

Broken, Blind and Burning: Disciples on the Road to Emmaus

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[0 : 00] So let's turn in our Bibles back to Luke chapter 24. Luke chapter 24 and let's reread from verses 25 to 27.

Luke chapter 24 verse 25. Now let's just say two things by way of introduction to this passage. The first thing to say is that the Bible can be a very complicated and confusing book to understand, particularly the Old Testament.

Sometimes we might get up in the middle of the night and all the lights are off in the house and we wander into the bathroom or we wander into another room and we can see things very darkly. We can make out the furniture but we can't see things very clearly and we have to put the light on. And that's what the Old Testament is like without Jesus.

[1 : 46] Jesus is the key to unlocking the Old Testament. And that was the problem that these disciples on the road to Emmaus had. They were not seeing Jesus in the Old Testament.

They had half a view as it were of the Old Testament. They were seeing some of the things in the Old Testament but not all of the things in the Old Testament. So the first thing is Jesus is the key to the Old Testament.

But the second thing we want to see just while we have introduction this morning is that we must, as we are saying to the children, we must, as we read these passages and particularly the resurrection passages, we must see these passages through the eyes of first century disciples.

We think of the cross and we think of the resurrection as glorious things. We think of them as great victories. But imagine if you were a first century disciple.

Imagine the confusion you would have felt at the cross. And imagine the confusion that must have surrounded that weekend between the cross and the resurrection.

[2 : 59] All these half reports were coming out about sightings of a risen Jesus. There was tremendous confusion. So we must remember that as we look at these passages, we must remember to see them through first century eyes.

Now the story of the road to Emmaus is only in one gospel. It's only in the gospel of Luke.

And in many ways it's one of the most interesting of the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus.

There was 11 appearances of Jesus after the resurrection.

And the road to Emmaus is one of the most interesting of those accounts. So we want to notice three things this morning about this passage.

The points are in the news sheet there. First of all we want to see broken and bruised disciples in verses 13 to 24. Broken and bruised disciples.

[4 : 05] And if you're taking notes, I'm just going to make three points under this heading. First of all we see a weary walk. A weary walk. There was two disciples on a journey.

They were weary. They were discouraged. They were depressed. They were broken. And they were bruised. We don't know who these disciples were.

We're not told who the second one was. We know that the first one was Cleopas. But we're not told who the second one is.

Some people think. As we said to the children. Some people think it was Simon. Some people think it was Peter. Some people think it was Luke. Some people think it was Cleopas' wife.

We just don't know. And whenever the scriptures are silent, we need to be silent as well. But these disciples were conducting a verbal post-mortem on all the events that had taken place over the past week.

[5 : 08] And what a week it had been. There was plenty to talk about. They could have been talking about what they'd heard about the Garden of Gethsemane.

How one of Jesus' followers had taken the ear of Malchus, one of the servants of the high priest. Maybe they would have been talking about Peter's denial. That must have been common knowledge by this time. Maybe they were talking about how Jesus had been mocked in the high priest's house.

How he'd been dragged before Herod. Before Pilate, sorry. And then he was dragged before Herod. Before being dragged back to Pilate.

Maybe they were talking about all the events of the cross and the crucifixion. Maybe they were talking about the reports they'd heard about the resurrection.

[6 : 11] There was plenty to talk about. And these two were going backwards and forwards all about the events of the last week. And particularly the last weekend.

But then secondly in this heading we notice a silent stranger. A silent stranger joins these two disciples. And somehow they don't recognise him.

Now these disciples we presume they weren't in the inner circle of disciples. They weren't amongst the eleven that were remaining. But they would have known Jesus well and they are kept, we're told, from recognising him.

And there were a number of appearances of Jesus in his post-resurrection body where he wasn't recognised. We're told in Matthew 28 verse 17 that some of the eleven doubted when they saw him. There was something about Christ's resurrection appearance that some people didn't recognise him immediately.

[7 : 18] Mary Magdalene didn't recognise him immediately. She didn't know that it was Jesus in John 20. In John 21 Jesus appears to the disciples on the shore when they're fishing.

And some of them don't recognise him. There was something about the appearance of Jesus in his post-resurrection form that prevented the disciples from recognising him.

Now we could have different theories about what that is. But I tend to imagine that it was just unbelief. It was shock. It was disbelief. There was something about the resurrected Christ that was so shocking that they disbelieved that it was him.

But we're told something extra in this passage. In verse 16, But their eyes were kept from recognising him. Now that word is literally, in the authorised version, it was the word, Their eyes were kept from holding him.

It's almost as if God was taking their eyes, stopping their eyes from recognising him. There was something sovereign about this inability to recognise Jesus.

[8 : 36] God restrained the disciples from seeing who Jesus was. And surely that's a picture of how God sovereignly gives us the ability to see Christ.

But in third end of the setting we see a dashed dream and a false dawn. Jesus asks them in this passage what they were talking about.

What is this conversation that you're holding with each other as you walk? And the disciples' disappointment is summed up succinctly in verse 21.

But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. What were the disciples saying?

They were saying this. They were saying, We wanted a saviour. We wanted a messiah. Who would be like Moses. We wanted, We wanted a redemption from the oppression of the Romans.

[9 : 40] We wanted a messiah that would come with a sword and defeat our enemies. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.

You can feel and hear the disappointment in their words. And you see the problem was, as we're going to go on to see, is that they hadn't read the scriptures properly.

If only they'd read Isaiah 53. The problem was that they skipped right to the end of Isaiah 53, where it says, Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and shall divide the spoil with the strong.

They wanted a strong warrior type saviour. But if only they'd read the verses before that in Isaiah 53, he was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, unacquainted with grief.

They would have seen that this messiah that was coming was a suffering saviour. He wasn't a glorious warrior messiah, at least not glorious, in his earthly ministry.

[10 : 54] They misunderstood the person and work of Christ. Their hopes had been dashed.

They were discouraged. And they were depressed, because they had the wrong understanding of scripture. And you see, it was even worse, because in the second half of verse 21, they say,

Besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened.

So they knew there was a prediction about Christ rising from the dead, but they believed that he hasn't. And you see, the problem is that they've heard reports of the resurrection, but you see, nobody's seen a body.

As they think, nobody has seen properly the risen Christ. So there's no credibility to these claims. He promised he would rise again.

But where is he? So the disciples were broken, they were bruised, and they were disillusioned. And I wonder if that's your situation this morning.

[12:10] You're broken, you're bruised, and you're disillusioned. Maybe you've had big dreams that have come to nothing.

Maybe, like the disciples, you've invested all your energy into a relationship that's let you down, that's come to nothing. Maybe a job hasn't worked out.

Maybe a church has let you down. Maybe you've prayed for healing and it's not coming. Maybe you've got a family member or a friend who's terminally ill and God isn't answering your prayers. Maybe you've begged Jesus to show up on your road to Emmaus, but he hasn't shown up. As Krishkan Daya says, sometimes it's easier to believe in a God who never heals than to believe in one that does but won't.

Sometimes it's easier to believe in a God who doesn't intervene than to believe in one that does but hasn't. Sometimes it's easier not to raise our expectations because there is less distance to fall when it all goes wrong.

[13:26] Sometimes it's just easier to go home, shut the door, and forget all about the God who has gone elusive on us all the promises that have evaporated.

Well, if that's how you feel this morning, you're in good company because that's how the two on the road to Emmaus felt. They were broken and they were bruised. But then secondly, let's notice blind and bemused disciples in verses 25 to 27.

Jesus listens patiently to their post-mortem. He listens patiently to their verbal post-mortem about all the events of the past week.

And then he responds in verses 26 and 27. What does he say? O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all the prophets, all that the prophets have 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 in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

[14:41] Let's notice two things under this heading. First of all, a warped world. The disciples had a warped view of the world. As we said, the disciples had read certain parts of the Old Testament, but they hadn't read other parts.

They had, as it were, read half the scriptures, but not the other half. So they had a warped view of the world. They hadn't understood or they hadn't read properly all the passages of scripture that talked about a suffering servant that was coming.

All the parts of scripture that refer to blood. To humiliation and to death. And you see, we might think it's a bit strong the way that Jesus talks about them.

He talks about all fools, all foolish ones. But this isn't the word for moral fools as in Proverbs. What he's just saying is he's saying that you have a distorted view of the world.

You're foolish in the way that you are looking at the world. you're looking at the world with one eye closed as it were. They were looking for this glorious Exodus type redemption.

[16:00] They were looking for another Moses. But what preceded the Exodus? The slaughter of thousands and thousands of lambs.

Egypt would have run red with blood for the shedding of the Passover lamb. Before glorious redemption came death and sacrifice.

They were looking for an all-conquering Davidic king. But what preceded that Davidic king? Murderous persecution by King Saul and David.

suffering came before glory. They were looking for the spoil-conquering victor of Isaiah 53 12.

But before the spoil-conquering victor there was the sin-bearing servant of Isaiah 52 1 to 11.

[17:08] That's why Christ rebuked them. Because they were missing out large chunks of the Old Testament. I wonder if this describes us this morning.

We're living a distorted Christian life. We want a victorious Christian life free from trouble, free from suffering, free from the cross, free from the battle.

How many Christians are like the two on the road to Emmaus? They're downcast, they're discouraged, they're depressed. Because they fail to see the necessity of suffering in the Christian life.

And you see, if we fail to see Christ in the whole Bible, we end up with this unbalanced view of life. So we see a warped world, but then secondly under this heading we see a systematic study of the scriptures.

scriptures. Christ uses New Testament light to interpret Old Testament scriptures. As we're saying to the children, the Old Testament is like a dark room unless we have Christ to illuminate that room.

[18 : 20] All the symbols and all the sacrifices of the Old Testament are strange and peculiar until we see them in the light of Jesus. If we go to Leviticus and Deuteronomy without Jesus, we're quickly lost, we're quickly bogged down.

But when we look at it in the light of Christ, it illuminates these scriptures. That's why there's so much blood, that's why there's so much suffering. Christ is the key to the Old Testament.

As J.C. Ryle says, let it be a settled principle of our minds in reading the Bible that Christ is the central, son of the whole book. Christ is the key that unlocks the door of the Old Testament.

And what does Jesus talk about? He talks about two things. He talks about his suffering and his glory. His suffering and his glory. We're not given any texts or passages that Jesus uses.

We're left to exercise faith. faith. And this morning we could go through every book in the Old Testament and say, there's Jesus, there's Jesus.

[19 : 35] But let's just take two or three themes from the Old Testament. Think of blood in the Old Testament. The pages of the Old Testament are soaked in blood.

Every single covenant, how is it inaugurated? the covenant of Adam, the covenant with Adam and Noah and Abraham and Moses.

How is it inaugurated? With a shedding of blood. Think of all the rituals and ceremonies of the Old Testament, soaked in blood. Imagine if you were an Israelite child or imagine looking around you, you'd have seen blood everywhere.

You'd have seen blood in the tabernacle. You'd have seen blood on the furniture, on the altar. If you'd seen a priest, what was he covered in?

He was covered in blood. And yet these disciples somehow thought the fulfillment of all these things would be bloodless. Of course they wouldn't. These things were pointing to the fact that the sacrifice would be in the shedding of blood.

[20 : 50] Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer? Think of Old Testament characters. Take any character you want. Think of Abraham or Jacob or Job or Joseph or David or Jonah or David.

All these people were pointing forward to Christ. What were their lives characterized by? Suffering, suffering, suffering and then success, deliverance and triumph.

That was the pattern of the Old Testament. And why would disciples think that it would be any different for the Messiah who was coming?

Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer? Think of the Psalms. The Psalms were the daily songs of the children of Israel.

Think of Psalms like Psalms 52 to 60. A night of weeping followed by joy in the morning. Suffering, weeping and joy.

[22 : 02] That was the Old Testament pattern. And then glory. We looked at suffering and glory. What kind of glory was Jesus talking about in this passage?

In verse 26. was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into what kind of glory? His glory. Think of a Psalm like Psalm 45.

Think of all the Old Testament representations of kingly authority. Robes, majesty, crowns, thrones, swords, scepters, palaces, servants, kingly authority.

All these things were used to talk of Christ in the Old Testament in Psalms like Psalm 45. And that's what the disciples wanted. They wanted an earthly king to come with all the trappings of an earthly king.

But you see, Christ's glory was altogether different. Luke 17 says, the kingdom of God is not coming with something observable. No one will say, see here or there, for you will see the kingdom of God

is in your midst.

[23 : 15] The kingdom of God is in the hearts of God's people. Of course there will be a glory one day, but not in this world. The kingdom of God is not in some earthly rule in the Vatican.

It's not displayed in the Crusades. These things are all deviations from New Testament teaching. Christ has already entered into his glory in heaven.

He had none of these trappings here. And the problem was that these disciples were looking for an earthly glory. So Jesus gives us a systematic study in the scriptures.

And the big question for us is, are we prepared to follow the same pattern? Are we prepared for a life of earthly suffering in order to advance the kingdom of glory within us?

But then thirdly and lastly we notice burning and bursting disciples in verses 28 to 35. You know, meals are a very important part of the gospel of Luke.

[24 : 27] Tim Chester in his book, *A Meal with Jesus*, discovering grace, community and mission around the table, says in Luke's gospel, Jesus is either going to a meal, at a meal or coming from a meal.

And it's interesting that this passage ends with the two disciples and Jesus having a meal. They're gathered around a table sharing food. And it reminds us of course of the tremendous importance in the New Testament of hospitality.

Is it any wonder that the disciples saw Jesus around a meal? They start the journey broken and blind but leave with bursting and burning hearts.

What did Jesus do that had such an effect on those disciples in that house? Well, as we're saying to the children, three things were opened in that house. First of all, the scriptures were opened.

Verse 32. The scriptures were opened. The scriptures were opened. They said to each other, did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?

[25 : 48] Imagine that seven mile walk to Emmaus. Jesus is opening the scriptures. The greatest expositor that ever walked this earth.

The one who wrote the scriptures himself. He opened the scriptures to them. It's like he was opening these doors. He opened Genesis.

What was behind the door? Christ. He opened Exodus. What was behind the door? Christ. He opened the Psalms. What was behind the door?

Christ. Every book of the Bible, every page of the Bible, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus. The scriptures were opened. And then we see that their hearts were opened in verse 31.

Their hearts were opened. This wasn't a physical, sorry, their eyes were opened, sorry, their eyes were opened. This wasn't a physical opening of their eyes.

[26 : 48] They could see the person that was with them, but it was a spiritual opening of their eyes. And what caused the opening of their eyes? Well, of course, it was a divine thing.

It was a divine opening. But it was in the breaking of bread that their eyes are opened. Now, there are many theories about this passage and this verse as to why their eyes were opened in the breaking of bread.

Some think that it was a communion service that Christ was opening, was breaking the bread in the way he had done in the upper room.

and the disciples saw very clearly that it was like the last supper. That seems an unlikely theory.

These disciples wouldn't have been in the last supper room, although it's possible that they had heard about the last supper. Some think they have a theory that there was something in the mannerism of Jesus and the way that he was with them that suddenly they saw that it was Jesus.

[27 : 59] And others think that the disciples saw as he broke the bread, he saw the nail prints in his hands. We don't know what made them recognise Christ suddenly in this meal.

But surely we can say this, if our faith is weak, the one thing we need is to see the sufferings of Christ.

the thing that kindles cold hearts is to see the nail prints of Christ's hands.

And this is why we have the Lord's supper so often, isn't it? To remind ourselves about the sufferings of Christ. To remind ourselves that he was bruised for our iniquities.

He was pierced for our transgressions and he was crushed for our iniquities. That's why we have the Lord's supper so often, to remind ourselves of the sufferings of Christ so that it turns our cold hearts into burning hearts like the two on the road to Emmaus.

[29 : 15] So we see the scriptures are opened, their eyes were opened and then lastly we see that their hearts were opened. Their hearts were burning within them we're told.

Did not our hearts burn within us? Or as Ryle says, was not our heart burning within us? And then we're told suddenly that Christ vanished.

Christ vanished from their sight. He vanished from their sight in verse 31. No sooner had they seen this image of Christ and this glorious appearance of Christ, they suddenly saw the risen saviour and he vanished from their sight.

And isn't that so often our experience as Christians that we have a glimpse of Christ in our devotional life, in the preaching of the word, in the Lord's Supper.

We have a glimpse of Christ, we experience Christ in a very powerful way and then he vanishes. We have a sense of his presence and then he is gone.

[30 : 25] And these two disciples talk about what it was like walking along that road, Christ expounding the scriptures to them, Christ taking them through the Moses and the prophets and all the scriptures.

You see, the problem with these disciples was dullness of heart and the solution was a Christ centred study of the scriptures. And you see, they don't compare notes, do they?

They compare hearts, they compare experiences, what did your heart feel like? This is how I felt. Did you have the same feeling as me?

And you see, a glimpse of Christ brought them into a vibrant and loving fellowship with each other. And that's what we sometimes experience in the Lord's Supper, isn't it?

As we see Christ, we have that loving and vibrant fellowship with each other that we can't explain. Our hearts burn within us.

[31 : 38] Their dull hearts have been enlivened and their dead hearts have begun to glow again. what's the remedy to cold hearts this morning?

What's the remedy to cold pews, to cold pulpits, to cold ministries? What's the remedy?

The remedy is a Christ-centred study of the scriptures. scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation. Notice these disciples, they're just at a meal.

They're having a night in. What do they do when they see Jesus? They rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem.

One glimpse of Jesus, and all their plans change. They must tell others of what they've seen.

[32 : 52] They run back to Jerusalem, presumably in the pitch dark. Danger, darkness, distance, they don't care.

find the disciples and tell them that they've seen Jesus. That very hour, they couldn't wait a moment.

They dashed out of the house. And you see, if Christ has opened your eyes, and if Christ has opened your heart, the least you can do is open your mouth for Christ.

if he's opened your eyes and your heart to see him, the very least we can do is to open our lips and tell others of Christ.

So we've seen disciples who were battered and broken, we've seen how they were blind and bemused, but we've seen how they end up with burning hearts, burning and bursting hearts for Jesus.

[34 : 02] And if you're feeling cold today, if you're feeling lifeless, what you need is a Christ-centred study of the scriptures.

You need to see the nail-pierced hands of Christ that were pierced for you in the gospel. And he invites you this morning to come to him fully and freely without any conditions.

Christ invites you to come to him and to rest in him for time and for eternity. May God bless these thoughts to us.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Lord, we confess that our hearts are so often dead and dry and cold.

And we pray, Lord, that like the two on the road to Emmaus, that we would have burning hearts as we see Jesus in the scriptures. Lord, bless your word to us in Jesus' name.

[35 : 11] Amen. Let's conclude our service by singing in Psalm 118 in the Scottish Psalter. Psalm 118 in the Scottish Psalter.

And we'll sing verses 20 to 29. Psalm 118 in the Scottish Psalter on page 399.

Psalm 118 in the Scottish Psalter on page 399. I should have said at the start, if you're a visitor, we'd love for you to stay for a cup of tea afterwards, so just in the hall at the back here. So Psalm

118 in the Scottish Psalter.

And we'll sing the tune Crediton. This is the gate of God by it, the just shall enter in, thee will I
praise, for thou me heard, and hast my safety been.

Psalm 118 verse 20 to the Lord's praise.