

Series: **Easter 2023**

CDOBC

Today's Title: "**Witness #3**"

April 9, 2023 - Luke 24:13-35 (Mark 16:12-13)

Easter Sunday

OBJECTIVE: To help people see the hope and transformation available to us through the resurrection.

The Bible not only declares the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, but it also gives us the accounts of who the resurrected Jesus appeared to.

It records 8 different resurrection appearances.

Turn to Luke 24:13-35

Today, we're going to look at the 3rd appearance of the resurrected Jesus – which takes place with 2 disciples – on the road to Emmaus.

Opening Prayer

Easter Sunday.

Many in our culture – possibly some of you – think of Easter and the celebration of Jesus being raised from the dead – as more of a mythological story instead of an actual, historical event.

Bunnies – chocolate – peeps and other candy – Easter egg hunts – seem to dominate the cultural attention and energy when it comes to Easter.

Easter is often more associated with springtime – than the resurrection of Jesus.

This is what the first point in today's text is about.

Our struggle to understand and believe in Jesus. vs. 13-17

We are so often a bit dull when it comes to understanding Jesus.

We are often slow to put our faith in the Lord – to truly lean on Him – to the point that we actually rely on Him. *But this is not unique to us.*

It's surprising to realize that even the disciples of Jesus struggled to understand who He was and to believe in Him.

Mark 8:27-33 – Peter's great confession.

Mark 8:31-32

“And He (Jesus) began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. And He said this plainly. And Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him.”

Peter rebukes Jesus – he is rebuking God? The Christ?

Peter (and the other disciple's) inability to understand what Jesus was saying – even though He was explaining things “plainly” (vs. 32).

It's recorded numerous times in the Gospels – but I'm sure there were many more times that Jesus told His

disciples He would be crucified – and after 3 days He would rise from the dead.

But the disciples never seemed to understand this – even though Jesus told them in very plain, simple language.

It's Sunday morning – resurrection day.

Jesus has appeared to Mary Magdalene – and then to all the women listed – and these women go and tell the disciples what has happened and what they saw.

Luke 24:10-11

“Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.”

The disciples didn't believe them.

Why?

Maybe because they were women, and their testimony was not respected / believed in 1st century culture.

Maybe because their concept of the Messiah was so fixed that they couldn't conceive of the Messiah being murdered by the Jewish religious establishment in partnership with the Roman soldiers.

Maybe because they couldn't conceive of the idea of resurrection – even though a week or 2 earlier they were eyewitnesses of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead.

Sure...Jesus could raise people from the dead... but who could raise Jesus from the dead?

It's resurrection day – a day full of wild stories from the women – but for the men – they were still in the dark – still thinking Jesus was dead. Empty tomb...no body.

Read vs. 13-17

vs. 13-17

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 this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?” And they stood still, looking sad.

vs. 13 – “That very day two of them...”

This is Sunday – resurrection day – in the afternoon.

They are walking 7 miles to a village called Emmaus.

We're not exactly sure where this village was located, but some think it was to the west of Jerusalem.

“two of them” – These are followers of Jesus. They are not part of the 11 disciples / apostles (Judas is dead), but they are part of the larger group of disciples / followers who have been with Jesus.

Jesus is in a resurrected, glorified body – what Paul calls a “spiritual body” (1 Corinthians 15:44) – but there’s nothing spectacular or dazzling about it.

I’m sure He could make it spectacular.

But He looks like a normal guy to these 2 disciples.

“...their eyes were kept from recognizing Him.” – This is in the passive voice – so it’s not their inability to recognize Jesus – they are kept – by God – from recognizing Jesus.

Mary Magdalene had a similar problem at first – she thought the risen Jesus was a gardener!

Why keep them from recognizing Jesus? Maybe so they would be good listeners – good students – as Jesus would later explain the Scriptures to them.

Notice, Jesus asks them questions.

He knew the answers... but He asked them questions.

Why?

Because they need to confront their lack of knowledge.

They need to be shaken out of their disbelief of what Jesus has said and what the Scriptures teach.

Questions are a great way to teach.

We often forget this.

We’re too eager to tell someone what we know – what we think they should know.

But a good teacher will ask questions first.

Questions do a few things.

First, it causes the listener / student to examine if they know the answer – and in this process they realize what they don't know.

Second, it helps the teacher know what the listener / student knows – so they can teach what needs to be learned instead of simply reviewing what they already know!

When Jesus asks them what they're talking about, they stop walking.

vs. 17 - “And they stood still, looking sad.”

The reality of what has happened has made them distraught – deeply disturbed.

Do the realities of life ever tear at your heart?

Do the difficulties and sorrows of life cause you to stop in your tracks and weep due to your immense sadness?

They are overwhelmed with sorrow – their expectations and hopes are dashed.

Knowledge of Jesus without *faith* in Jesus. vs. 18-24

You can know a lot about the Bible...about Jesus...and still not have faith in Him.

We can have a disconnect when it comes to our knowledge about Jesus – our knowledge about the Bible – and how we live our life.

Over the years, *and I have to include myself into this group...* but I have known so many people who have an expansive knowledge of the Bible – they often know a lot about Jesus – but their life is not affected, or their behavior or attitudes are not impacted by what they know.

This is what has happened to these 2 disciples.

Read vs. 18-24

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?”

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 crucified Him.

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. 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.”

vs. 19-20 – they give this ‘stranger’ a brief overview of Jesus and His ministry. They don’t refer to Jesus as the Messiah – but as “a prophet mighty in deed and word”.

vs. 21 - “But we had hoped” – past tense already!!! They are already in a post-Jesus mindset.

They are hopeless – and its resurrection day afternoon!!

How quickly our hope and trust in God can vanish!

What they say next is interesting.

They recount the testimony of the women.

The women’s testimony is verified by the Peter and John – who we know from **John 20** were the 2 disciples who ran to the tomb when they heard the women’s story.

Yet they don’t believe that Jesus has been raised – even though Jesus told them countless times that He would be raised – even though the women have told them – even though Peter and John verified what the women said about the empty tomb.

vs. 24 - “...but Him they did not see.” – Because they didn’t see Jesus yet with their own eyes – they didn’t believe those who had seen Him.

How do you compare to these 2 disciples?

Do you believe in Jesus – even though you haven’t seen Him with your own eyes?

Do you have knowledge of Jesus – but you lack faith in Him?

The greatest Bible study ever. vs. 25-29

And He said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!

Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory?”

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

So, they drew near to the village to which they were going.

He acted as if He were going farther, 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.”

There is so much here...

You have a Bible.

vs. 25 – God expects you to know and believe what the Bible says.

Key word “all” – “all that the prophets have spoken.” – if you’re “slow of heart to believe all...” – ***Jesus says*** you’re a “foolish one”.

Our faith must be rooted in / based on what the Bible says – not our personal experience.

- Christianity is a Bible-based, truth-based, historical reality-based faith.
- It is not based or proven in our experiences.
- It stands on the revealed truth of God in the Bible.

These 2 disciples did believe in the Scriptures – but they were selective in their belief.

They only believed the parts that made sense to them – that fit their own pre-conceived ideas.

Isn't that our struggle.

We believe the Bible – but we believe certain parts more than others.

Some parts we might set aside – we don't like what it says, or we don't understand it – so we just set it aside.

The part they had set aside – the part of Scripture they missed – was what Jesus says in **vs. 26**:

“Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory?”

The **reality** of the Messiah did not fit with their pre-conceived ideas and beliefs about what the Messiah would be like and what He would do.

Then Jesus...

vs. 27 - “...beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”

That would have been an amazing Bible study!!!!

From Moses (wrote 1st 5 books – starts w/Genesis) Jesus starts with Genesis – and all the way through what the prophets wrote.

No N.T. at this time – Jesus' Bible was the O.T. Scriptures – and He shows them what the O.T. says about Him – the Messiah.

As they arrive at Emmaus – Jesus acts like He’s going further – but they convince Him to stay with them because it’s getting dark.

He accepts their offer.

This is how Jesus works...even now.

He doesn’t barge into your life.

He doesn’t force Himself into your life.

He waits for you to ask Him – to invite Him to stay with you.

He is waiting for you now!

The source of spiritual truth and insight. vs. 30-32

Here is something really important for us to realize before we read these verses.

We can’t understand Scripture on our own – we need Jesus / The Holy Spirit to help us – to ‘illuminate’ the Scriptures for us.

When He was at 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 Scriptures?”

vs. 31 – “their eyes were opened” – passive voice – something enables them to now recognize Jesus.

Just as God prevented them from recognizing Him earlier, now He removes the restraint, and they

immediately recognize they are with the resurrected Jesus!

As quickly as they recognize Him – He vanishes. Interesting that nothing else is mentioned about Jesus vanishing. His glorified body is not limited like our physical, earthly bodies.

Their hearts were burning while Jesus was revealing the Scriptures to them.

The same thing happens today.

Maybe it's happening to some of you right now.

When you read the truth in the Bible...

When you hear the spiritual truths taught in God's Word – there is something inside you begins to stir.

Your soul awakens – the Spirit of God begins to work within you – to draw you to Himself.

You sense something new... different in your mind – and your spirit.

Their hearts weren't burning because Jesus was walking with them.

It was that Jesus was explaining the Scriptures to them – and the Scriptures came alive and awakened their souls!

The response to knowing the resurrected Jesus. vs. 33-35

Their response?

“And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” Then they told what had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of the bread.”

They hurried back to Jerusalem – to the other disciples – this was urgent – they had to share what just happened!!!

Their response was also a shift from sadness to great joy.

From unmet expectations to having their expectations exceeded!

Their response was to tell others about Jesus.

Apply it...

We may struggle to believe in Jesus and the Bible’s teaching about Jesus.

Maybe you’ve given up hope because God hasn’t met your expectations.

These are the thoughts and feelings of these 2 men as they walked to Emmaus.

But what we see in this passage helped them – and they will help us also.

1. Ground your faith in what the Bible teaches.

“O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.”

Too many people make their **experiences** the foundation for their faith.

But our experiences are not a reliable or stable foundation.

God has given us His Word – **all of it** – to help us and guide us in every area of our life.

Make the Bible the foundation for your faith and life.

2. Ask God to help you understand the Bible's teaching.

Theologians refer to this as the Holy Spirit's ministry of illumination.

Just like the 2 men were prevented from recognizing Jesus – and then enabled to recognize Jesus – when we read the Bible it is more than an intellectual pursuit.

It's a spiritual pursuit – and for that we need God's help.

Seek His help as you read and study the Bible.

3. Invite Jesus into your life.

He doesn't invite Himself – He doesn't barge into your life.

He's waiting for you to invite Him in!

Put your faith in the risen Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.

4. Tell others about meeting Jesus.

When Jesus was born – and the shepherds went and saw the baby – wrapped in cloths – lying in a manger – the Bible says they went away and: “...told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child.”

In our passage today – after they realized this was Jesus – they headed back to Jerusalem to tell the others.

Have you told anyone about the risen Christ?
Have you told anyone about the truth of Christ?
We’re not supposed to keep quiet about this amazing news – we’re supposed to share it with others!

May God bless our words and multiply our efforts as we share the good news – great news of Easter – the amazing news of the resurrected Jesus!

Closing prayer