

**Easter Sunday**  
**Luke 24:1-35**  
**“We’ve Just Seen Jesus”**

**Introduction**

Ask a hundred random people what is the single most important event in the history of the world, and you’ll more than likely get a hundred different answers. Ask that same question within the Church and you should get only one answer: The resurrection of Jesus Christ! For your see, the resurrection is without question the greatest event in all of human history. Without the resurrection, we would have no hope of eternal life :

**“But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified that He raised Christ from the dead. But He did not raise Him, if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.”**  
**1 Corinthians 15:12-19**

So you see, while Christ’s death upon the cross was in fact payment for our sins, His resurrection was the proof that the payment had been accepted. In other words, the payment for sin was made on Good Friday, but on Sunday... The check cleared!

Let us look to an *Old Testament* example of this truth. On Yom Kippur (The Day of Atonement), the High Priest would enter the Holy of Holies to sprinkle blood on the Mercy Seat (Lid of The Ark of The Covenant) for his own sins, as well as, the sins of the people. He alone was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies, where the Shekinah Glory of The LORD would appear, and only upon this one special day. The priest had a long rope tied around his ankles and bells that were attached to the bottom of his robe. As long as the people outside could hear the bells tinkling, then they knew that the High Priest was still alive and active in making his intercession for the people. If the bells stopped ringing, they knew that something dreadful had happened, and the High Priest was dead. If this tragedy were ever to occur, the other priests had been instructed to pull out the lifeless body of the High Priest using the rope tied around his ankle.

If God was not pleased with the High Priest, for whatever reason, He would be struck down for entering the Holy of Holies. Aaron, the brother of Moses, had lost two sons this way (**Leviticus 10**). However, if God **was** pleased with the intercession of the High Priest, then his sacrificial offering would be accepted. And how would the people know that the sacrifice had been accepted? When the High Priest re-emerged from the Holy of Holies ALIVE! You see, the re-emergence of the High Priest was proof that the sacrifice had been acceptable to God. The resurrection of Jesus, Our Great High Priest (Hebrews 4:14), and His coming out of the empty tomb was proof positive that His sacrifice had been accepted on our behalf once and for all! Therefore, The Resurrection of Jesus Christ **is** the single most important event in all of human history. Nothing else even comes close.

Today, we will be looking at my favorite “resurrection passage” found in **Luke 24**. We will take a look at two very discouraged people walking back home from Jerusalem on that very first “Lord’s Day”. Even though these two travelers had heard reports of a miraculous resurrection, they still had doubts. While the other disciples stayed behind in Jerusalem, these two discouraged souls left and headed for home. Have you ever just wanted to give up and walk away from it all? Then you should be able to empathize with these two weary travelers on their way to Emmaus. They had all but given up hope, but Jesus made a special effort to track them down! They may have given up on Him, but He hadn’t given up on them. I find a tremendous source of encouragement from their story, and if you are discouraged this morning, I hope you will as well. If you have begun to wander away from Christ, I hope that you will see that Jesus wants to track you down and bring you back home! Let us look together at how He ENJOINED them, EXPLAINED The Word to them, and ultimately ENLIGHTENED them that evening on the lonely road to Emmaus.

## **Enjoined**

Just like most of you, I have heard this story taught many times before. Many preachers speak of the two “men” that Jesus met on the road to Emmaus, a small village seven miles outside of Jerusalem. Let me be perfectly clear, nowhere in the text does it actually “say” that both of the people who traveled to Emmaus that day were men. *The Bible* simply says “two of them” or “two of these” depending upon how the original texts are translated. This is an obvious reference to the previous passage (**vs. 1-12**) that tells of the women going to the tomb and finding it empty. They immediately ran to tell their male counterparts who refused to believe them. Peter and John, however, did at least go to look into the tomb, and while John was convinced of Christ’s resurrection, it is obvious the Peter was not (**vs. 12; John 20:3-9**). This must have been incredibly frustrating for the women to have seen the angels and heard their message of The Risen LORD only to have no one believe them. Everyone began to disperse in confusion and disbelief as to what had actually occurred. While many of the disciples remained in Jerusalem that Sunday, others began to depart for home disillusioned and sorrowful, because they had failed to fully understand Jesus’ real mission to come and lay down his life as the ultimate Passover Lamb of God. His death to them felt like a crushing defeat, when in reality it was the greatest victory in the history of mankind.

I believe that the two individuals that left Jerusalem for the village of Emmaus that day were not “two men”, but rather husband and wife, a man named Cleophas (**vs. 18**) and his wife Mary (**John 19:25**). Mary had not only personally witnessed the crucifixion, but had accompanied the women that morning and had seen the empty tomb and the angels for herself. I believe that it is she who is the “second disciple”, who was on the road to Emmaus that afternoon. She and her husband were simply making their way back home. The two had much to talk about as they walked. They had seen Jesus, their teacher, the one that they loved so dearly, be subjected to unspeakable tortures. And for what purpose? For being loving and kind? For teaching the truths of God’s word? For healing the sick and raising the dead? It simply made no sense. How could the religious leaders, who were supposed to represent the faith that they had cherished all their lives, demand the execution of The One, who was the greatest prophet that Israel had ever known? They had been convinced that Jesus was indeed the “redeemer of Israel” that the prophets had long foretold was coming. But how could Jesus be that Messiah? Surely God would never allow His anointed one to suffer and die in such horrific fashion. To say that these two were confused and discouraged would be an understatement. They were crushed.

*The Bible* tells us as they walked they “talked and discussed” these things. The Greek word translated “discussed” could also be translated “to argue”. If the mysterious “second disciple” was indeed Mary, then this would make perfect sense to me. Being a married man myself, I can just imagine hearing Sandi speaking her mind, if she had seen angels at Jesus’ empty tomb, and I had refused to believe her! Can’t you just hear the conversation? “Cleophas, I know what I heard, and I know what I saw. I’m not a child you know!” And the reply being, “I know Mary, but sometimes you must admit that you do get a little carried away. Maybe what you saw was just two of the caretakers, whose clothes were shining in the morning sun. I mean, did they actually **say** they were angels? He’s dead Mary. You saw Him die. Now I know it’s hard to accept, but we have to face the facts!” ...And so the conversation/dispute continued.

Then something amazing happened. A mysterious man just showed up out of thin air! They just looked up, and there He stood. Perhaps they reasoned to themselves that their intense discussion of the past weekend had so consumed their focus, that they simply hadn’t noticed Him there before. Whatever, the case, He had obviously been there all along. Jesus approached them, but miraculously kept them from knowing who He was. He wanted them to understand why the cross had been God’s perfect redemption plan all along. He wanted them to “get it”, and He had made a special trip to find them and make sure that they did. They might have given up on Him, but He hadn’t given up on them. He pursued them in love and **enjoined** their conversation.

I remember when we started this church called Freedom Fellowship. Our original intent was to start a church to reach out to those who had become disillusioned and for whatever reason “walked away” from their faith, just like Jesus pursued Cleophas and Mary (at least I believe it was Mary) that day. We wanted to pursue those who had been hurt or forgotten, those who had wandered away from “the fold” for whatever reason. We wanted to get them to turn around and head back “home”, as it were, to a Savior who loves them. We believed (and still do) that Jesus is about pursuing the wanderers. Please hear what I am trying to say this morning. If you have drifted away from God... He wants you to come

back home. He stands ready and willing to forgive your sin, even if your sin is unbelief. He longs to convince you of the truth, so that you will recognize Jesus for Who He is so that you will long for His salvation and guidance. He wants to bring you back to where you truly belong. Are you a wanderer this morning? Come home. Jesus is making a special trip just to find you. That's why He drew you to this place today.

### **Explained**

I love how Jesus asked them what they had been talking about, and why they were so sad (**vs. 17**). He already knew the answers to both questions, they might have "witnessed" the cross, but He had **endured** it. However, He couldn't very well let them know that, or it would have "blown His cover", so to speak. They had no idea who this "stranger" was, but they were shocked that He seemed to know nothing of the recent events in Jerusalem. Apparently, **everyone** knew about it but Him. So they began to tell the story of The One, Who had been so viciously crucified on Calvary's Cross. Jesus listened to them intently, allowing them to finish the entire recount of the events. I'm not sure why, but I believe that He knew that it would be good for them to talk about it. I believe that God wants us to tell Him about our problems. *The Bible* says, **"Cast all our anxiety on Him, because He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7)**. I quote that verse a lot, because I truly believe that we serve a God, who He doesn't want us to carry our grief around. He wants to carry it for us. He wants us to unburden ourselves at His throne. When is the last time that you took your troubles to God and just left them there?

Cleophas ended his retelling with the statement:

**"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. (I believe he pointed to Mary as he spoke.) 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 they did not see Jesus."**

**Luke 24:21-24**

It was then that The LORD rebuked him for his unbelief:

**"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?"**

**Luke 24:26**

What The LORD did next was amazing. He began in *Genesis* and went through the entire *Old Testament* pointing out the truths about Himself. For you see, Cleophas had only believed the things that he had chosen to believe about the coming Messiah, but all the scriptures regarding how God's Anointed One would suffer and die... well those he hadn't bother to heed. I know a lot of people like that. They only believe what they want to believe about God and ignore the rest. Someone once asked Mark Twain, that famous author, if he had trouble with parts of *The Bible* that he didn't understand. Twain's reply was, "No, it's the parts that I **do** understand that I have the trouble with!"

Please listen to me this morning. If you truly want to SEE Jesus, then you will only be able to do so by **accepting** ALL of the truths about Him from His Word. You can't just pick and choose the truths you like and discard the rest. Notice closely in this passage that Jesus does **not** reveal Himself to the two on the road to Emmaus, **until** He has fully **explained** the scriptures to them! To know and believe the entirety of God's Word is to come to know Christ.

**"...faith comes by hearing the message, and the message is heard through The Word about Christ."**

**Romans 10:17**

Jesus knew that for Cleophas and his traveling companion to ever truly "get it" in regard to Who He was would be entirely dependent upon just how well they "got" The Word of God. Which is exactly the reason that, in this church, we endeavor to teach the congregation each week to see Jesus throughout the entirety of scripture. You see, every page of your *Bible*, every story, and every truth, are all pointing in

the same direction... to Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God, who came to take away the sins of the world. From Abel's sacrifice of his firstborn lamb (**Genesis 4:4**) and every single sacrifice that followed after that, they were **ALL** pointing to Jesus. And that is what Jesus explained that day on the road to Emmaus. I wonder just how many *Bible* stories they actually "heard" that day for the first time? Oh, I'm sure being devout Jews they had each of the stories memorized, but they had never seen Jesus in the stories. That is what I mean when I say that they "heard" them for the first time. Abraham's sacrifice of Issac, with the Ram that took his place; Joseph, who was rejected by his brothers and yet later became their savior; and that first Passover, where the blood of the lamb was applied to the doorpost so that God's death angel would pass over His chosen people; all of these and so much more were about Jesus. Have you ever thought about the passover, and why the blood was applied to the doorpost? Just what is it that hangs upon a doorpost? The DOOR, that's what! And Who is the door?

**"I AM the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture."**  
**John 10:9 (ESV)**

*The Bible* is all about the only "Doorway to God" and his name is Jesus. Sadly, most people in this world will never be able to find Jesus in the scriptures, but that doesn't mean that He isn't there my friends. He is ALWAYS there. That is why it is incumbent upon us, as believers, to **Explain** the Word for the sole purpose of revealing Christ. That is exactly what Jesus pursued Cleophas to do that first Easter Sunday.

### **Enlightened**

If you ever want to know how this pastor feels about the importance of teaching Christ in The Word, you'll find it in this passage. AFTER Jesus had explained the scriptures to them and how they all point to Him, His sinless life, His atoning death, and His resurrection from the dead, not only did they believe it, but they couldn't get enough! When Cleophas and Mary arrived at **their** home (yet another reason why I believe this was a husband and wife), they invited Jesus to come inside and keep on teaching. When people are taught The Word and shown how it all relates to Christ, they will naturally become hungry for more. *The Bible* tells us that when Jesus pretended like He would keep walking they **"urged him strongly to stay with them"** (**vs. 29 NIV**). The Greek actually suggests that they grabbed hold of Him and would not let Him go. You see, they had been exposed to some genuine preaching of God's Word, and they couldn't bear for the "service to end". I LOVE THAT!! Have you ever been so excited about The Word that you couldn't get enough? That my friends is the mark of a true believer. If The Word of God doesn't light a fire within you (**vs. 32**), then there is a problem in your soul.

I also love that Jesus waited on them to invite Him in, before He would agree to it. You see, once you've been exposed to The Word, then it is up to you to decide what you will do about it. Cleophas and Mary grabbed hold of Jesus and wouldn't let go. He came in, because they took hold of Him and would not let Him go! How will you respond today? The couple on the road to Emmaus were saved that day, by grace, through faith. Jesus pursued them (that's grace), and after Jesus explained the scriptures to them, they believed (that's faith)!

**"If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is LORD,' and believe in Your heart that God raised Him from the dead, YOU WILL BE SAVED."**  
**Romans 10:9**

As soon as they **"invited Him in"** (**vs. 29**), because they had believed His teaching... He **enlightened** them, by revealing Himself to them. They were so caught up in his teaching that they weren't even being good hosts. They should have served Him bread, but He actually served them, in their own house! Then they recognized Him. I have often wondered what they noticed first. I wonder if He let them see the nail prints in His hands as He broke the bread? Whatever it was, they were absolutely amazed, when He revealed Himself to them! Then in a flash, He disappeared, before their very eyes! Gone forever from their minds were the fear and doubt that had so consumed them, when they had started the long trip home from Jerusalem earlier that day. Those things had been replaced with a powerful sense of joy and worship! They had a personal encounter with The Risen LORD and would never be the same. Why? Because He had pursued them, taught them The Word, and after they had

believed the Word, they SAW Him. This world may tell us that “seeing is believing”, but to the child of God “believing is seeing”!

I want each of you to know this morning that Jesus LOVES you. He is pursuing you and longs to Enjoin with you, Explain His Word to you, and Enlighten you by revealing Himself. He wants you to truly “see” Him for Who He is. He doesn’t want to be someone that you “know about”, He wants to be someone that you KNOW. Listen to the Word of God this morning and respond. Confess with your mouth that He is LORD. That doesn’t mean “Lord” in some general sense. It means that you will declare that He is LORD OVER YOU, and you will have no problem doing that, if you truly believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead on that first Easter morning.

Cleophas and Mary may have been tired after that long walk to Emmaus, but after they had seen Jesus, they returned to Jerusalem as fast as they could go. By that time it would have been dark, but nothing could have stopped them from going back to share what they had experienced! It may have been dark outside, but they were bringing “the light” with them. It’s just what people do, when they have truly “seen” Jesus! They had left Jerusalem in discouragement, but returned with Joy. Jesus had turned them around, and they were headed in a new direction with a new purpose. He wants to do the same for all of us. Have you wandered far away from God this morning? Jesus is pursuing you today. He wants you to turn around and come back home. He wants you to trade in your sorrows for joy. Now what on **earth** could be more important than that? Whatever road you are on, wherever you are, or wherever you’re going this morning, just come home. You will never be sorry if you do.

And ALL God’s people said... TRUTH!!!