

"It Is All About Jesus"

Luke 24: 13-35

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If you could sit down with one person and have them explain the bible to you, pointing out things, details, that you maybe have missed, who would that be? I enjoy listening to sermons by Dr. John Piper, because he often sheds new light on passages of which I am familiar, but may have missed some of the nuances, especially from the Greek text, that Piper notices. But, John Piper, or any other pastor or bible teacher now, or in the past, is the wrong answer to my question. If you had the opportunity to have one person explain the bible to you, you should want that person to be Jesus. No one understands the bible as well as He does, because He literally wrote the book. Folks, today our text describes two of Jesus' followers having this kind of conversation with Him. Our journey through the gospel of Luke brings us to 24:13-35. If you have a bible you can turn there, otherwise the verses will be on the screen. This passage describes the conversation between Jesus and two of His followers just hours after the women had discovered Jesus' tomb was empty. There are important lessons for us from this text, so let's pause and pray we would hear and heed what the Lord is saying to us through this portion of His word today....

**Luke 24:13 Now that same day (Easter Sunday) two of them were on their way to a village called Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem.**

Verse 18 tells us one of these individuals is named, "Cleopas." Some speculate that Cleopas is the same person as Clopas. According to John 19:25 his wife Mary is a follower of Jesus. Thus it is possible this is a husband and wife pair, or it could be two different people. We know they are followers of Jesus, but not part of the eleven apostles.

**Luke 24:14 Together they were discussing everything that had taken place.** (Meaning Jesus' crucifixion and the report of His resurrection) **Luke 24:15,16 And while they were discussing and arguing, Jesus himself came near and began to walk along with them. But they were prevented from recognizing him.**

Apparently, the argument was about whether Jesus had risen from the dead. Jesus asked them

what they are discussing, and not having any idea they are speaking to Jesus, this is what they tell Him:

**We have been talking about Luke 24:19-24 Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet powerful in action and speech before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him. But we were hoping that he was the one who was about to redeem Israel. Besides all this, it's the third day since these things happened. Moreover, some women from our group astounded us. They arrived early at the tomb, and when they didn't find his body, they came and reported that they had seen a vision of angels who said he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found if just as the women had said, but they didn't see Him.**

Jesus responds, **Luke 24:25, 26 "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Wasn't it necessary for the Messiah to suffer these things and enter into his glory?"**

On a number of occasions Jesus expressed the belief that His followers should have had a little better understanding than they did of God's redemptive plan that would be accomplished through Him, the crucifixion and risen Messiah.

**Luke 24:27 Then beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted for them** (or some verses, "explained to them.") **the things concerning himself in all the Scriptures.**

This is the Old Testament I believe Jesus explained to them how all 39 books of the Old Testament told a story that pointed to Him as God's anointed Savior. They then reach the village of Emmaus and Jesus agrees to share a meal with them.

**Luke 24:30 It was as he reclined at the table with them that he took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.** That is also how Luke describes what Jesus did at the Last Supper.

**Luke 24:31 The their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, but he disappeared from their sight.**

Perhaps Jesus' actions with the bread helps them realize who He is, but I suspect both the recognition and disappearance had a "supernatural" dimension.

**Luke 24:32 They said to each other, "Weren't our hearts burning within us while he was talking with us on the road and explaining the Scriptures to us?"**

At that point they did not realize it was Jesus talking to them, but there was something about what He said and how He said it that made their hearts burn. Now, they were not referring to physical "heart burn" which can be very unpleasant. This is a very positive spiritual experience. I think they mean that when Jesus spoke, they both intellectually and "emotionally" realized that what He was saying was true and important. I believe Jesus clearly articulated truth about Himself in a clear and persuasive manner which results in these two disciples both believing and embracing what Jesus said.

Cleopas and his companion then return to Jerusalem where they find the eleven apostles gathered. The apostles tell them,

**Luke 24:34, 35 "The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!"** (meaning Simon Peter.) **Then they** (the two) **began to describe what had happened on the road and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.**

Okay, that is our text. Now, let's focus on what the Lord is saying to us today through this portion of His word. There are two verses in this passage that I think stand out.

**Luke 24:27 Then beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted (or explained) for them the things concerning himself in all the Scriptures.**

**Luke 24:37 They said to each other, "Weren't our hearts burning within us while he was talking with us on the road and explaining the scriptures to us?"**

That experience, of having Jesus explaining how the entire bible pointed to Him, deeply impacted Cleopas and his companion. And I think these two verses point to some very important truths for us.

**Number 1** – We need to see Jesus Christ throughout the Old Testament. God has chosen to reveal Himself to us through the 66 books of the bible, 27 in the New Testament, 39 in the Old Testament. As Christians, we are new covenant

believers. The books of the New Testament speak more directly and clearly to us, and in many ways are more relevant for us, that the books of the Old Testament. I believe both our individual and corporate times of bible study should be weighted toward the New Testament. *But*, the 39 books of the Old Testament are the word of God. They are god's revelation for all people, in all places at all times. Through them God speaks to us. The apostle Paul was refereeing to the Old Testament when he wrote **2 Timothy 3:16,17 All Scripture is breathed out by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.**

Neglecting the Old Testament weakens our souls. And many of us have at times, or maybe for our entire life, neglected this part of God's word. Yet, our souls are also weakened and can even be destroyed if we fail to read the Old Testament the right way. What do I mean by that? Well, there are folks, I know some, who go to an Old Testament book of Leviticus, and try to figure out how they should keep the Sabbath, what foods are permissible to eat, and even whether it is appropriate to wear clothes with blended fibers. After all, Leviticus 19:19 forbids clothing woven from two different materials. Now, people come up with all sorts of interpretations for these passages. I read one article talking about how clothes made from blended fibers are inferior to 100% wool or cotton. Thus, the lesson for us from Leviticus is supposedly that Christians should always buy top quality clothing, as long as they can afford it. I don't think so. The main problem with those type of interpretations is that they focus on details, and often miss the big picture. They see the trees, but not the forest. What is the forest? In our text Jesus reveals that it is *He, Himself*. That is what the Old Testament is about Jesus Christ, or Jesus the Messiah. Now are the different approaches that Christians take when reading the Old Testament. Dispensational and covenant theology both have some value. But, I think the most helpful way to approach the Old Testament is to remember the entire bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is a story, one story, a true story. And the central figure of the story is Jesus, the Messiah. Everything in the Old Testament in some way points to Him and His kingdom. That is what Jesus was telling Cleopas and friend on Easter Sunday afternoon. As Martin Luther put it,

“Christ, the Messiah, is found on every page of the Old Testament. In the New Testament we find out the Messiah’s name is Jesus.”

So, even though there may be some practical value in not mixing two different fibers for clothing or planting two different kinds of seeds together (Deuteronomy 22), the main point is that these instructions are intended to highlight that the people of Israel not blend with pagan cultures. And the reason for this separation has nothing to do with ethnicity, but everything to do with the fact the Messiah would be the seed of Abraham, the Lion of the tribe of Judah... sprouting from the tree of Jesse. In a sense the Israelites were not to blend wool and linen because of Jesus. And I suspect Jesus may have talked about that on the road to Emmaus.

Friends, we need to learn to read the Old Testament, like Jesus did. Let me give you another example. 1Samuel 17, David and Goliath. Most of us know the story. David the shepherd boy engages in a one on one contest against the giant Philistine warrior, Goliath. Against overwhelming odds David defeats the giant with just a sling and stone. A great story. What does it mean?...What does it mean for us? Well, I am sure somewhere in the United States this morning a pastor is preaching a sermon on that passage saying, “from this passage we learn that no matter how gigantic your problems may seem, God will help you overcome them.” Friends, that is true in a sense, but this is such a “light” sugary application of the text that it leaves souls undernourished. Others would read this passage and focus on **1Samuel 17:45** where **David said to the Philistine, “You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, who you have defied.** They will note that the people of Israel needed to trust in the Lord, not in military might. Likewise, we too need to trust in the Lord, not human resources. Friends, that is a true statement and an appropriate application of the text. I think I have preached a sermon that said basically that. It is not wrong to draw that lesson from the story of David and Goliath. But...the Lord has something much more for us in that passage... something which, again, I suspect Jesus pointed out. David, not only rescued Israel by defeating Goliath, but He would soon be God’s anointed king, who would bring peace and

prosperity to Israel. As the anointed one He was a small “m” messiah, who pointed to a much greater anointed one, the capital “M” Messiah who would save both Jew and Gentile and ultimately establish and eternal kingdom where there will be no more death, mourning, crying or pain. David points to the greater Messiah, who would defeat a giant far bigger than Goliath, the evil one, Satan himself. David’s wonderful victory that day, points to a far greater victory that Jesus would win on the cross, which will ultimately end with Satan being cast into the lake of fire. If we read the Old Testament as Jesus did, and as I believe God intends, thinking about David’s great victory over Goliath, will cause us to think of Jesus’ even greater victory of sin, death and the devil. We need to see Jesus throughout the Old Testament.

**Number 2** – We need to see Jesus Christ throughout life. By that I mean we need to recognize opportunities we have to honor the Lord Jesus in every aspect of life and by God’s grace, we need to strive to do that. Life would never be the same for Cleopas and his companion after their encounter with the risen Jesus that day. Their hearts burned within them, and I suspect like the apostles, that fire never went out. Cleopas is not mentioned anywhere else in the bible, but according to tradition he was martyred. Encounters with Jesus after the resurrection tended to make willing to die for their faith. C.S. Lewis said people could be divided in three groups. First are those who reject the Lord, who for whatever reason, choose to live life apart from Him. There is no room for Jesus in their schedule. The second group, this includes most people Lewis knew and many people I know, are those who want to make Christ a part of their lives. They try to fit Jesus into their schedules. Lewis notes these folks are seldom truly happy because there is continual tension between what they want to do and what Jesus wants them to do. They often see serving and pleasing the Lord as a great sacrifice, that involves giving up their own happiness. And then Lewis says there is a third group, who choose not to make Christ part of their lives, but to make Him the sole focus of their lives. For them life is about Jesus, pleasing and serving Him. He fills every part of their schedule.

Now, let me clarify. First, Lewis and I are not saying that everyone in the second category, folks with Jesus as part of their lives, is not true Christians. Some of those people are, some are

not. Some are born again and saved, some are not. God is the judge, but salvation is always by grace, through faith, in Jesus Christ alone. However, every Christian believer should want to be, should strive to be, that third category. I suspect for many of you, your life is about Jesus, some days. And then there are other days when you are trying to fit Jesus into your schedule, your agenda. I know that is true of me. But I don't want it to be that way, and I hope you don't either. Second, when life is about Jesus, when He is the sole focus of our lives, it doesn't mean we will spend our entire day reading the bible, praying and singing hymns. People who are Jesus focused still have jobs, still spend time with family and friends, still eat three meals a day, still have hobbies, still relax, still go to dinner parties, still sleep, still take showers and brush their teeth. They just do these things a little differently than people who are not Jesus focused.

There are two verses in the bible that are especially helpful in understanding what this means. One is **1 Corinthians 10:31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.** The other is **Colossians 3:17 and whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.** Folks, these verses remind us that every part of life, even the most mundane, can be lived in a way that honors the Lord. That is what a Jesus focused person wants to do. Even eating and drinking should be done for God's glory. John Piper talks about how one can drink a glass of orange juice for the glory of god. How? By enjoying the taste and being grateful to the Lord for such a wonderful beverage. Another thing the bible makes clear is that no matter what type of job someone has, it can be done in a way that honors the Lord. Now, that doesn't include being a drug dealer or prostitute, but any legitimate job can be done for the glory of God. The apostle Paul gives these instructions to slaves in **Colossians 3:23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.** Reflecting on those words, C.S. Lewis wrote, "the work of a Beethoven and the work of a house maid become spiritual on precisely the same condition, that of being offered to God, of being done humbly 'as to the Lord". This does not, of course, mean that it is for anyone a mere toss-up whether he should clean rooms or

compose symphonies. A mole must dig to the glory of God and a rooster must crow."

Friends, when the Lord calls you to dig or crow, strive to dig or crow in a way that honors Him. This is part of understanding our vocation or calling. That simply means recognizing what the Lord wants us to do at a particular time and doing it. Everyone has a slightly different calling, but our goal should always be the same, glorifying God, seeking to live every part of life under the lordship of Jesus. Even those who have very limited abilities or opportunities can still do this. If someday I end up confined to a nursing home bed, unable to speak, and all I can do is smile at the staff person who feeds me, I better smile for the glory of god, in the name of the Lord Jesus. In all sorts of different aspects of life, being Jesus focused, glorifying God, includes, first, enjoying the gifts God has given us with gratitude. Jesus focused people are grateful people. Second, it includes seeking to be a light shining for Christ wherever we may be. Third, it includes striving to show love toward anyone we encounter. And fourth, it includes being a good steward of whatever the Lord has entrusted to us. When our hearts burn with the truth of who Jesus is and what He has done, is doing and will do for us, those are things that by God's grace we will strive to do as we seek to live a Jesus focused life.

Friends, the theme and title of our sermon is it is all about Jesus. The Old Testament is about Jesus... Life is about Jesus...He, not us, is the path to true and lasting joy. By God's grace, may we follow that path.