

“Did not the Christ Have to Suffer and then Enter His Glory?”

Luke 24:13-35

The last two Sundays we looked at questions asked during the passion events leading up to Jesus' death that we have to address as well. The first from Pilate to the crowds 'What will you do with the one called Christ?' when he asked the crowds to choose between a political activist and Jesus. Last week we were challenged to answer the question put to Peter when he abandoned Jesus at His arrest, 'You're not ne of His disciples are you?' And we were encouraged to not be ashamed of the gospel or Jesus and to stand firm when accused or ridiculed.

This mornings' question comes from the lips of Jesus, on Resurrection Sunday, to two discouraged followers of Jesus; discouraged by the news of His death and of the fresh news of the absence of His body. The question Jesus asked was a rhetorical one, implying a clear yes to the question. Jesus asked these two who explained to Him the events of the day (they didn't recognize it was Jesus), *'Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter His glory?'* Implication – yes, that's what Scripture said.

Yet who is it that's struggling to believe what Scripture says? People who were following Jesus. It is His own followers that Jesus had to initially convince that all the Scripture was true concerning Himself. So, whether we are already followers of Jesus or have yet to choose to follow Jesus, there are a number of things we can learn from this portion of Scripture. The obvious answer to Jesus question, *'Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter His glory?'* is yes, but these followers of Jesus failed to learn from Scripture what God said about Jesus. So, we need to remind ourselves this morning that

To Know Christ [More] We Have to Begin [Return] With Scripture **(24:13-24)**

Who were these two discouraged believers walking back 7 miles back to Emmaus from Jerusalem? We know they were part of the larger group that followed Jesus along with the 11. They mentioned in v.22 'some of our women' referring to those who went to the tomb earlier that morning. These women "came and told us" (v.23) about not finding Jesus and v.24, then "some of our companions went to the tomb", knowing from v.34 that one of these was Peter himself. And when they returned they went directly to "the eleven and those with them" as if they knew them well. They had a lot of inside information that only those close to the eleven would have known. While Jesus had His 11, there were other dedicated followers of Jesus like Cleopas and probably his wife here.

Yet even the closest of disciples is not immune to discouragement. Why were these two discouraged? Because they didn't look closely enough at the Scriptures to understand the things that had happened. So often our own discouragement is self-induced

because we expected God was going to do something for us that didn't happen and that usually comes from misunderstanding what His Word says.

These two were discouraged because they failed to know what Scripture actually said about Jesus. Yet when the disguised Jesus asks them about 'These things' ironically they do a pretty good job of sharing the gospel with Jesus. First, they tell of how the Scriptures give . . .

Testimony of Jesus' life (v.19)

They say that Jesus was from 'Nazareth, a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people.' Essentially that one sentence says a lot. Jesus grew up in Nazareth which fulfills Is. 11:1. Jesus was the shoot (branch) that comes from the stump of Jesse (David's dad). Branch in Hebrew is Nazar. Nazareth means 'Branch town'. The Scripture also testifies of Jesus' birth to a virgin in Bethlehem.

Jesus' powerful messages and miraculous deeds testified to His deity. He never sinned. He performed miracles. He taught with authority. When John the Baptist was arrested and he sent a message to Jesus asking Him, 'Are you the One (Messiah) who is to come?' Jesus answered by quoting Scripture and essentially saying 'How does Scripture and my life compare?' He was inviting people by word and deed to see if His life matched with what the Old Testament said the Messiah would be like.

Then Cleopas talks about how people responded to Jesus and shares about . . .

His rejection and crucifixion (v.20)

²⁰ The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him;

The chief priests and elders (rulers) were the spiritual authorities, the experts in the Old Testament. They saw the same miracles and heard the same words Jesus spoke but because the people were following Jesus more than them, they decided to get rid of Jesus. These 'experts' in the Old Testament knew in their head what Scriptures said but they changed the Word by adding their own words to it, making rules about God's Word and forcing people to be like them 'if they want to please God'.

They 'handed Jesus over' to the Romans who then had Jesus whipped, beaten, spit upon and finally tortured on the cross. Some people only say Jesus was a great moral teacher and then He died. The death and crucifixion of the sinless Son of God was prophesied in Ps. 22 and Is. 53. He was more than a moral teacher. He was hated because He was the Son of God. Jesus exposed the false teaching of the religious leaders; they didn't like that. They didn't want to change. So, they got rid of Jesus.

But then in vv.22-24, these two tell about . . .

His resurrection (v.22-24) . . . even though they didn't understand yet!

22 In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning 23 but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. 24 Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus."

And Jesus is like, 'Yah! So, what's your problem then?' They just explained the resurrection and didn't believe it yet! The women didn't find the body. They saw angels and heard a message from them that Jesus was alive. And other followers confirmed what the women found.

Jesus told them numerous times that He would be crucified, die and rise on the 3rd day. Yet when it happened people didn't believe the evidence of His absence nor the message of the angels until Jesus appeared to them in His resurrected body.

So why didn't they understand and believe right away? Because they didn't understand . . .

His purpose (v.21)

"but we had hoped that He was the One who was going to redeem Israel"

Why were these two discouraged? Because they had false expectations about Jesus. Jesus didn't beat up the Romans. Jesus didn't take their troubles away. Jesus didn't make their lot better in life. Often our discouragement is self-induced because we expected God was going to do something for us that didn't happen that He hasn't promised to do – yet.

Jesus will return and take care of all unbelieving people and bring in His kingdom to the earth, and reign and take away our troubles and make our lot in life great – but not yet. False expectations not based on Scripture results in self-induced discouragement which clouds our faith. It causes us to do things that are unhealthy for us. Where were these two disciples going? Home. They were leaving Jerusalem. They were leaving their close friends, the other followers of Jesus. Did you know they were so discouraged they left Jerusalem on a holiday? Resurrection Sunday was the Feast of First-fruits. That was when you gave an offering to God of the first sign of your barley crop. God promised if you honour Me with the first and best of your crop, I will bless the rest of your crop. Paul points out in 1 Cor. 15 that Jesus rose on the First fruits as an assurance from God that there would be a greater harvest. First Fruits was followed by a 50 day wait until Pentecost, which was the final cutting and harvest of the early barley and wheat. God says give me your first and best when you hardly have anything showing and in 50 days I'll bless you with a great harvest. Jesus rose at First Fruits. God brought a harvest of 6000 souls saved at Pentecost 50 days later.

Jesus came to redeem, (buy back) the world, not just Israel. He paid the price (death) that sin demands. He purchased our salvation for us on the cross by buying us back from Satan essentially, who holds death in his power. And when we place our faith in Jesus alone believing He paid the price we can't pay for our sins, we too will rise from the dead when we pass away.

So, after these disciples of Jesus tell Jesus the gospel (which they don't believe!) Jesus gently rebukes them and points out that

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We Must Believe for Ourselves What Scripture Says **(24:25-27)**

Jesus stops these two and says,

"How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

Jesus says essentially, you've gotten the story right, you just don't believe it. And to know all the facts and not believe it Jesus says,

We're foolish if we don't (v.25)

That's the word Jesus used, 'foolish' to describe those who have the truth but don't believe it. Jesus usually reserved that word to describe people without faith. He used it in Matthew 7:24 when He described the one as foolish who builds a house on a shaky foundation which was an illustration of one who hears Jesus' words and doesn't put it into practice. He called the Pharisees blind fools because they studied the Scriptures all the time and yet refused to believe in Him, the One they point to. He used it to describe the foolish virgins who were unprepared for the groom when He showed up to announce the wedding was on! He used it to describe the man who lived for the present only and not the future, who kept building bigger barns for his grain. The word literally means 'no mind'. That may not sound very flattering, but this is Jesus using it to describe those who have or heard the truth but aren't putting it together. Then Jesus goes on to explain from Moses (who wrote Genesis through all the prophets interpreting what the Scriptures said concerning Himself. We must believe for ourselves what the Scriptures say about Jesus and that means,

The complete and unified message (vv.26-27; Is. 53)

That Jesus can go from Genesis to Malachi explaining what Scripture says about Himself implies that the Bible has a unified message and that Jesus is the center of Scripture. Jesus is the central figure of Scripture because He is God's gift and message of love to us, predicted to come in the Old Testament, fulfilled in the Gospels, declared in the epistles and His future return proclaimed in Revelation (as well as in the Old Testament). You need all of Scripture to know who Jesus is and what God's purpose is for us. The Old Testament explains how and why we have a sin problem and the New Testament shows us the solution that the Old Testament did predict. While many of us know that Is. 53 predicted Jesus' crucifixion, many miss that Isaiah also predicted Jesus' resurrection. Look at Is. 53:10,

¹⁰ Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. ¹¹ After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their

iniquities. ¹² Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors.

All of Scripture is necessary to understand the fullness of God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit and God's plan for Israel and the church. To study one without the other will only lead to confusion and misapplication.

At this point Jesus stops as they seem to have reached Cleopas' house. Upon their urging Jesus stays. Strangely, Jesus takes the place of host by blessing the bread and then vanishes, whereby the hearts of the two are finally opened. It's not enough to just have the knowledge of the truth. And while we need to believe for ourselves what the Scripture says about Jesus we still have to

Pray for God to Open Hearts to the Truth **(24:28-32)**

Back in v.16 we read that *'they were kept from recognizing Him'*. And here we read *'Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him'*. God obviously kept them from recognizing Jesus because they weren't ready to believe but when after Jesus explained the Scriptures and they saw Him bless the food as He had done on numerous occasions, God opened their eyes and hearts to who Jesus was and what all took place.

There are times because of our own slowness of heart that God says 'You're not ready to understand this yet'. The way to get ready obviously is going back to the Scriptures; what does God actually say in His Word about whatever it is we're struggling with at the moment? For these two, they were struggling to believe that Jesus was actually dead but when Jesus took them to the Scriptures and showed them where the Bible said Jesus would suffer for our and their sins and that He would be victorious over death, then they were able to understand. But notice what they said afterwards about Jesus' explaining Scripture to them: *'Were not our hearts burning within us while He talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?'*

Most of our discouragement as followers of Jesus can be traced to an absence of reading the Scriptures or misunderstanding the Scriptures. Keep going back to the Word and pray that God will open our hearts to what He is saying. There are some great prayers in Ps. 119 about what God's Word can do for us that we should be praying before we open up His Word. One of my favourites is 119:33-37,

³³ *Teach me, LORD, the way of your decrees, that I may follow it to the end.*

³⁴ *Give me understanding, so that I may keep your law and obey it with all my heart.*

³⁵ *Direct me in the path of your commands, for there I find delight.*

³⁶ *Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain.*

³⁷ *Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word.*

And once these two understand now about their clear understanding of God's Word, they . . .

Go and Tell Others **(24:33-35)**

³³ They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together ³⁴ and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." ³⁵ Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

It's so great getting together with other believers and learning God's Word together, sharing with others what we've learned and seeing the excitement in their faces when they share what they learned or when they 'get it', their hearts and minds understand what God is saying to them.

Maybe this morning your heart was warmed and you're beginning to understand for the first time that Jesus actually died for your sins -something we can't do for ourselves – and you realize you are sinner, separated from God and in need of salvation. Believe what God says in His Word about His Son Jesus. Ask for forgiveness of your sins and accept Jesus Christ as your Saviour. And if you have or want to do that, make sure you tell someone today. Because it says in Romans 10,

⁹ 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. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

And if you're a discouraged follower of Jesus this morning, are you discouraged because you have misunderstood what God's Word said? Are you looking for future promises now when God says they're for later? Are you discouraged because you're surprised by suffering when Jesus said in this world we will have trouble but take heart I have overcome the world? Go back to the Scriptures. Maybe you're only looking at the same verses all the time and have taken them out of context? Jesus had to go from Moses to the prophets to help these people see God's big picture concerning His plan for Jesus.

All Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for teaching, correcting, rebuking and training in righteousness so we will be thoroughly equipped to serve God. The disciples were discouraged because they didn't actually believe what God told them. We stay encouraged in God when we hear what Jesus says, believe it and then do what He asks.

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If you have any comments or questions about this message please contact us at olivet@rideau.net