

# Luke 24:13-35

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     Let's bow our heads and pray as we stand together.! Heavenly Father, we ask now that you would open our eyes and ignite our hearts! So that we might see who Jesus is and what he has done.

And we pray, Heavenly Father, that through being together today, you would give us a life-changing encounter with the risen Jesus. We ask in his name. Amen.

Please sit down. I want to add my warm welcome to Jordan's at the beginning of the service. Say what a great privilege it is for us on this Resurrection Day to look at this historical account of that remarkable day and how it changes everything.

We're in Luke 24 on page 885. And when you read Luke's Gospel, one of the three Gospels, what's amazing about this record of the day of the Resurrection is what he leaves out.

He wrote a whole other book in the New Testament, Dr. Luke did, called Acts. And he records for us that Jesus appeared for 40 days after his Resurrection, dozens of appearances, hundreds of people.

[ 1 : 1 8 ]     But here in this chapter, he only chooses three events all happening on that one day. And the reason for that is that he's not interested in the mechanics of the Resurrection, that's above our pay grade, nor all the evidence.

Although there is overwhelming evidence for the Resurrection if you're willing to look. His purpose is somewhere else. His purpose is this, for Dr. Luke, how do we have a life-transforming encounter with the risen Jesus?

How does the Resurrection of Jesus transform our hearts and our lives today? And each of the three episodes in this chapter have the same shape.

They begin with believers depressed, distressed, despairing, bewildered. And they end with believers full of joy, telling others that Jesus has risen.

And in between those two things, they are rebuked for their unbelief. Even though they've got the facts, and even though Jesus is standing there, it's only as they come to understand the Scriptures that the facts ignite into fire in their hearts.

[ 2 : 3 4 ]     And just by the way, it demonstrates that the idea that the early Christians invented the Resurrection is absolute nonsense. They didn't believe it was going to happen.

They didn't even want it to happen. And when Jesus appears to them, they still don't believe. And this middle episode that was just read for us is double the size of the other two.

It's very important. Because it's not hard to see ourselves in these two disciples on the road to Emmaus. They had the basic facts, but the facts were out there, hadn't made any difference to them, hadn't changed them.

They were slow in heart, spiritually blind. The truth they knew, but it hadn't touched them and transformed them. And the point of this episode is how Jesus brings them to the thrill of recognition, sets their hearts on fire in a particular way, which means he can do it today and he's willing to do it today for all of us.

So there are two points. One is the mystery of what the Messiah does. And the secondly is the majesty of who the Messiah is. Do you like those headings?

[ 3 : 45 ] My son came up with them. Number one, the mystery of what the Messiah does. The whole episode from 13 to 35 takes place in about four hours in the afternoon and early evening of the day of the resurrection.

And we meet two dejected and disillusioned disciples of Jesus making their pilgrimage in the wrong direction, away from Jerusalem to their hometown of Emmaus, maybe 10 or 11 kilometres away.

In verse 14, they're talking and discussing, and the words means they're just trying to figure out what's going on. Perhaps they had seen Jesus crucified and him dying just made no sense to them whatsoever.

And in verse 15, as they're trying to figure it out, the risen Jesus himself comes beside them and walks with them. And their eyes were closed, it says, which implies they were closed by God from recognising him.

Because understanding who Jesus is and what he has done and encountering the risen Jesus doesn't come from our own human insight or effort or intelligence. It comes directly by God's revelation.

[ 5 : 04 ] But what this simple point at the beginning of the story means is that the risen Jesus may be in your life now, but you don't recognise it. You know, we look around at the world and we see what a mess it is and we say, God, where are you?

And the risen Jesus is right there beside us. Or we look at our own lives and we can't make sense of them. And the risen Jesus is right there all along. And the question we ask is, how are we going to wake up?

How are our cold hearts to be heated and our eyes to be opened? And so Jesus gently asks them what they're talking about. And in verse 17, they stand still and look at the ground, disconsolate, dejected and disappointed.

They're disappointed with God. They're disappointed with their lives. They're disappointed with Jesus. And in a lovely piece of irony, they both say to Jesus, you must be the only person in Jerusalem who doesn't know what's going on.

He's the only person who really does, of course. And you see Jesus' kindness. He doesn't blast them with power because you can't force anyone to believe anything.

[ 6 : 12 ] He gently asks them what's going on. This is very important because some of us want a voice from heaven. We want fireworks before we'll believe.

And most of us only come to realise that Jesus has been in our lives after we come to believe. So they rehearse the facts about Jesus of Nazareth.

You look at these verses. They say, He was a prophet, mighty indeed, and word. Where have you been? He healed the sick. He healed leprosy. He healed paralysis and blindness. He raised the dead in front of crowds.

Back in chapter 7. He calmed storms. He walked on water. He cast out demons. He multiplied bread. And his teaching was full of fire and pure wisdom.

Went straight to the heart. And they say, And our leaders manipulated the crowds, handed him over to the Romans, who crucified him in an act of brutal savagery.

[ 7 : 11 ] And we had hoped that he might be the one who would redeem Israel. He obviously wasn't. And that was Friday.

And now it's Sunday. And some of the women went to the tomb to finish spicing the body. And they met two angels who were not at all patient with them. And you can read this in the first 12 verses.

The angel said to the women, What are you doing here? Why are you looking for the living among the dead? Did you not hear what Jesus said at least four times?

That he'd be crucified and on the third day rise. He's not here. He has risen, said the angels. And when the women went and told the men in those early verses, the men thought they were being hysterical.

The word is delirious. But what's so helpful about this is that you can have all the facts and all the evidence you wish, but that's not in the end what kindles our heart with fire for Jesus.

[ 8 : 11 ] What does Jesus do? Verse 25 and 26. He said to them, Now, if I was Jesus, that's not what I would have done.

I would have said, Look, it's me. Touch me. See me. Which he does in the next story. He takes them to the scriptures to show them that Messiah must suffer crucifixion and must be raised from the dead to enter his glory.

And it's a brilliant moment because these are the two things that stand as barriers to these two believing in Jesus. There are only two problems, the crucifixion of Jesus and the resurrection of Jesus.

They just can't believe either of them. The crucifixion of Jesus has completely thrown them. They think it is a tragedy and they're scandalised by it.

They wanted a Messiah who would redeem them from the Romans, who would bring political and economic change. They had a Messiah in their own image.

[ 9 : 33 ] They wanted someone who would fix the world around them, change their circumstances, who wasn't going to get themselves slaughtered. And they're deeply offended by any idea that God could suffer.

And I think it's perfectly understandable for us when you think about it just for a moment because when you look at the cross, what it says about us is very confronting.

It says we're not okay. It says we can't save ourselves. We can't work to please God on our own. And all the things that we do to try and bring about redemption, in the end, don't bring us any real change.

And we usually want redemption so that we stay in charge. And the cross will not allow us to follow Jesus on our own terms. It shows us that the redemption that Jesus has brought is not redemption from political or economic troubles, but is much deeper and more permanent.

It's freedom from sin. It's freedom from death. It's freedom from Satan. And like most of us, these two look at life also without the reality of the resurrection.

[ 10 : 47 ] They think death is the absolute end. And now that Jesus has died, it's over, right? And if you look at life without a sense of the resurrection, that's where you get this feeling that life is meaningless and insignificant.

We find it very hard to imagine that Jesus has smashed a hole in death and gone through and made a way for us out to the other side, that the one standing before them and the one who is still alive holds the keys of death and hell and offers us eternal life.

So here were the two barriers to their belief, the crucifixion and the resurrection. No wonder they were downcast. And so for three and a half hours or so, Jesus takes them through the Old Testament scriptures, showing them that it was God's plan always to deal with our suffering by himself suffering, by the Messiah coming to suffer in our place, to be pierced for our transgressions and to be raised to new life so that the grave would no longer hold him.

And that is exactly what you find the apostles preaching in the book of Acts. So salvation is not a vague, general, spiritual feeling.

It's not a philosophy or a morality of universal love. It has to do with the whole story of God with his world, that the Son of God, God's chosen king, should be pierced for our transgression, that by his stripes we would be healed.

[ 12 : 20 ] And as we read in Psalm 16, God would not allow his Holy One to see corruption, but will raise him and put him at the right hand of God. That's why Jesus left heaven. That's what he has come to do.

That's what the Messiah does. That's point one. But point two is even more important. It is the majesty of who the Messiah is. And here we come to the heart of it in verse 27.

If you have the Bible open, I'll read that verse. Beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

Now this is key, who Jesus is. Because you can study the cross and the resurrection and never come close to encountering the real Jesus until you see how important he is, until you see the majesty of who Jesus is.

So for the entire walk, Jesus goes through the Old Testament, showing from every part of the Old Testament, every hope and every promise, every story, every character is all about him.

[ 13 : 29 ] And if we miss who Jesus is, nothing God says and nothing God does is going to make very much sense at all. We'll miss what God is doing in the resurrection and in the crucifixion.

any transformation will remain outside us. It's only when we begin to see who Jesus is at the heart and core of all that God is doing that we can begin to relate to Jesus as God wants us to.

Now we don't know exactly what passages Jesus took them through, but it was pretty comprehensive, beginning with Moses and all the prophets. prophets and I wish I had a few hours to do this, but perhaps he took them to the Exodus, you know, the great redemption from the power of Egypt through the Red Sea and said that was in fact a rehearsal and a preparation for the great redemption I achieved on the cross.

Or perhaps he took them to the Passover Lamb of God and said that's me who takes away the sin of the world. Or maybe he took them to the manna from heaven and he said I'm the bread of life.

Or Jacob's ladder. Or the water of life. Or the rock of ages. Or the presence of God. Or the branch of Jesse. Or the wisdom of God. Or a prophet like Moses. Or the kinsman redeemer. Or the son of righteousness.

[ 14 : 52 ] Or the king of kings. I mean it's astonishing when Jesus opens our eyes to see these things. He is the key and pivot of all God's doing in the world.

He's the purpose of creation and salvation. He's the purpose of your life. He's the purpose of mine. He holds all things together. He is the cornerstone and the foundation of all God's purposes and actions not just in history but in the cosmos.

And I think people are pretty respectful when they talk about Jesus today. But if he's the son of God who stands behind creation, if he's the saviour of the world who's come to bear away our sins and the judge, the risen one who will judge the living and the dead, respect doesn't cut it really, does it?

As Jesus himself said in another gospel, all that God does, I do. All the judgment and salvation that God has has been given to me and all the worship and honour and glory that belongs to God now rightly belongs to me.

And the question for us this Easter is, do you believe that? Is that how you think about Jesus? Jesus. I mean, anything less means you can't have a heart connection with him. It means that we miss out his love for us on the cross and the eternal life he offers us in his resurrection.

[ 16 : 14 ] And it will leave us wandering around still disillusioned and not able to make sense of things. The message of the whole Bible is not that we should be better, try harder, be nicer and make the world a better place, although it's nice if we do.

The message is we're in deep need and God in his love has given his only son for us, so seriously does he take us. And when they get to Emmaus they invite Jesus in for supper and he takes bread and he breaks it and verse 31 their eyes were opened by God to recognise him and the very next thing they say in 32 is did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road while he opened to us the scriptures?

What set the facts on fire? What transformed the facts into faith in their hearts was the slow opening of the scriptures on the road by the risen Jesus as they came to see who Jesus really is showing them that he is the heart and centre of all God's doing showing that the Bible is not a collection of moral stories for us to copy but to read the Bible in a Christ-centred way the same God who set the burning bush burning now sets their hearts on fire with love for Jesus as he teaches them from God's word what's wonderful for us this morning is we weren't there on that first Easter but it is possible for us to have a true encounter with the risen Jesus in just the same way as we open God's word week by week we pray that Jesus himself would be our teacher and that's why this chapter is here it's to open to us the mystery and the majesty of the Messiah and I think we're meant to identify with these two unknown disciples and the process they go through as they encounter the risen Jesus and so perhaps you're at the beginning of the story just aware of your own disillusionment that there's a great deal wrong with the world trying to make sense of where Jesus fits in unaware that the risen Jesus was already in your life but you just don't recognise it or perhaps you know the facts about Jesus and his life but they've had no real impact in you you can't really bring yourself to believe all of it and the idea of the resurrection and Jesus as Lord of all is a bit delirious really or perhaps you believe some of what Luke says you don't have any problem with the death of Jesus or even the idea of resurrection but the idea that Jesus has taken away your sins or that you can enter life with hope and glory that's too much good news to take in or perhaps you've started hearing God's word and hearing Jesus speaking to you through God's word and you really want to be part of his kingdom and grace but something is holding you back to all of us the message is the same we need to pray that God would open our eyes and reveal Jesus to us that he would show us the magnificence and the kindness of Jesus and as he does it it will mean changes because if he is at the centre and the pivot of all things it means you will no longer be in charge but he will be which comes as a relief to all us control freaks and it'll mean entering into his death and resurrection and dying and rising with him and if you'd like to move forward in this way and you're new to St John's we have an event this next Wednesday evening that Jordan's going to speak about where you might meet with others on the journey and starting in May we have three weeks called

Introducing Jesus it's a great thing to come to and find out more but the most practical thing you can do right now is to pray quietly in your heart along with me as we finish with him and finish with him with him and finish with him and finish with him and finish and finish with him with him with him and finish and finish with him with him and finish with him and finish with him with him and finish with him and finish with him and finish!

and finish and finish and finish