

The road to Emmaus

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[0 : 00] Luke chapter 24, and we'll read from verse 13, and we're reading down to verse 35.

Now that same day, two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened.

As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them, but they were kept from recognizing him.

He asked them, what are you discussing together as you walk along? They stood still, their faces downcast. One of them named Cleopas asked him, are you only a visitor to Jerusalem and do not know the things that have happened there in these days?

What things? He asked. About Jesus of Nazareth? They replied, he was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people.

[1 : 28] The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel.

And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning, but didn't find his body.

They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels who said he was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.

He said to them, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?

And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the scriptures concerning himself. As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus asked as if he were going further.

[2 : 49] Jesus acted rather as if he were going further. But they urged him strongly, stay with us, for it is nearly evening, the day is almost over.

So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and began to give it to them.

Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the scriptures to us?

They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven and those with them assembled together and saying, it is true, the Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.

Then the two told what had happened on the way and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread. Amen.

[4 : 0 0] The Lord give us good understanding of that passage when we come to it. We're going to sing one interesting comment about the apostle Paul. Let me read it to you. He was confined within his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him.

When they came, he proclaimed to them the kingdom of God and taught them about the Lord Jesus Christ. He witnessed large numbers of Jews from morning until evening, explaining about the kingdom of God and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, that's what Christian ministry really is all about. Christian teachers proclaim the kingdom of God, first of all, and teach about the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because in John 17 and verse 3, we read, eternal life is to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

So we talk about him constantly. The Old Testament prophesied that the coming Messiah, who Jesus was, would suffer.

[5 : 2 3] Jesus did suffer, especially in the last week of his life culminating at Calvary. Two disciples returning to Emmaus from Jerusalem had not anticipated that Jesus' life would end by crucifixion.

Their master, Jesus, had not resisted his accusers when they came to arrest him. He allowed himself to be taken.

And at that point, his disciples forsook him and fled because he wasn't making any defense. Peter was not a coward, was he? He took up arms and lopped off the ear of the high priest's servant.

They were not cowards. They were disillusioned. Messiah himself, as these two disciples, were walking back home to Emmaus, dejected, with their hopes dashed.

They'd witnessed the arrest, the trial, and the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. The Messiah joined them as they walked on their journey home, but they didn't know it was him.

[6 : 5 0] Luke 24, verse 17. What are you discussing together as you walk? They replied, can you possibly be the only visitor to Jerusalem who doesn't know the things that have happened there in recent days?

What things? Oh, momentous things. About Jesus of Nazareth, a man powerful in word and deed before God and the people. And the chief priests and our rulers handed him over, and they crucified him.

Their emotions were at rock bottom. Now, who better than this stranger, this visitor, to enlighten their minds?

So he said to them in verse 25, how foolish you are. Slow to believe all the prophets have spoken. Did not Messiah have to suffer? Prior to entering his glory.

Then, as Paul had done, as we read right at the beginning, he explained to them what was said in all the scriptures concerning himself.

[8 : 0 4] In John chapter 5, verse 39, Jesus said, the scriptures testify about me. Cleopas and Companion, they were convinced of this truth.

And so we must speak of him when we preach the word. And we must preach about him from a good understanding and knowledge of the Bible, following in the pattern of Paul and the Lord Jesus himself.

The writer of Hebrews gave us counsel. He says in chapter 12, verse 2 of Hebrews, Fix your eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, then sat down at the right hand of God.

Consider him, consider him, think of him, ponder him, who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Two weary, discouraged disciples who had lost heart were on the road to Emmaus. But that all changed. On further considering Jesus, our appreciation and our gratitude to him grows.

[9 : 31] And he will keep us from growing weary, discouraged, losing heart. And the Bible exposition that these two people experienced in the lives of these two people, as the Bible exposition was going on, their hearts were burning.

And they were transformed. They were changed. I don't know whether you've ever listened to a sermon and your hearts have burned. I think I have quite a few times. When the word has so got into my heart that I feel as if I'm burning within.

And for these two, night became day, darkness became light, sadness became joy. Our calling is to preach Christ as crucified.

The more we understand his sufferings, the more we will be effective in our witnessing. Listen to Paul again. Galatians chapter 6, 14. Far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.

1 Corinthians 15 and verse 3. It was what I received that I passed on to you as of first importance that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.

[10 : 57] And that's what was explained to the two disciples on the Emmaus road. Paul said to the Corinthians again, I resolved to know nothing while I was among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

So I've said all that to say this, that a suffering Christ is at the center of our preaching. God so loved the world that he gave his son to the world.

God so loved the world. And he was not sent to the world for 33 years of a change of scenery. He was sent as a servant to suffer.

This message of a dying savior has melted stony heart. It melted my heart a long time ago. He suffered.

The Greek preposition *chupa* is an interesting one. It means he suffered on behalf or for the sake of someone else.

[12 : 02] It was substitutionary atonement. Because the sinless savior died, my soul is counted free for God the just is satisfied to look on him and pardon me.

I went to the Tron, went from Edinburgh to be the pastor of the church at Prestwick for 10 years. And when I had a free Sunday, I would pop up to Glasgow to the Tron and heard a good sermon.

And it was simple. It was a simple sermon, but it was a powerful sermon. And it had three points. And I made a note of the three points. Jesus' sufferings were vicarious.

Jesus' sufferings were voluntary. Jesus' sufferings were victorious. His sufferings were vicarious. They were for us.

They were voluntary. They were endured willingly. And they were victorious. They were effective. In Luke 24, two disciples were given a new understanding of Jesus' sufferings.

[13 : 10] At several points in the New Testament, it's made clear that Jesus has suffered death. That by the grace of God, he might taste death for everyone.

It was fitting that God should make the pioneer of our salvation perfect through suffering. Now, let me pause there. Christ made perfect.

Does that not sound rather strange to your ears? One that is already perfect, how can he be made perfect? It's a paradox. But the Greek word can also mean complete.

Be made complete. His suffering completed Jesus in some way. The word made flesh at Bethlehem, identified with humanity at every level, emotions and their trials and their temptations.

Hebrews 2.11 says, Jesus was of the same human family, therefore not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters. Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his human death, he might break the power of him who holds the power of death, that is, the devil.

[14 : 36] And we see this Jesus, the Son of God. We see him hungry. We see him thirsty. We see him tired.

He prayed. He ate. He wept. He slept. He was human. And fully human. And knows exactly how we feel.

And in chapter 5, in verse 8 of Hebrews, we read, he learned obedience. Does that not also sound strange?

Jesus learned obedience. He is one equal with the all-knowing God. It's another paradox. Yet he learned something.

He learned from suffering, pain, temptation, rejection, and personal abuse.

[15 : 35] They were new experiences. He learned to deal with human adversity by unqualified obedience to the Father.

He learned obedience. Thus, he became the source of eternal salvation for all those who believingly obey him. Because he suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who also suffer temptation.

The Son of God completed his course, the course that was assigned to him by the Father. And he qualified to be our understanding, sympathetic high priest, able to sympathize with our weaknesses.

Tried just as we are. Only shared as he did with our human nature. He did not sin.

And that's a difference. Eternally in heaven, in the past, he was obedient to the Father as the perfect Son of God.

[16 : 52] 33 years on earth, he was perfectly obedient to the Father as Son of Man. Philippians says, Philippians says, Jesus, in very nature, God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage.

But rather, he made himself nothing by taking the nature of a slave and made in human likeness. But in appearing as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death.

Wesley caught this in one of his hymns, didn't he? 'Tis mystery all the immortal dies upon a cross. Amazing love.

How can it be that thou, my God, shouldst die for me? There's something for each of us to discover, folks. And we always have to recognize that there may be someone in our gathering who is not a Christian.

You've got to grasp this. God died for me. Jesus became human in order to die. And that's a truth to comfort repentant sinners.

[18 : 12] It helps when we can say to a fellow sufferer, certainly valuable in pastoral ministry, I know how you feel. And our Savior can say to us, I know how you feel.

He understands so we can come confidently to the throne of grace. To receive mercy and find grace in time of need. And in connection with his sufferings, we cannot ignore Isaiah 53.

The prophet has much to say on the atonement that the Lord Jesus made at Calvary. This is what he says. He took up our pain and suffering.

Punished by God, stricken, afflicted, but he was wounded for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. Because of the transgression of my people.

And Peter adds, Christ suffered once for sins, the righteous in the place of the unrighteous, to bring us to God. He bore our sins in his own body on the tree.

[19 : 21] I know this is familiar truth, but this is the heart of the gospel. And how did Jesus live those 33 years? How did he live his earthly life?

Well, like this Peter says, especially towards the end of his life, when his enemies hurled insults at him, he did not retaliate.

When he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he trusted himself to him who judges justly. And that reflects what Isaiah said in 53 again.

Isaiah 53. Oppressed and afflicted, led like a lamb to the slaughter, in silence as a sheep, before its shearers is silent, so he didn't open his mouth. Jesus said, now is my soul troubled.

What should I say? Father, save me from this hour? No, for this very reason, I came to this hour. During his trial, Jesus expended no time or energy protesting his innocence.

[20 : 34] I'm sure you've noticed. It was to Pilate's amazement. Aren't you going to say something in your defense? And we can sort of think what the Lord's reply would be.

No, I'll drink the cup that God has given me. And though numbered among transgressors, he never transgressed at any time in thought or word or deed.

He committed no violence, neither was deceit found in his mouth, yet it was the Lord's will, the Father's will to crush him and cause him to suffer.

It's always interesting to read the testimonies of those who were not his friends, who were convinced of his innocence. Pilate, addressing those being for his blood, said, I've examined this man in your presence, and I found no basis for any charges against him.

What crime has he committed? I found in him no grounds for the death penalty. And one thief to another, on either side, we are being punished justly, receiving what our deeds deserve.

[21 : 47] But this man has done nothing wrong, nothing deserving of death. And then Mrs. Pilate sent a message to her husband, have nothing to do with this innocent man, how Jesus was denied justice.

But betrayal, arrest, and condemnation did not take him by surprise. He predicted these very things anyway several times.

Mark 8, 9, and 10. When approached by a mob with staves and clubs, we read, Jesus fully knowing what was going to happen to him.

And he asked the mob, who is it you want? Jesus of Nazareth. I am he, so let these go. I'm your man.

Wasn't that the plan was going wrong at all as the disciples thought? So that's, that's the suffering that was necessary.

[22 : 55] Now then, just to go on to a new tack, there are two ways that the prophets and the apostles often allude to Jesus' suffering. first of all, in body, and secondly, in soul and mind.

The New Testament, I notice, does not emphasize the physical brutalities Jesus endured. There is a brief reference in the Old Testament which conveys the horror of those physical brutalities, where we read in chapter 52 and verse 14, his appearance was disfigured beyond recognition as that of any human being.

We are left to ponder on that. And again, in Psalm 22, all my bones are out of joint, my heart turned to wax, my mouth dried up like a pot shed, they pierced my hands and my feet, all my bones are on display, I thirst.

We read, they scourged him and led him out to crucify him. Now, well-meaning preachers do major on the pain Jesus endured physically.

And that's not inappropriate. Don't let me leave you with that impression. Crucifixion was physically cruel. We have historical, harrowing descriptions of the horrors endured by its victims, a barbaric practice that all decent people had hoared as the worst form of capital punishment ever devised.

[24 : 44] It was reserved for the worst of criminals to inflict the maximum pain and discomfort. And yet, the New Testament in my humble judgment makes more of his non-physical sufferings.

What do I mean by that? Note the language used, ignominy, abasement, humiliation, maximum vulnerability.

It speaks of his shame, speaks of him being despised, rejected, ignored, and mocked all during his three-year ministry. Then, anticipating Calvary in Gethsemane, we read in Mark 14, Jesus began to be deeply distressed and troubled in spirit.

My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Such was his anguish of soul that blood appeared through the pores of his skin on his forehead.

Again, Isaiah in 53, he speaks of the suffering of his soul. He poured out his soul unto death. A pastor was asked to meet with church workers at their request.

[26 : 09] he expressed when he got to the meeting his brotherly love for them and appreciation of his friends. They were his friends. Only to be told, if you think you're among friends, you must think again.

Some, he led to Christ, patiently disciplined, but they tore into him verbally, trashing his ministry, trashing his reputation, trashing his motives.

Result? A broken spirit. No visible bruises, no black eye, none of the deacons took their jackets off to give him a punch.

No, wasn't like that. I know it's happened in some churches, but no bloody nose, no punch up. Cruelty with words, with looks, with body language, with ingratitude, with indifference and betrayal.

Jesus said, they hated me without a cause. Do you have painful memories of thoroughly deserved experiences like that?

[27 : 34] I can blush still when I think of the past. Perhaps you can too. We experience mental strain and heartache and anxiety and I've experienced sorrow.

That's not physical, but it's suffering. Bereavement. It's not physical, but it's suffering. It's painful. It hurts. I tasted bullying at school.

Sometimes it was physical. Most times it was not. I have memories of being alone and disliked and helpless and unsupported. Don't cry too much for me when I tell you that I know what it's like to be taken to one side and told.

You realize that nobody likes you. They were right. Couldn't complain. I was a horror. I deserved it, but it hurt.

I became a Christian while at school. Mockery was hard to bear. The tongue stings more than the whip. And now we have, our children have to experience cyber bullying, bullying emails, anonymous letters, texts, Twitters, being told they're ugly, useless, worthless.

[28 : 54] I made a pastoral visit once to a couple. I won't say which church it was. They'd stopped attending church and they were members and so we were just simply explaining why they should come to church and they spoke their minds to the pastor.

I tell you folks, a kick in the stomach by a horse would have been more welcome and I cried all night. It wasn't physical.

About 12 years ago, can you remember the film The Passion of Christ? It was received enthusiastically even by evangelical Christians.

The director boasted he made \$500 million from that film. It was graphic, apparently.

Scenes of the scourging and crucifixion were painful to watch. I tell you this folks, the sufferings of Jesus cannot be portrayed adequately, only in a physical way.

[30 : 24] Reverently I say his worst sufferings were not physical. What happened to Jesus between the sixth hour and the ninth hour of that day can never be conveyed by a movie.

When Jesus cried out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? It was an anguished cry of dereliction as the Father abandoned him.

forsakenness is terrible suffering. Betrayed by Judas and then by Peter, then one after another, the disciples, the male followers of Jesus left.

Can we ever know the isolation that Jesus felt when the Father forsook him? Hatred by his enemies was expected.

Jesus was wounded in the house of his friends. lamentations, is it nothing to all you that pass by, look around, say, is there any suffering like my suffering inflicted on me by the Lord?

[31 : 45] In the day of his fierce anger, a wrath? Paul's personal desire was to share in Christ's sufferings, which was granted in a measure.

we read Paul saying, you know all about my suffering, what kinds of things happened to me, the persecutions I endured, everyone in the province of Asia deserted me.

Demas has forsaken me. Trusted friends turned their backs upon Paul, and he spoke of this experience in a way that he never did of his physical sufferings.

Well, the point I'm making is that there's a mystery here, the mystery of Christ bearing our sins in his own body on the tree, and God having condemned sinners to eternal hell.

I remember as a young Christian hearing Billy Graham simply say, hell is eternal separation from God. In the infinite capacity that Christ could do what he did, he bore eternal hell on the cross for me.

[33 : 23] it's a mystery. Bearing shame and scoffing rude, in my place condemned he stood.

And was anyone less deserving than he? There are many accounts of God's servants experiencing undeserved humiliation in the Bible just as the forerunners of the Lord Jesus.

There was Joseph and there was Daniel and there was Job and there was Mordecai. But folks, there's something wonderful in common about them all.

They all ended well. them all. And that's the good news. Forsaken for that period of time.

The creed, as we read, the post-cree sometimes gets it wrong, you know. He was crucified, dead and buried, he descended into hell. It's not the sequence.

[34 : 36] he went to hell on the cross. And then after a certain time he cried out with a loud voice, get a Lester, it is finished.

And then he prayed. No longer was the separation there. Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.

the separation was ended. He bore my sins in his own body on the tree. Folks, that's the gospel.

What do you owe to the Lord Jesus Christ? How can you ever tell? So we're grateful this morning for the cross. And maybe it's appropriate that in a few minutes we'll celebrate the Lord's table together and rejoice in what he's done for us.

So let's pray together. Father,