FOUR POINTS CHURCH

Small Group Questions

Luke 24:13-35, Christ's Reminder to Us: His Sufferings were Necessary!

Opening Discussion: Below are some "Don't" imperatives. Which of these do you struggle with the most, and what does it look like in your life?

- My hope for you this morning is that you will understand the full reality of what Christ accomplished from you both through his death and resurrection. What Christ has accomplished is exactly this: you possess his very presence in your heart!
    - Don't miss Him! Don't forget Him! Don't take Him for granted! Don't ignore Him! Don't shut Him up! Don't shut Him out! Don't talk over Him! Don't filter Him! Don't question Him!
- **[13] That very day** (the day they discovered the empty tomb) **two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, [14] and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. [15] While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. [16] <u>But their eyes were kept from recognizing him.</u>**
    - Sometimes God doesn't fully reveal his presence that we might seek him all the more.
        - We see this with Elijah in the cave and Samuel with God's voice speaking to him as a child. When God does this, it is because he is leading us to listen more intently and seek him more fervently.

<u>Question: do you know of any other examples of this in scripture? (There are indeed a few more.)</u>

- **[17] And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. [18] 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?" [19] 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, [20] and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him.

- Many people have acknowledged Jesus was a prophet without acknowledging him as God's son, and the redeemer of God's children.
  - The Koran mentions Jesus as a prophet.[1] That doesn't make the Koran true. Jesus was more than a prophet.
- We can see by the very next verse that they questioned whether Jesus was the redeemer.

Question: Have you ever talked with someone who believed Jesus was a true figure in history, but not Deity? What was that conversation like and how did it make you feel?

- **[21] But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. [22] Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, [23] 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. [24] 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."**
  - The have all the information already, but they are refusing to do the math and understand the answer. (Aren't math story problems annoying!)
  - They hadn't properly processed Jesus previous statements (statements they were uncomfortable with) to the extent that they could understand the answers.
    - This is a reminder to wrestle with and receive every part of scripture that we might be fully prepared for God's sovereign work.
  - When we close our minds to difficult things about God, we force God into a box we have created. After that, we only look for God in that box, but he never promised to contain himself to our boxes.
- **Sometimes we miss God because we are too busy looking for him.**

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[1] Quran-Surah 19:30

- Have you ever been too busy looking for your glasses to realize your glasses were actually on? You were expecting your glasses not to be there, so it didn't register in your mind that they actually were there!
- This often happens because we are looking for God to be somewhere he hasn't promised to be or do something he hasn't promised to do.

Question: are there boxes you try to force God into because of fear or preferences?

- **What blinds us from seeing God?**
  - **A blocked faith vision.**
  - I spoke last week about wearing Gospel lenses.
    - Perhaps you have your gospel lenses on, but the lenses are dirty and smudged.
  - How does the Bible define our faith vision?
    - **Hebrews 11:1-3 [1] Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. [2] For by it the people of old received their commendation. [3] By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.** (ESV)
  - Here are four faith vision blockers:
    - **1. When our faith vision is on our circumstances, we tend to miss Jesus.**
      - I'll repeat this often, because it is so easy to forget. What we know about God's character should inform our circumstances, not the other way around!
      - Trust God, test your feelings. Trust your feelings, test God.
    - **2. When our faith vision is on other people, we tend to miss Jesus.**
      - One of the big mistakes we make with God is trying to interpret God through how he deals with others. That is a dangerous practice. God doesn't deal with us all in exactly the same way.
      - If you are ready to walk away from church, your faith was in church, or Christians, rather than Christ.

- **3. When our faith vision is focused on a false version of Jesus, we tend to miss Jesus.**
    - A false version of Jesus is all too prevalent in many movements today. This is where we have to be so careful about social media. If someone gives you a version of Jesus that makes you only comfortable and happy and easy going, you should be suspicious. Much of what Jesus actually said should cause you to pause and even make you feel uncomfortable. (Read the sermon on the mount!)
- **4. When our faith is on a lack of evidence we want to see, we tend to miss Jesus.**
    - My daughter had a faith crisis for years. When she realized there would never be unanswered questions and accepted it, she began to see the beauty in a God she could not explain, rather than the mere discomfort of unanswered questions.

Question: what faith blocker causes you the most problem in your own life. How do you combat your struggle with faith?

- In order to correct the faith vision of the men traveling to Emmaus, Jesus offered them a reminder of 3 important truths:
    - **1. Christ's purpose in coming to earth was to endure the cross and join His Father through death.**
        - **[25] And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! [26] Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"**
    - **2. Christ's plan was to fulfill the Genesis 3 promise interwoven throughout the Old Testament.**
        - **[27] And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.**
    - **3. Christ's presence is on offer (through the Holy Spirit) to those who would believe and surrender to His work of salvation.**
        - **[28] So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, [29] but they urged him strongly,**

saying, “Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.” So he went in to stay with them. [30] When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. [31] And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. [32] 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?” [33] And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, [34] saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” [35] Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread. (ESV)

- I want to key in on one statement in these verses: ““Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?” (Vs 32)
- There should be within you a burning desire to know God more deeply, and this burning desire is kindled by the Holy Spirit.

Question: in your own words, explain what it would mean to you to have a burning desire in your heart to know more of God? How do we feed that desire?

- Jesus had promised to send the Holy Spirit after he departed. This was always the plan!
  - **John 14:16-17 [16] And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, [17] even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.**
  - **John 14:26 [26] But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. (ESV)**
  - **John 15:26 [26] “But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. (ESV)**

- **John 16:7 [7] Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. (ESV)**

- **Christ sufferings were necessary for us to have a more personal relationship with God through His Holy Spirit.**
  - We are no longer separated by the law and a veil. We have full and complete access to God instantly through the Holy Spirit.
  - But how often is the burning desire to know God quenched by other desires?
  - One of there shortest verses in Scripture says it all: **1 Thessalonians 5:19 [19] Do not quench the Spirit. (ESV)**
  - Just as Peter ran out of the tomb and into marvelous light, with the good news (the Gospel) on his lips. Now we must allow the good news to continue to burn its way out of our lives to a lost world around us.
  - **How do we quench the Spirit?** Well, it is actually the same process as bringing darkness into the church. Let me review the 5 "C's" of darkening/quenching the church and the Holy Spirit:
    - **Cynical Viewpoints - stop questioning God's goodness.**
    - **Critical Conversations - stop arguing with God is asking you to do.**
    - **Complaining Spirits - remember that your complaints don't change God's plans.**
    - **Controlling Attitudes - let God be God! You can't share a throne with a king.**
    - **Compromising Lifestyles - be sure, as much as you are able, that your outside is matching the inside.**

- If we only got one try, If we've only got one life, If time was never on our side, Then before I die, I want to burn out bright[2]

Application Questions: What does your relationship with the Holy Spirit look like in your own personal life? What do you talk to Him about? How do you listen for His still small voice? How does the scripture and music effect that relationship?

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[2] Switchfoot, Album: Oh Gravity!. Jon Foreman / Tim Foreman, Burn Out Bright lyrics © Penny Farthing Music, Publishing Shmublishing Publishing, Publishing Schmublishing Publishing