

The Power of the Word of God to Open Blind Eyes

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Preacher: Pastor Andrew

[0:00] Hey, well, good morning. Open your Bibles, if you would please, to Luke, chapter 24. It's my prayer for this service and for our time together You know, things would be so much easier to believe in Christ if I had seen Him for myself.

It would have been so much easier if I had seen His miracles, if I had heard Him teach, if I had been there and saw Him raise the dead or heal the leper or heal those blind men by the side of the road.

It just would have been so much easier. If I would have seen the empty tomb, then, man, the wrestling that I have with faith would have been so much easier.

But this morning's passage is proof that that's not true. This morning's passage is proof and actually the passage from last week and the passage next week will be proof that you can have all the evidence all stacked up, the empty tomb, Jesus Christ appearing, walking with you on the road, having a conversation and yet you still cannot see with eyes of faith to believe and what Jesus will demonstrate through His interaction today with two disciples on the road to Emmaus that the Word of God is sufficient.

The Word of God has power. It's the Word of God that changes hearts and transforms. And so if you're thinking about your own life and wondering, that issue in my life I just can't seem to get past, or that person in my life that I want to receive and enjoy the benefits of the gospel, or that co-worker that you have been trying to share the gospel with and your heart is that they would come to faith in Christ, the evidence of an empty tomb, the evidence of Jesus Christ actually walking along beside you isn't enough.

[2:23] What you and I have in the Word of God is sufficient to save. It is sufficient to save. That's the encouragement of this message this morning.

The passage that we read, the encouragement is, the Word of God has power to save. It opens blind eyes. It changes and saves dead hearts. It rescues blind people and restores them back to sight.

It gives them faith. And here we are. We're going to be looking at these two disciples of Jesus. They're walking back from Emmaus, or from Jerusalem to their home, and they are shattered by the events that just took place in Jerusalem.

You see, the problem is that they had limited eyes of faith. They saw and knew the promises about this coming future Messiah, this Christ person.

They knew the promises, but what they believed about Christ was conditioned by their own heart, and He's going to be a king. He's going to reunite Israel.

[3:31] He's going to put us in the land. Things are going to be happy and joyous and wonderful when the Messiah comes. He's going to liberate us from oppression. We're not going to have these problems anymore.

That's the perspective they had of the Messiah, of the Christ. They could not. They did not have a category for a suffering Messiah. They did not have a compartment for a Christ that would die.

And so, leaving Jerusalem, they're shattered. I imagine that we can resonate. We understand. And especially, I'm sorry guys, we're probably the biggest to blame for this.

Okay? Like, we go to the refrigerator. We're looking for that thing. We know it was there, but we can't see it for some reason. And so we ask for help. Those of you who are wise, ask for help.

The rest of us, we just try to hunt and search and 15 minutes goes by, we still don't find it. But those who are smart say, hey honey, please help me.

[4 : 34] She says, well it's right here. And she pulls it out. I was looking for the blue container. That's red now. How did that happen? You know how it goes, right?

Well, I want to just put this little test for you as well. So you can kind of sympathize with me here. Now, here's a picture of a duck.

Okay? Here's a picture of a duck. You know a duck. A duck head. He's a beak. He's looking up to the left. Okay? Now, here's another picture of a duck.

Okay? You can see this picture of a duck. The question is, can you see the bunny? Can you see the bunny? So you've been conditioned, and those of you, you've seen this before, you're really smart.

The smart people in the room, the rest of us, or me, I struggle. Okay? You might see the bunny. But here, this might help. Let's look at the bunny. Okay? There's a bunny.

[5 : 31] Now we can go back to the combined picture. And maybe it's a little easier to see. Or maybe you're still struggling. I still can't see that bunny. Or I can only see the bunny. I can't see that duck.

This is the problem that the disciples were having. The disciples they were having, they were locked in to a picture. This picture they had in mind of the Christ, the Messiah.

They knew what he was going to look like, but they could not see the suffering parts. The suffering of Christ was drowned out by the noise of celebration.

In their hearts, they were ready to rejoice at the coming of Messiah. They could not comprehend the possibility of a suffering Christ.

So we come to our passage this morning, and I would encourage you, if you're not there yet, Luke 24. If you're using the Pew Bible, it's on page 884. Please join us in looking at the Word of God together as we look through this together.

[6 : 32] Beginning in verse 13, we're going to see two blind disciples. Two blind disciples. Now they're not blind because they can't see visually or physically.

They're blind in a spiritual way, and we're going to see that as we work our way through the text today. And they're blind for several reasons. We're going to pick up on that as we work through this passage as well.

But notice their blindness as I read through from verses 13 to 20. It says, 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 all 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 the conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?

And they stood still, looking sad. 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?

[7 : 39] And he said to them, what things? And they said to him, concerning 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 to crucify him.

Two blind disciples on their way home. They're blinded by several factors and just want to draw out a few of them this morning. First, they're blinded by their limited perspective.

They're blinded by their limited perspective. We know that there are two disciples and disciples in kind of in a general term in that they're from a larger group of those who followed after Jesus.

They're not one of the eleven apostles, but they're one of the disciples or followers of Jesus. And it says that very day, two of them, speaking about two out of a collective or a larger group, probably had been in Bethany, had definitely been there in Jerusalem during the Passover.

And now, after the Passover is finished, and after the Sabbath is done, now they can finally make their way home. Emmaus, it says, was seven miles away.

[8 : 54] And while we don't know the specific location, and there's some controversy or some confusion about where the actual Emmaus was, it's likely a town that's about seven miles to the west of Jerusalem.

They have likely left later in the morning. There's details about the story that they will share with Christ. It's clear that they've been in Jerusalem. It's clear that they've heard about the resurrection.

It's clear that some women have come back and reported to them. It's clear that there have been some disciples that have gone to the tomb and reported back to the group. And somewhere late morning, perhaps, they are making their way back home.

So they travel. And there's one thing on their mind. There's one thing that consumes their attention and their conversation. We find that in verse 14.

They were talking with each other about all these things that happened. What things? Well, the things that happened during that week. The things that we've been discussing since the beginning of the year as we've been working our way through this final week of Jesus' life.

[10 : 07] Punctuated by that triumphal entry where Jesus comes into Jerusalem riding on a donkey. He's humble and riding on a donkey. But the palm branches that are waving, Hosanna to the Son of David.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. And then his cleansing of the temple on the next day. The time that he spends answering questions, very difficult questions from all the different religious leaders to establish his authority and knowledge of the Word of God.

And of course, the Passover that he shared with his disciples. This Passover feast that was to commemorate that lamb that was to take the place of the firstborn son in the home and the blood that was painted on the doorpost.

This symbol and picture of redemption. This price that had been paid. The blood that was painted on the doorposts so the angel would pass over. But there's a problem.

The problem was that the death of Christ did not have a compartment or a category in their minds as they thought about Jesus or the Messiah.

[11 : 20] Death had no category in their minds or his suffering for that matter. And as they're discussing and the word here is even arguing with one another, perhaps they're arguing about the scriptures, a stranger appears in verse 15 and 16.

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

Jesus joins the group which would have been typical in that day where strangers come and they share the road and they converse with one another as they're walking along the way.

But this problem that Jesus himself was there but they could not recognize him. Why? Because their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

Their eyes were kept from recognizing him. This is a passive. It means that they're a recipient of action. This word for kept is to hold, onto, to grab, to seize, to control, to arrest.

[12:31] That their eyes were shut. They were closed. They were unable to see Jesus standing right in front of them. They could not recognize who he was. They're blinded from seeing the Lord for who he is.

Of course, this was the last person they expected to see. That's part of the problem. But for now, their eyes are kept from seeing because there's an important lesson for us to learn in this story.

A lesson that only Luke will share with us about these two that are moving from Jerusalem to Emmaus. They're stunned. Notice, Jesus asked them a question in verse 17.

What is this conversation that you're having with each other as you walk? And they stood still looking sad. Here they are walking along the road and the question is asked and you can almost see they're stopping in their tracks, perhaps turning around, making eye contact with Christ, perhaps putting their arms on their hips and just, what in the world is your problem?

Because of their limited perspective. They had eyes that could only see what they were conditioned to see. Their limited perspective kept them from being able to see Christ.

[13:49] But there's something else. We find that in verses 18 to 21. We find in verses 18 to 21 their narrow view of redemption. Let me read this. Then one of them named Cleobas answered, Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened here in these days?

Their narrow view of redemption. I want to just define this word redemption for you so you know what we're talking about. Redemption is this action of regaining possession of something in exchange for payment or clearing a debt.

Basically, when you go to the store and you purchase something, you're redeeming it. You're exchanging a value of money for that item. This is what Jesus has done for us by dying for us on the cross.

There was a redemption price that was paid. He paid the price that we deserve to pay for the wages or the penalty or the payment for sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Jesus paid that redemption price so that we could enjoy the benefits of salvation to those who believe. But their idea or concept of redemption was that Jesus was going to deliver them from Roman occupation.

[15:10] Jesus was going to come and he was going to make everything better for them. He was going to take away the taxes. He was going to restore the people back to Israel. He was going to unite both the northern and southern tribes.

He was going to make everything better. That was their concept of redemption. But they should have known better. They should have known better because what we're going to see here in these next several verses is how they answer this question the question that Jesus asked about what are you discussing will demonstrate they have all the right knowledge but not the right faith.

You can have all the right facts. You can believe all the right truths and still not have a saving relationship with Jesus. Look at this.

They believe the right things about him. They know where he's from. They affirm his mission. They believe that his works were from God and they are aware of his death.

Now just take note of that as I read beginning in verse 19. And he said to them Jesus what things? What are you talking about? What things happened there in Jerusalem?

[16:26] I'd like to know. Well okay. Here we go. And so Cleopas answers concerning Jesus of Nazareth a man who was a prophet mighty indeed in word before God and all the people and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death and crucify him but we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.

Yes besides all this it's now the third day since these things have happened. See they believed all the right facts about Jesus. They knew that he was from Nazareth which was important.

Isaiah chapter 9 talks about coming from the land of the Galilee of the Gentiles. They believed that he was a mighty prophet from God. A Moses like prophet as a matter of fact from Deuteronomy chapter 18 and 19 where Moses promises this future better than Moses prophet.

They believed that he was approved by God because he did his works his mighty works before God which meant that God approved of the things that Jesus had done and they believe in the unmistakable reality of his death but there's one thing missing.

They do not believe in the resurrection. They haven't seen it and they don't understand what Jesus came to do in terms of redemption and they don't really understand what his death accomplished either and all of that should have been clear and what's fascinating is they say and it is now the third day since these things happened.

[18:02] Well that should have sent bells off in their mind third day well Jesus talked about the third day I know what's supposed to happen on the third day he's going to be risen but none of that took place.

A dead Messiah had no place in their minds and especially in this week this week of Passover where they understood that redemption could only come one way redemption could only come through a redemption price that lamb that was killed the blood that was spilt so that the firstborn son in their home could be free.

It was all a picture of what Christ was going to do and what Christ did do on the cross in giving his son the death that was required this purchase price this redemption that God had given to us or offered to us through his son Jesus.

They couldn't see it because they didn't understand redemption they had this narrow view and then we see in verses 22 to 24 their unwillingness to believe their unwillingness to believe it says 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 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 notice they heard the testimony of the women all the facts were there all the evidence was available and they're still struggling to believe this unwillingness of their heart to accept the clear testimony of the evidence that they had this testimony of the women this testimony of those who went to the tomb Peter and John the testimony of the heavenly messengers that came and spoke and reminded these ladies of the word of Christ and in fact there were some women who did see

Jesus so that his statement here at the end of verse 24 they did not see well that wasn't true in Matthew 28 verses 8 and 9 we see so they departed quickly from the tomb speaking of the women with fear and great joy they ran to tell his disciples and behold Jesus met them and said greetings and they came up and took hold of his feet and worshipped him some women had seen Jesus the testimony was clear the tomb was empty the message was confirmed and interestingly they even repeat the angels words back to Jesus verse 20 how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death and crucify him that word delivered is the same word that's used by the angels and the same word that's used by Jesus Christ on the occasions that he shared about this event and somehow with all of the evidence stacked up in front of them they still are unable to believe the word of

[21:19] Christ had gone before them the testimony of his life his authoritative teaching the events that unfolded in Jerusalem just as Jesus had said the empty tomb the confirmation of angels Peter and John and the women who had seen the tomb for themselves verification galore and one commentator puts it this way and I appreciate this he says the inability of these two to believe is a moral failure not an intellectual one it's a moral failure not an intellectual one all the facts were lined up they were recounting those facts those truths but in their hearts they could not believe they refused they rejected the truth that was right in front of them the irony of the situation is really quite staggering here they accuse Jesus of blindness are you the only one from Jerusalem that doesn't know what's happened are you blind and here they are the blind ones themselves walking next to the Messiah they could not see it's a strange series of events wouldn't you say why would

God put this in the gospel record for us I believe it's here for several reasons but one main reason is to help those of us who now 2000 years after the resurrection of Christ will understand that all the evidence all of the truths that are stacked up all the facts that are in place do not matter apart from the word of God to do its work and by the way all of us in this room have the word of God all of us in this room have access to the power of the word to save even Jesus and we're going to see that in the next several verses even Jesus himself instead of saying hey I'm the guy here I am look at me recognize me Jesus doesn't even do that Jesus will point them to the word of God that alone has the power to save let's look at that together the power of the word to open blind eyes that's what we see from verse 25 to the end of the chapter the power of the word to open blind eyes it begins in verse 25 and he said to them this is

Jesus speaking oh foolish ones and slow of heart to was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory there's several things that the word of God does for us in order to get us and lead us to faith and the first thing that happens is the word of God confronts us the word of God confronts and Jesus speaking the word of God helps these disciples these followers of him to recognize the hardness of their heart the slowness of their heart to believe I don't know about you there have been some times where I've been confused I've been looking at certain facts but I still can't figure it out and so I ask a question to a friend and if that friend would say you big dummy you such a fool that probably wouldn't resonate very well with us would it and yet

Jesus graciously and directly challenges and confronts the true nature of their heart it was a foolish heart it was an unbelieving heart they needed to be shocked into awareness they needed to come to a place of recognizing the true condition of their life they needed to see it how it really was they were fools in and of themselves they needed wisdom from God they needed help from God and Jesus in helping to confront the true nature of their heart now begins to work in that process to lead them to truth Jesus begins with confrontation it's the same track that he uses by the way consistently throughout his ministry to Nicodemus you remember Nicodemus who comes to Jesus by night Nicodemus is in the upper echelon of the thinkers and scholars there in

Israel and Nicodemus comes and asks Jesus a question by night and Jesus carries him through and talks about how does a man get to see God well he must be born again and Nicodemus is like what be born again must I enter into my mother's womb and be born again how does that happen and Jesus is like in John how can these things be and Jesus is answer are you a teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things how is your heart so hard how are you such a fool Nicodemus recognize the truth of the word recognize your true nature the number of times that Jesus confronts his disciples about their foolish hearts oh you of little faith and God will do the same for us he wants us to recognize that in and of ourselves we are fools in and of ourselves our hearts are hard and calloused our eyes are blind we cannot see and until you come to the place of recognizing that you need

[27 : 07] God you will not get God you can do it on your own well you're not going to have him and these disciples needed to come to a place of recognizing that of themselves they could not add up the facts enough to come to a place of faith they needed something more so what will Jesus do well the grace of God through Christ brings the word to them and we find that the word now brings light in verse 27 the word of God brings light he says and beginning with Moses and all the prophets he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself what I find so fascinating here is that Jesus doesn't say come on guys I'm the one it's me look here I am recognize me Jesus doesn't do that Jesus uses the word of God and there's a reason for that the reason is because it's the word of

God that has power the reason for that is these disciples understood the integrity of the scripture that had already been confirmed that it was a word of God and so if Jesus is drawing from the word of God that they understand it has a testimony that's authoritative it's sufficient if he's drawing from that word and applying it to himself then God through the Holy Spirit will connect the dots and help them to finally believe that faith will finally come true his word oh what a message that must have been a message that included all the promises that were then fulfilled in Christ but a message that also included the elements of his suffering that he would be the suffering Savior the suffering Christ you know they weren't convinced by the angels they weren't convinced by all the people they weren't even convinced by Jesus walking with them on the way but they were Jesus uses the word of

Christ the word of God he's leading them to see it for themselves by the way this is a strategy that Jesus uses consistently and you remember and we'll just go through this quickly John the Baptist sends his disciples he's in jail remember he's like are you the one or are waiting for somebody else and what does Jesus do Jesus doesn't say I'm the guy let me liberate some oppressed individuals let me raise the dead and and then he quotes scripture to them we find that in Luke chapter 7 verses 21 to 23 it is the one who is not offended by me he speaks the word of

God which by the way pointed to the character and the service the ministry of this future Messiah which by the way Jesus had just done Christ's confidence was in the word of God in the spirit of God to lead a person to faith and if Christ's dependence is in the word how much more should our dependence be on the word of God saves through giving light from his word in verses 28 to 32 we see the word the word gives sight not just provides light but now gives sight notice this so they drew near to the village to which they were going he acted as if he was going further but they urged him strongly saying stay with us for it is toward the evening and the day them now 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 and he vanished from their sight 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 scripture and we see here that the word of but but

I want you to recognize two things first I want you to recognize the work of the word that begins even before they get home but even the burning convicting work of that word of God needed something more it needed what we find here in verse 31 and their eyes were opened and their eyes were opened it's another passive verb it means that God did a work in their eyes their hearts their eyes were opened it was a work of God God awakened their hearts God opened their eyes light shone in the darkness and helped to stir them up to faith and now the work of the word in the opening of their eyes now leads them to true faith and now they believe finally believe this work of God and so what does that lead to well it leads to the word that transforms and that's our final point this morning the word that transforms as I read through this see if you can can pick out the ways in which things are different at the end of the story notice notice notice notice the word!

[33 : 10] the word that transforms The love for Jesus and love for disciples now turns them around.

They were walking away from Jerusalem, and now they're walking towards Jerusalem. They walked away in disbelief, and now they're walking towards with full faith and commitment. They're walking away in discussing and arguing, and now they're walking towards with this word of God.

He's been risen. He's revealed himself. It's true. He is the Messiah. Everything changed, and they're compelled to go back and share it with the disciples.

The word of God has so burned within their hearts, they want to share it with the rest of the disciples. And so the word of God has power today.

And I'll just close with this verse, found in 2 Peter 1, verses 3 to 8. For those of you who have come to faith in Christ, who have come to a place of recognizing that you are a sinner, have come to a place of recognizing that you cannot get to God on your own, that God has opened up your eyes, he's given you the gift of faith, you believed in Jesus as the only way to salvation, the word of God has this promise for us.

[34 : 39] It says, His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness. Okay, so God has granted through his divine power just a little bit of things that we need for life and godliness.

No? Oh, He's provided most of the things that we need for life and godliness. No. He has provided all things, everything that you and I need for life and godliness.

How? Well, through the knowledge of him who called us to his glory and excellence. That knowledge of him, by the way, comes through the power of the word of God.

We have knowledge about God through his word, and it's sufficient to help us to do everything that we need to do in this life to please him.

He's equipped us for it in his word. By which, verse 4, he's granted to us his precious promises, so that through them we become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.

[35 : 47] For this reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, with virtue, with knowledge, knowledge, with self-control, self-control with steadfastness, steadfastness with godliness, godliness with brotherly affection, brotherly affection with love, for if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they will keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

You want to have a life that matters? You want to have a life that makes a difference? You want to have a life that is filled up and is fruitful and is progressing? The word of God is the answer.

And the power of the word to change your life, to change my life, to change the lives of those you love, to change the lives of those in your community, your family, and in your workplace, wherever you go.

It's the word of God. They don't need any other evidence. They don't need to see the empty tomb. They don't need to have a trip to Israel. All they need is the power of the word. And through your prayers and the power of the spirit, and the message of his word, he can change and will change a life.

Do you trust it? Are you being transformed by it? I trust that God will help us to be reminded of the significance of opening our Bibles. Let's open our Bibles.

[37:13] May that be an everyday occurrence as we seek to be changed in the likeness of Christ through the knowledge of God from his word so that we can be effective and fruitful in the life that God has called us to.

Let me pray. Oh Lord, thank you for your word and its power. And God, we trust you to do your work. And we pray that our commitment day by day would be to allow the word of God to have its way in our lives.

That we would not just be hearers of the word, but also doers of the word. Thank you. In Jesus' name. Amen.