the door and they were talking to him and after a while they said, do you know what it means for Jesus to die on the cross?

And at that point a little kid came running up from the back of the house. I know why Jesus died on the cross. the father looked down. How did he know? He died on the cross for me and for my sins. He took the punishment for me upon the cross so that I could be God's friend forever. More College Mission Week is a very exciting time where we declare the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection to a world who needs to hear it.

We have the great privilege of a more college team not this coming week but the week after. This is a great and exciting time but it's not just a great and exciting time for the team members that are coming down.

[25 : 43] It's not just a great and exciting time for Sue and some of the staff and the people who are putting on different events. It's a great and exciting time and opportunity for each one of us to declare the great news of Jesus.

Are you prepared for this week? Are you praying about this week that people's minds would be open? Are you listening to God's call to go out and proclaim the good news?

You may feel intimidated about talking about the good news but are you inviting your friends, neighbours, family to the many different events? This is indeed going to be a great and exciting week, a week where good news is preached.

Perhaps you're worried that God won't be able to do a great and mighty work. But we see here that God promises that he will clothe his disciples with power.

God gives us his Holy Spirit. He is the one who works in people's lives and it's a great privilege to be a part of that. So let's work together. Let us work towards proclaiming God's great news.

[26 : 59] In little under four weeks hopefully there will be a brand new little Dudley running around in our household. Going according to the two previous children it could be as short as two weeks away.

This is great. It's a great exciting news, a brand new little life. For us, Michelle and I were reflecting the other day just the great excitement of when the baby is born.

For many people it may be not quite the same but for us that moment when the bump becomes a person, when we get to know whether it's a boy or a girl, when we get to know this little life, this brand new life.

