

The Greatest Tale Ever Told

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[0 : 00] Well, if we turn back to the passage we read and if we take for our text the words of verse 11. But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.

The Lord Jesus Christ has been crucified. His body has lain in the tomb for two full days. And now on the third, a group of women come, reporting magnificent events to the disciples. Things that are so unbelievable that they would be considered by them as idle tales. And the tale as described is what we read of in verse 22 and 23.

By the two that traveled on the Emmaus road. That says, I want to consider this verse. And I'll sense very briefly, but I'll take it under the headings of a walk, a wonder, and a word.

[1 : 35] We'll begin with a walk. The woman amazed them. And maybe that's all the devil was to them during this time.

The amazing account seemed so far-fetched to them to be believed. Peter instinctively jumped to inspect the reports.

But we don't read that as the two Emmaus men. Because we read that they walked. They left Jerusalem. They left the disciples.

It seems even after all that had happened to them. While Jesus was with them. And even after this report that came from the women.

There was still nothing they found that would justify that they should remain. Jerusalem seemed so empty to them now. And with the increasing threat from the Jewish authorities to the believers.

[2 : 36] They chose to make their way and depart. Whatever led them to Emmaus, we were not entirely sure. It could be different reasons.

They could have merely been returning home. They could have been seeking work. Whatever it was. One thing we do know of them. Is that they were going away hopeless.

They aren't understanding what has happened. And that's fair to say really in their circumstances. In a sense it's easier for us today.

We've got the full picture. We've got as full a picture as we can have. But we understand what was happening at that time. They were two real men.

And we often maybe make the assumption that these biblical characters were of superior trust or confidence. But they aren't. It always comes across to us in the details of the biblical stories.

[3 : 41] They're just like us. We can see ourselves in these accounts. They're prone to doubt. They're prone to misunderstanding.

The times. And even often walking in difficult paths of sorrows. Put yourself in their shoes.

They followed the man who they hoped was going to be their saviour. And he's died. The one they had hoped was the long-awaited promised Messiah.

Beforehand all the signs were there. The miracles he did. The miracles he did. The words he said. There must have been a great excitement amongst him. As they awaited this Jesus to be exalted as their king.

Their great ruler and defender of the nation of Israel. But now he's gone. These men, they're sorrowful.

[4 : 48] We can understand that. And in a sense the last thing they want to hear is tales of him being alive. The words written here of idle tale can be translated from the Greek as just nonsense.

Absolutely no sense. Because, you know, I think if they had believed the women's words, they wouldn't have gone anywhere. Because we find them running back as soon as they find out the truth.

Whatever they were going to Emmaus for had lost all its importance. And they ran back. Now the women, they actually came with the most significant news they could probably ever have heard.

And they wrote it off. Jesus is alive. The greatest truth they could have heard. But it was perceived by them as a tale.

And in a sense, that's scary for us. To think that the men who spent most of the time with Jesus. Who followed him and hoped in him. That he would be the one that would rise again.

[6 : 08] They could not contemplate or believe that Jesus actually would do what he said he would do. It's scary. That they couldn't grasp it.

They were so close to him. And still they didn't grasp it. They doubted. So it's no wonder that the man who is not close to Jesus.

Can so easily say that this is tales. And you'll find no shortage of people making that claim today. How often maybe you've had it said to you yourself.

You don't believe in that nonsense, do you? Maybe you're listening at home and you're thinking exactly these words. And you know sometimes you might get the chance just to sit down one evening and read a book or watch a film.

And it's a great, you know, the selection is massive. What you can watch or read. But I always tend to prefer the films or the books that say based on a true story.

[7 : 24] I think that just makes all the difference. It has far more worth to it. You know, whatever it is, a film or a book, it almost leaves an impression on you.

Rather than just an enjoyment of having watched it or having read it. The true story leaves an impression in you.

It's not just someone's imagination. Some of these true stories you maybe wish they were someone's imagination. And you're not just saying, you know, that was a good film.

You know, sometimes you're left saying, I can't believe that actually happened. Now the Bible doesn't have the phrase based on a true story penned in the pages of it.

In a sense it kind of does. Throughout the whole thing. The concluding chapters in Revelation actually have. These words are trustworthy and true.

[8 : 29] Now before you close the Bible, it's reminding you twice. These words are trustworthy and true. But the question we must all ask ourselves is, what do we believe?

Is it idle tales? Or is it trustworthy and true? And you look at the evidence on both sides. And you can wonder over the claims that we would take it at its word.

You know, there's a man called Lee Strobel. You've probably heard of him. He does this. He took the, he's got a book called The Case for Christ. And there's actually a film on it too.

If you're not a good reader. And it's worth a watch. But he sets out to see, is this tales or is it true? And he proves it from a legal point of view.

He takes all the evidence and adds it together. And comes to his decision. Is it true or is it tales? It's truth to Lee Strobel.

[9 : 35] This is the great decider for your life. What path you will walk on. And maybe we can say that, was there more than two men who followed Jesus to Jerusalem and walked away that day?

You know, was there more than just the two Emmaus men? Probably. Surely, in fact. Was there more than two men who gave up hoping in Jesus after he had died?

Again, surely there must have been more than two. Was there more than two men who walked away and threw in the towel at this point?

Maybe someone who said, well, he wasn't the Messiah after all. And walked away. We're not entirely sure. But I pray none of us here would make that mistake.

But the thing with these two men is they don't throw it away. These men, they walked away. But they didn't throw in the towel.

[10 : 48] They have not dismissed the whole case together. They're deliberating over it. And they're probably saying, surely there's something in this. They are in a wonder over what has happened.

They're trying to reason it together. So I'll take my second point now of wonder. These men, I believe, they are in a sense, well, they are sincere men.

They're walking as a departure made quite simply in sadness. That's why they lived, I think. They wanted to mourn.

But they are still full of questions. And if there's any credit to give them, we could say that they are trying to reason it out together. They've not just dismissed this Christ.

They're trying to see, well, what? There's something. There's something to this, surely. That sincerity is known to the Lord. The Lord who is near to the brokenhearted.

[11:58] But these men never quite could realize how close or near the Lord would get to them that day. Until after he revealed himself to them.

You can almost hear them discuss as they walked. You know, we can't deny the tomb's empty. We don't know how. Someone must have taken his body.

But the tomb was guarded and it was sealed. Why are the two ladies coming to us now? And Joanna and they're telling us he's alive. The tomb's empty.

He can't be alive. It's impossible. Who survives a crucifixion? He was dead. Joseph and Nicodemus wrapped his body and they placed him in the tomb.

How? How was he able to save others though? And he didn't save himself. They're reasoning it.

[12:58] And Jesus approaches and says to them, What is this conversation you are holding with each other as you walk? And they stood still looking sad.

And they stood still looking sad. It captures the scene. They're heartbroken sad. They're maybe sore sad.

They're hopeless sad. Maybe sad that they didn't want to speak to anyone else about it. Jesus has just stopped them in their tracks.

They couldn't believe what this man had asked. Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened here in these days? You know, you could, if you had someone come up to you and say to you, you know, why are you all wearing masks?

You'd think, are you the only one that hasn't ever heard of this coronavirus? You know, where have you been? Essentially what they're saying.

[14:02] And regardless of this response that they give to him, they're gracious to him. And they explain to him what they themselves thought of Jesus as sincere men.

And that restoration to them came from the most unlikely source of this man who knew apparently nothing to them. They could have sweetly told the man to go away, but they didn't.

They gave him time. And that time on that day was the most important thing they could have done. It was the greatest thing that they did.

In all their sadness, the Lord was so close to them in it. What a reassurance that is for each of us.

They were kept from seeing it only until they looked, well, until Jesus revealed. And they looked back and they thought, you know, our hearts burned within us.

[15:05] He was there with us. You know, we didn't quite realize it. I hope we know something of that as we look back on our own lives and see the Lord's hand working in it.

They heard the most wonderful explanation of Christ that day from the Old Testament. You know, they were essentially saying, you know, we don't understand what's going on.

And Christ gave them the greatest lecture that they could have ever have heard. And he made it so clear to them. The result was that they said, stay with us.

Don't go anywhere. Stay with us. Jesus never asked us to believe in him because we can reason everything out and understand everything and make sense of everything God is doing.

We're told to have faith in the Lord. To remain faithful to the Lord. To have a belief and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[16:13] In part, there is knowledge revealed to us. Enough for us to identify truth. But also, there is an aspect of his power made upon your personal life.

This is almost the spirit working in you as the cup that we looked at in the children's talk. The spirit works in us and warms us.

It makes the word acceptant to our hearts. And it changes us. And the Christian cannot but say that he is my God.

Even though I don't understand how he was. The revealed Jesus in my heart has left such an impression upon me.

And often I confess and say, you know, I can't believe it's true. But it is. And I am completely assured of that.

[17:21] The word of God takes on worth. Christ takes on worth. And his words burn within our hearts. And we know it is a truth that Jesus is alive.

They went from standing still in sadness to returning in joy. You know, the Christian's hope is restored. He's given a new life.

A new joy. A new purpose. A new meaning. And a new worth. Is today a day to give Jesus time?
Are you sincere in seeking after Jesus?
Are you sincere in your wondering of Jesus? Your consideration of Christ? If you are, I pray. He will
come to you with clarity and power.

And reveal himself to you. And that Christ will become as truth to your soul. Ask him to teach you
through his word.

[18 : 30] And that's my last point. Word. Now we must admit the women were ahead of the game
here. Whilst the other disciples were hiding.

The women practiced an unfaltering love. But in coming to the tomb. They cherished and
remembered his words. As the angels spoke with them.

And went declaring with boldness. New words. That was so strange to the lips of men. I wonder.
Did they consider would they be believed? We can learn something from them. The Christian. We
should be loving and dutiful to the Lord.

Mindful and memorable of scripture. Remembering that he will return. Ready for his return.

[19 : 31] Honestly comprehending this return visit as a reality. And sometimes. And sometimes.
Myself. And we as Christians.

Are maybe guilty. Of treating that. As a tale. Because. If Christ's. Return. Was a reality to us.
You know. It would be. It would. It would put us to work. It would be seen. In our daily living.
In our witness. We would be confident. To say to everyone. Of what Jesus means to me. Jesus has
revealed himself to me.

And I know it as a truth. Even when nobody. Believes you. Even when they dismiss every word you
say.

[20 : 31] As idle tales. The truth still stands. And Jesus is alive. The men didn't really understand.

Or trust. The woman's word. Jesus had to reveal himself. Before they believed. There's sort of a
similar situation.

With Thomas as well. You know. He missed the first appearing. Of Jesus. And the disciples. You
know. They were telling him. They told him.

We have seen the Lord. But he still. He wouldn't believe. Until he seen him himself. We are so slow.
To believe at times. That is so fitting to ourselves.

And that. Maybe we say that we are. Oh foolish ones. We struggle to believe. And we automatically.
Naturally.

[21 : 31] Kind of lean towards the. I can't believe. Side of things. But we must trust. In the Lord.
Jesus Christ. And call out.

Help. My unbelief. The world may think. You are so. But it will be better. That. Than Christ.
Say that to you. Jesus had said to Thomas. Do not disbelieve. But believe. Just believing so easy.
Believing seems so hard to us.

But Jesus is. Just believe. Believe. Have you believed. Because you have seen me. Blessed are
those. Who have not seen me. And yet believe.

Is there anyone listening tonight. Who. Is like walking. To a maze. Like the two men here. Who
have a shattered hope. Who are struggling.

[22 : 29] To understand. The times or events. And asking. What. Will we do now? Wait. On God.
Don't go anywhere.

Consider. What he has done. In your life. Previously. Learn from it. As the psalmist says. In 130. I
wait for God.

My soul. Doth wait. My hope. My hope. Is in. His. His. Word. Hope. Is in his word. The two men.
Were void of hope. Even when they tried. To reason it out. It wasn't until Jesus. Showed himself.
And he turned their attention.

To the word of God. First. Then. Their hearts. Were revived. Then.

[23 : 27] Their hearts. Began to burn. Then. They desired. Christ. To stay with them. Then. Their
eyes. Were opened. And then.

They went. Back. They must have been saying. The tale. You know. It was true. Jesus.
Is alive. He revealed himself. To us. In his word. And then. We sat. And when he broke.

The bread. We saw him. And I can't help. But wonder. Did he bless. That bread.

With his own words. Of. John 6. Verse 51. And the bread. That I will give. For the life.

[24 : 22] Of this world. Is my flesh. And the bread. That I will give. For the life. Of this world. Is my flesh.

The symbol. Of bread. Is the flesh. Being broken. Before them. You know. This is what opened their eyes.

It was only then. That they realized. Within their hearts. That it was. As verse 26. Necessary. That the Christ. Should die. Suffer.

And enter his glory. That's the first thing. Christ said. It was necessary. That the Christ. Should suffer. And enter his glory. In order. That he.

Would redeem. His people. And giving. His flesh. This is what every soul. Needs to know. Only through.

[25 : 22] His word. The revealing. Of the word. Of Christ. The power. Of the spirit. Applying it to us. That. Is what will restore us.

And revive us. If we have. Walked. Away. Come to the word of God. Seek his teaching.

Seek out Christ. Be in prayer. And meditation. Over it. Maybe you have concluded. The bible. Is one big tale. From beginning. To end.

What it claims. Is just so far fetched. That you think. It's nonsense. Maybe you had given it time. Once in your life.

But now come to decide. That there is no hope in it. And you have left. The other followers. To it. And walked away. Okay. Will you reconsider.

[26 : 20] Your walk tonight. Consider the voice. Of the believer. As he speaks to you.

That this is truth. And not tales. He says. I know it in my heart. And the new. The new Christian. Has that passion. In his heart. A desire.

That people. Would understand. What they have just. Been revealed to them. Jesus is alive. What makes this.

The greatest tale. Of all time. Was that it was true. And not a tale at all. Give it your consideration. Can this be true.

Before you walk. Wonder. Over the bible. And weigh up. The word. Sincerely. Seek out the truth.

[27 : 19] Ask Jesus. To show. Himself. To you. Tell him. You want to have hope. Turn me around. From any disbelief.

Make me believe. Draw close to me. And whilst I may not. See you by sight. May I see you. By faith. Pray that Christ.

Is to be considered. By you. By each of us. Christ is worth. Your consideration. And may we.

Confess. In conclusion. That my heart. Will declare. That this. Is the greatest. Truth. That has ever. Been told. It's a beautiful truth. Because it's a beautiful. Christ. May we. Have a desire. To lay hold of.

[28 : 19] And cling. To the one. Who will direct us. Along life's journey. Encourage us. Along the way. Pick us up.

When we are feeling low. Correct us. When we make mistakes. You know. What do you. Think. Of Christ. May these thoughts. Be blessed. To us. Tonight. We'll do a final singing.

In Psalm. 130. In Psalm. In Psalm. 130. In the Scottish.

South. That is on page. 421. Psalm. 130. Page.

[29 : 17] 421. We'll sing the whole. Psalm. Lord. From the depths. To thee. I cried. My voice. Lord. Do they hear. Unto my.

Supplications. Voice. Give an. Attentive yet. Lord. Who shall stand. If thou. O Lord. Should mark. Iniquity. But yet. With thee. Forgivenesses.

That fear. Thy mayest be. I wait. For God. My soul. Doth wait. My hope. Is in his word. More than. They that. For morning. Watch. My soul.

Waits. For the Lord. I say. More than. They that. Do watch. The morning. Light. To see. Let Israel. Hope. In the Lord. For with him. Mercy. Be.

And plenteous. Redemption. Is ever. Find with him. And from all. His. Iniquities. He is. Real. Shall. Redeem. We'll sing.

[30 : 10] These words. To the praise of God. Lord. From the depths. To thee. I cry. We'll stand to sing. Lord.

From the depths. To thee. I cry. Thy voice. Lord.

To the hear. The Lord.

SONG CONTINUES SONG CONTINUES SONG CONTINUES

I say for the lave to watch the morning light to see.

[32 : 34] Let Israel open the Lord, all breath and mercy be.

And plenty of redemption is ever found with Him.

And from all His iniquities, He is the child of Redeemer.

Let us close with a word of prayer. Our Father, may we consider Your Son Christ, what He has done for us and what He means to us.

And that through Your Word, You would reveal Yourself to us. Give the hearts of this town a desire to pray that prayer.

[33 : 59] Reveal Jesus to me. That we would know Him and trust in Him. Be with us as we part.

Help us to be praying for each and one another.

And that we would know Jesus Christ, the one who redeems Israel, His chosen people. Forgive us our sins, we pray.

And all these things we ask in the name of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.