

Luke 24:1-35 - On the Emmaus Road

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[0:00] Good morning church. Today I'll be reading Luke 24 verses 1 to 12. On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices that they had prepared and went to the tomb.

They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright, the women bowed down with their faces to the ground. But when the men said to them, Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here. He has risen. Remember how he told you while he was still in Galilee, the Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified, and on the third day be risen again. Then they remembered his words. When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to their eleven and to all the others.

[1:23] It was Mary Magdalene, Jonah, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.

Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen laying by themselves, and he went away wondering to himself what had happened.

So it's Luke chapter 24, verse 13. Now the 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 the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?

[2:45] What things, he asked. About Jesus of Nazareth, they replied. He was a prophet, he was a prophet, powerful in word and deed, before God and all the people.

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 the body, 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 Jesus had said, but they did not see Jesus. He said to them, how foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?

[3:57] 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 continued on as if he was going further, 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, and their eyes were open and gave 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, then the two told what had happened on the way and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

[5:21] Amen. Great. Thank you, Liz, for reading for us. Do keep the Bible with you if you can. We're going to be looking at that story together.

I'm not going to keep us for too long. I know that there's lots of wriggling children around and hopefully you're enjoying the coloring in. But my hope is that we're going to look at that story and just see a few things together from it.

So let's pray and ask for the Lord's help as we do that. Let's pray. Father, we want to thank you so much that we come together this morning to listen to what you say in your word and not our own good ideas.

We want to pray now that you would speak to us and that you would give us hearts which are eager to listen as we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. Now, I want to just show you three simple things from the story that we have just had read for us. And to help you out, I've got a prop for each one.

[6:21] And my hope is that over lunch, maybe you can remember the three props and that might help you remember what the sermon was about this morning. And so we're going to look at those three things and then I'm going to tie them all together and tell you why it's important.

So the first prop is this. What do we think this is? Anyone tell me? Yes. What is it, Kyla?

It is a blindfold, right? Yeah, you all get that? That is a blindfold. Now, why would we have a blindfold in the story? Well, if you look down at the story, I think this is meant to be one of the big surprises in the story, which is that, well, they don't recognize Jesus.

Did you notice that? Look what happens in verse 15. Look down in the Bible at verse 15. And as they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus came up and walked along with them, but they were kept from recognizing him.

Here, Jesus, who, remember, on the Friday had been killed on the cross, he joined two of the disciples as they're walking home to Emmaus from Jerusalem. And as he meets them, he keeps them from recognizing him.

[7:33] He deliberately stops his disciples from working out who he was. And I think that's incredible. Just imagine it for a moment. Imagine if you were Jesus and you are meeting disciples who are deeply worried and concerned for you.

They've seen you killed on the cross and you want them to know that you're alive. And now you bump into them as they're walking down the street. What's the first thing that you say to them? I'm Jesus.

I'm alive. But he does the very opposite. Instead, he closes their eyes. So they can't see. He hides himself from them.

It probably wasn't that difficult to do. It's the afternoon. It's getting a bit dark, isn't it? Verse 17 tells you that they are downcast. Probably means as well that they're walking with their heads down. And so they don't recognize or see who Jesus is. And notice, notice what they feel like. They're sad, aren't they, these disciples? And they tell him that they'd hoped that this Jesus character would be the one who would redeem Israel.

[8:36] But instead, he died on a cross. It was three days ago, they say. I mean, three days ago when someone's died. That's so long ago that they know nothing is going to happen. It's definitely all over now.

They then tell the story about these women who said that they couldn't find the body. And they don't think Jesus has risen. They're just confused, aren't they? Where is he? They say. And Jesus just walks along, he listens to them, and he doesn't show them who he is.

He blinds them. There's a blindfold. Second prop. Okay? This is more tricky, but I was thinking about this, thinking, how do I, this is what?

What is this? Does anyone know what this is? A lanyard, right? I want you to think carefully. Who wears a lanyard, right? So this is a lanyard. It's got pens on it.

It's got a teabag on it for break time. It's got a whistle, ready? Yeah? So who wears a lanyard like this? Teachers. Thanks, Kerry J.

[9:40] Yeah, teachers. They wear lanyards like this, and they rattle around school wearing these lanyards looking important, yeah? Now, so teachers. Now, look down at the passage. I want you to notice that Jesus becomes, in the passage, a teacher.

A teacher. Look down at verse 25. He said to them, after they've told him that they're worried about what's happened to this Jesus character, he says, how foolish you are and how slow to believe all the prophets had spoken.

Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory? I think that's quite a bold thing for Jesus to say. But notice that he doesn't just say, it's my opinion.

He doesn't even say, listen, I've got some ideas that you need to listen to. Instead, he becomes a Bible teacher. Look down again at your passage, verse 27.

What does he say? And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the scriptures concerning himself.

[10:42] Moses and the prophets there means basically all the Bible, all the Old Testament that they had. And then he says, all the scriptures. And so here as they walk along the road, these disciples who don't know who Jesus is because they're kept from recognizing him, they get a theology lesson as Jesus walks along with them and teaches them from all the Bible everything that was said about him.

It's a lesson that covers all of the scriptures for them. And it's not just that he's picking out the relevant parts from the Bible, saying, oh, look at this verse here or this bit here or that bit there. It's not that. No, what he's saying to them is listen, all of the Bible is telling my story. All of the scriptures are telling this story about me. The whole thing points to this Messiah who had to come and suffer and die before entering his glory.

This is the lesson if you like, it's that Jesus had to die before he rose. That, you know, the visible success that they were hoping for, that they were looking for, this restoration of Israel that they talk about.

No, they've misunderstood. The kingdom of the Messiah was never meant to be a political restoration. It was a spiritual one, an eternal one.

[12:00] The kingdom of God is not about what you build with bricks and mortar or material possessions or what you build in kingdoms and nations. No, the kingdom of God is built in hearts that love and trust the Lord and want to live for him.

It's about suffering now and glory later. It's about death before resurrection. You know, you can imagine it, can't you? Jesus saying to them, listen, think about Noah.

You know, what comes before the rainbow? The flood comes first, doesn't it? Judgment came first. But what comes before the promised land in the Old Testament?

Slavery in Egypt and the rescue. David was hunted and persecuted. He lived on the run before he was exalted as king.

The pattern of the Bible is down first and then up. Down and then up. Down and then up. Maybe he told them the story of Samson. Do you know the story of Samson, the strong man of the Bible?

[13:04] How what? Samson won the great victory in his death with his arms stretched out. Think of the story of the exiles or Daniel being thrown to the lions or Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego thrown into a fire.

It was death first and resurrection later. Over and over and over again. The kingdom of God, says Jesus, is not a nation state of Israel or Babylon or Rome.

The kingdom of God is made up of people who have faith in him. People who are looking for a kingdom that's coming. A resurrection kingdom, not a present one. A heavenly one, not a political one.

Now Jesus was a brilliant teacher. I don't know whether this is like this in your school but when the teachers in school are really brilliant the hour that you're with them just flies by, doesn't it? And it seems like that's going on here.

So by verse 28 they've already arrived in Emmaus and the disciples they want to hear some more. I mean imagine the bell going at school and the kids saying no hey let's stick around we want to hear this teacher some more.

[14:06] It never happens does it? But it happened here. And then they invite Jesus into dinner. Which brings us to the last prop. Okay? So, we've had what have we had?

We've had a blindfold. We've had a lanyard. Now, what's this? Huh? Fire. Yeah? Yeah? I had intended to like make actually set something on fire but I figure the church deacons might get crossed with me if I did that.

But yeah, burning, right? Burning or fire. That's the last one. Now, notice where that comes from. Look down at verse 30. When he was at the table with them he took bread gave thanks and broke it and began to give it to them.

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

Burning. The disciples' eyes are opened as they eat with Jesus and they suddenly recognize who he is. eating with Jesus is obviously something they've done a lot of.

[15:18] Famously in the Last Supper he breaks bread with them and now the penny drops. This is Jesus. This is him. And just as they work out who he is he disappears from them not because he's a ghost actually in the next little section in Luke's Gospel you find Jesus eating fish.

Ghosts don't eat fish. Well, they don't eat anything. They don't eat fish. Jesus disappears because his work here is done. The lesson is over and it seems as if Jesus' resurrection body is quite a bit better than his pre-resurrection body which is great hope for lots of us, isn't it?

Interesting though is the point the disciples remember is not the point at which their eyes were opened. Do you notice that? They're not getting excited that all of a sudden their eyes have been opened.

They remember the point where their hearts burned. Yeah? And when did their hearts burn? Well, not just when they recognized the physical Jesus their hearts burned when they saw the truth about Jesus from the scriptures.

Look at what they say in verse 32. They asked each other were not our hearts burning within us while he talked to us on the road and opened the scriptures.

[16:30] So now Jesus risen he had to rise the Bible said it the lesson proved it and now they've seen him. And so they head back to Jerusalem and they meet up with the other disciples and the other disciples have now seen the risen Lord as well and they're saying it's true the Lord has risen and then they tell their story about how we met Jesus along the way and how he explained to them the Bible and they recognized him in the breaking of bread.

So there you have it, right? A blindfold a lanyard and a burning candle. A blindfold a lanyard and a burning candle. Before we finish though just think why?

Why? I don't know whether you ever read the Bible like this but it's a good question isn't it? It's to ask why is it like this? Why is it put like this? Not only why does Jesus not reveal himself immediately to the two disciples more than that why is this the story that Luke decides to record about the risen Jesus?

Have you thought about that? If you were writing Luke's gospel which story would you record? The New Testament tells us that on one occasion the risen Jesus appeared to 500 disciples all at the same time.

I think if I was writing Luke's gospel I would include that right? I would want a dramatic glorious ending. I would want something that would look good on Instagram right?

[17:51] I want something where there's a huge crowd and Jesus saying look it's me everybody it's me it's me why doesn't Luke record that?

Why instead does he record a story of two disciples a two hour long Bible lesson before they recognize Jesus and then he disappears? In fact maybe if you're here this morning and you're not a Christian and you're thinking do you know what that's a really good question I think that almost

disproves the resurrection if Jesus really rose from the dead we'd expect something much more dramatic than this well let me tell you if that's what you're thinking I think there's a really good reason why Luke ends his gospel this way and that is because and this is incredible Luke's concern is not really about those two disciples meeting the risen Jesus that's not his concern Luke's concern this morning is that you and I meet the risen Jesus that's what he really wants and how does that happen?

How do you meet the risen Jesus in a way which changes you and transforms you from the inside? Well notice because of his story you don't have to meet Jesus physically you can meet him in the words about him in the Bible you know perhaps if again if you're not a Christian you maybe think well if only I could have some kind of encounter with God then I'd become a Christian if the risen Jesus walked into this room this afternoon this morning still just for five minutes if the risen Jesus walked into this room this morning I would believe for sure I would I wouldn't be able not to well let me tell you that he doesn't need to do that and that's not actually how faith in Jesus works you don't need to meet the risen Jesus physically to believe in him because the burning of the heart comes not from seeing the flesh of Jesus but from hearing the word about Jesus that's it perhaps I can put it this way

Luke writes this story because he thinks that this is a model for how throughout all of history people will encounter the risen Jesus as they see in the scriptures over and over again that God is not about political success or worldly power God is not impressed with fancy cars or moral behaviour or good jobs or bulging bank accounts God's kingdom is not of this world it's a resurrection kingdom Jesus dying for sin before rising from the grave that as we see that all the scriptures tell this story that people like you and me people who are weak and fallen who let ourselves down who wander away from God who live for ourselves and not for him people like us can meet the risen Jesus and be cleansed and forgiven and receive new life be fitted for glory through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ who we meet not in flesh but in his words and that's true for us this morning that's why we're here we're not just here for the friendship or for the coffee or for the Easter egg hunt which is coming at the end we're here to encounter the risen Jesus in his word that's why we're here every week that's why our hearts burn within us as we listen to what God has said and if you're a guest this morning that is what we are holding out to you in the word about the Lord Jesus here is the one who died he died for your sin that you might be forgiven he died to fit you for a resurrection kingdom which is not of this world but of the world to come a world beyond death where we will live in the presence of our saviour forever and ever and you get to be there through listening to his words that's how now I think this morning that there are probably lots of questions that you might have some of your questions might be well did the resurrection really happen can I really trust this book why did Jesus have to die some of your questions might be more about how do I live the Christian life or how do I keep going now some of those would be great to come and ask at Christianity Explored which we mentioned earlier but also I've got a few of these books and I'd love to offer one to you this morning it's called

Is Easter Unbelievable? four questions that everyone needs to ask about the Easter story and maybe if you've got one of those questions you would love a book like this I would love to give you one at the end so please come and find me and I'll give one to you let's pray as I close and rejoice in the risen Lord Heavenly Father how we thank you that we this morning sitting in this room can encounter the risen Jesus through the word about him in the Bible thank you that the whole book of the Bible tells the story of Jesus who had to die for our sins that we might be forgiven and who rose to new life that we can belong to the kingdom of heaven the kingdom not of this world but the kingdom to come where we will live with you in future glory for all eternity through faith in Jesus Christ alone

[23:33] Lord how we pray that each one of us this morning whoever we are wherever we're from how we pray that we might encounter Jesus this morning that our hearts might burn within us as we ponder on his word as we think on it in his name Amen Amen