

Luke 24:1-35

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[0 : 0 0] Well, with any event in history, there will always be different perspectives. Everyone who sees an event in history will see things from a different point of view.

! So, take church this morning. If somebody asks you this afternoon, how was church this morning? And what do you remember about it? What impression did church make on you?

There is no doubt, is there, that your answer will be different to the person next to you, even if you have been living with that person for the last 50 years. We all have attended the same church service, at the same time, in the same place, and all our answers may well be reliable and true, but all our answers won't be the same.

We all have, won't we, different perspectives. And that is true with any historical event, and with any eyewitness testimony. And so it's no less true when you come to the resurrection of Jesus.

Many people at the time were aware that something strange and something surprising had happened. Some were beginning to develop firm convictions about it. Others were just confused.

[1 : 1 5] But over time, people's understanding grew in clarity, and a consensus emerged about what had happened. And that is when people like Luke, Dr. Luke, started to write it all down.

But when he did, he still had a lot of choices to make. Luke would have to ask himself, how do I tell the story of the resurrection? What perspective shall I share with my reader, Theophilus?

What shall I include? What shall I leave out? Because he couldn't write about absolutely everything. And so, guided by the spirit of the risen Jesus, Luke makes his decisions.

And he writes this final great chapter of his Gospel, Luke 24. And as we reflect on this chapter this morning, I want us to think, first of all, about the decisions that he made when he wrote this chapter.

I want to think for a few moments, how did Luke actually choose to tell his story? And first of all, I want you to notice what he leaves out. What he leaves out.

[2 : 2 1] It's fascinating. We're not actually told how Jesus' resurrection happened. We're not told how the stone was rolled away from the tomb. We're not told what happened to the soldiers who were guarding in front of the tomb.

We're not told, are we, when Jesus' body surged again with life, that moment. Whether he walked out of the tomb.

Or he just disappeared like that. We're not told any of that. Now, in one sense, that's entirely unsurprising. Because nobody saw any of that today.

So he would have no place in an eyewitness account, because they didn't see it. Instead, as we read Luke 24, we experience the resurrection as the eyewitnesses.

As those who saw it experienced it. And as they encountered the empty tomb and the risen Jesus himself. And the effect of that is to really authenticate the resurrection of Jesus.

[3 : 2 8] Not through some scientific method, explanation, of how a dead body was restored to life again. But through the testimonies of the people.

The people who saw the person. Who two days earlier had been undeniably dead. And the other effect of reading the story this way. Is we're given insight into the impact of this event on people.

That we're not just dealing with the facts this morning. But praise God we are. But it's not just the facts. But with people's reactions and their emotions. We come face to face with the impression that the risen Jesus made on people.

And because of that, I think we'll find that Luke's account raises great questions. As to how are you going to respond to it. How are you going to react to it this morning.

How are you going to feel about the resurrection of Jesus. Secondly, I want to point to you, what does Luke put in? What does he put in? And Luke's chosen method is, Luke tells us three separate stories.

[4 : 42] All set on one remarkable day. He doesn't choose to tell us anything about Easter Monday. He doesn't tell us anything about Tuesday.

Or the rest of the week. In fact, with the exception of a couple of short verses right at the end of the chapter. Which describes Jesus, how he ascended into heaven. The whole chapter is telling us about people's experiences on that very first Easter Sunday.

The Sunday after the Friday when Jesus had been crucified and killed. In the first of the three stories, which is in 1-12. He tells us about the women. The women who went to the tomb.

To assist in the embalming process. The wrapping up process. For Jesus' dead body. And they found that the tomb. Is surprisingly open.

And Jesus' body has gone. And they are deeply confused. And then two angels appear. And tell them that they were looking for the living.

[5 : 47] Among the dead. And it occurred to them. And that is exactly what Jesus predicted earlier. Through his life. So like the angel said.

So the women race back to tell the men. Most of the men think that Jesus is kind of. Think of the women are. At least a cup of sandwiches short of a picnic. They think they've gone mad.

But Peter at least. He hotfoots it to the tomb. And he sees. What the women had seen. An empty cave. And strips of linen.

Which just a few hours earlier. Had wrapped the body of Jesus. A lifeless Jesus. The second of Luke's story. Is in verses 13 to 35.

We're going to look at that a little bit later. And the couple of disciples. Meet the risen Jesus. On the road where they're travelling. Luke's third story. Is in verses 36 to 49.

[6 : 41] And many of Jesus' friends there. Gathered together. When all of a sudden. Poop. Jesus appears amongst them. And he proves to them.

He is not a ghost. He is a real human being. Come back to life. The sort of human being. That eats fish. And explains things to people. And he explains them.

That everything that has taken place. Was in fulfilment. To what the Old Testament foreshadowed. The Old Testament pointed forward. So those are Luke's three stories.

But they are united. By one 24 hour period. Verse 13. The conversation took place. On the road to Emmaus. On the same day.

That the women and Peter. Found the empty tomb. Verse 36 tells us. That it was while Jesus' followers. Were still talking. After they'd come back from Emmaus. And they joined with the other disciples.

[7 : 37] From Jerusalem. They were still talking about what had happened. Then all of a sudden. He's in the room with them. It is Sunday isn't it? It is Sunday.

For those people. What a remarkable 24 hours. Their heads must have been spinning. When they got to bed that night. But nevertheless. The emerging consensus.

About what had taken place. Was beginning to become clear. Even on that day. And it gets clearer. And clearer. And clearer. Can you see in verse 6. We read. He is risen.

Verse 34. The Lord. Has risen. Verse 46. This is what is written. The Christ. God suffer. And rise from the dead.

On the third day. And given that it was Christ himself. Who spoke to them at that moment. And given that it was the third day. Since he had been killed. I reckon we have to say.

[8 : 36] He's pretty right. Now thirdly. We've seen what he left out. What he put in. I want to see thirdly. The major theme. And the major theme.

That Luke wants to draw your attention to. What he wants you to get this morning. In observing these three incidents. He wants you to see two things. He wants you to see the confusion.

Of the disciples. But also the clarity of God's word. The confusion of the disciples. And the clarity of God's word.

First of the three stories. The women are standing at the entrance of the tomb aren't they? And they're trying to make sense of the emptiness of that tomb. They are very confused. But the angels appear to them.

And bring them. A clear word from God. They say. This is nothing more or less. Than what Jesus told you previously. He was no longer dead.

[9 : 34] He died according to God's purpose. But he's been raised again. According to God's power. And then they remembered. We're told. What Jesus said. And it all started to make sense.

Do you see confused disciples. But clear word of God. Second story. We see the same dynamic work. The two companions.

They walk along the road. But they don't understand. What has happened to Jesus. They don't know why that's happened. They didn't even recognize. The person talking to the mother. Either. But when their eyes were opened. The words of Jesus. Began to make sense to them. See those two things. Confused disciples. God's clear word.

Then the third story. The gathered disciples. Are there aren't they. They are the first to see Jesus. Amongst them in that room. And they are amazed. And troubled. And joyful. And confused.

[10 : 35] All at the same time. But then he speaks. And all the pieces of the jigsaw. Begin to fall into place. And they come to understand.

Not just his resurrection. But everything that had gone before as well. Confused disciples. God's. God's clear word. Luke's point couldn't be more clear.

Could it? In the midst of confusion. Or doubt. This morning. It is the word that God sends. It is the word that Jesus speaks. That brings clarity.

That is the disciples need. I want to focus in on the middle story. On the second story. Because I think all the major themes.

Of what we are looking at. Are in. And struck in that story. And I want to do it by. Talking about bodies. It is all about the body. So first of all.

[11 : 28] Walking legs. And talking mouths. Walking legs. And talking mouths. Let me read to you again. From verse 13. That very day. Two of them were going to a village named Emmaus.

About seven miles from Jerusalem. And they were talking. And discussing together. And Jesus himself drew near. And went along with them.

So here are two disciples. They could have been friends. They could have been a husband and wife. We don't know. We are not sure. But they have sat down on a seven mile walk. From Jerusalem to Emmaus.

And as they walked. They talked. As their legs carried them. Their minds. Churned over the last few days. How Jesus had been arrested.

And killed. And then the women had come back from the tomb. That morning. Saying that it was empty. But he wasn't there anymore. And then there is Jesus. And Jesus is walking with his legs.

[12 : 25] And talking with his mouth too. But the question that he asks. Leads them to have downcast faces. Can you see that? Verse 17. 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. It's almost amusing isn't it? It's almost amusing to Cleopas.

In verse 17. That this man. That Jesus does not know. What went down in Jerusalem. In this past week. Everyone's talking about it. Everyone knows.

It would be like turning up to work. This last week. In the middle of the day. And hearing people talk about the Brussels terrorism. And what's just happened in Brussels. And someone saying.

At the water cooler. What are you talking about? What terrorism? You'd think wouldn't you. You'd think they'd been living under a rock that morning. But Jesus continues to play along.

[13 : 26] As if he's ignorant. And in response to the downcast followers. These downcast followers. They've given him explanation. Don't they. For the sad look on their faces.

They see. There was this guy called Jesus. They knew he was a prophet. They knew that he was powerful. And they had really high hopes for him. They'd hoped. They say. That he was going to be the one.

To redeem Israel. They had hoped. That he would be the one. To be the Messiah. That he would be God's promised king. And then all of a sudden. He's gone.

He's arrested. He's killed. And now. Even more bizarrely. His body has vanished. It's impossible. I think. To miss the irony here. The irony.

Of Jesus himself. Hearing the story. Himself. From these two disciples. And they tell it to him. As if he's the most ignorant man in the world.

[14 : 25] And that is because. These travelers. Are not only people with downcast faces. They are people with slow hearts. Walking legs. Talking mouths. Sad faces. Slow hearts.

And Jesus tells them. Then in verse 25. He says. And he said to them. Oh foolish ones. And slow of heart. To believe. All that the prophets have spoken. Was it not necessary.

That Christ should suffer these things. And enter into his glory. And beginning with. Moses and all the prophets. He interprets to them. In all the scriptures. The thing is concerning himself. You see. Notice the irony. They concluded. Don't they? This Jesus. This traveler. He is the slow one. But here Jesus. Turns to the table. And say. Actually. No. You are slow ones. You should have known. What was going to happen. For reading the Old Testament. They should have known. That the Messiah. Would have to suffer. Before he would be glorified. You shouldn't be surprised. You shouldn't be confused.

[15:23] And downcast. They should have believed. God's word. Through the prophets. But their hearts. Were slow. But as Jesus. Diagnosed. The slowness.

Of their hearts. Their hearts. Began. To burn. Walking legs. Talking faces. Talking mouths. Downcast faces. Slow hearts.

To burning hearts. When we get down. To verse 32. After it's dawned on Cleopas. And his companion. Who they were talking about. We hear them discussing. Jesus' conversation with them. On the road. And we're told. Verse 32. Then 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 scripture. They might have been slow. Up to this point. But as Christ. Explained. Their Christ. To them. It's as if somebody.

[16:19] Lit a match. Under the kindling. Of their partial knowledge. And it ignited. Boom. And they began to grasp. More fully.

What the scriptures. Had said all along. And they began to sense. What they were hearing. Was true. And they began to love. This truth. With a glow. But they still didn't see. It all clearly. And that comes next.

Where Jesus moves them. From slow hearts. Through their burning hearts. To people of being. Opened eyes. Opened eyes. Because it was nearly evening.

The two travelers. Stayed with them. In Emmaus. For the night. And as they sit down. To eat. Jesus does this. Most unexpected thing. What is the unexpected thing. Jesus does. In the third story. He plays the host. Rather than the guest. It's not his house. He took the bread. And he gives thanks to God. And he broke it.

[17:18] And he passed it. To his two traveling companions. And it's at that moment. That the light. Switches on. The last trace of darkness.

In the disciples understanding. Comes into the light. In verse 16. It says. They had still been kept. From recognizing Jesus. God has closed their eyes. Verse 16. But now he's opened them. And at that very moment.

Jesus vanished. But it didn't matter. It didn't matter to them. Because they knew. They just had the light switched on. And now they realize.

That the whole Old Testament. Bore witness. To him. And now they also realize. That Jesus himself. Was bearing witness. To himself.

[18:15] And because they did. And they realized that. They were instantly transformed. Into witnesses. They didn't waste another second. They knew. That their newfound understanding. Needed to be shared.

They couldn't send an email. Or a text message. Or a tweet about it. There was no phone. To call people on it. So having walked. The seven miles. From Jerusalem. To Emmaus. They promptly turn around.

And walk the seven miles. Back. And they've got. Walking legs. And talking mouths. And their talking mouths. Get going again.

They find their friends. Jesus and other disciples. Huddled together. Somewhere in a room. Perhaps. The same room. As they had the last supper in. Back on the Thursday night. But wherever they were.

Cleopas and his companions. They barge in. Only to discover. That the other disciples of Jesus. Have come to the same realization. The lights have been switched on. As well. God opened their eyes.

[19:11] So they spend. The next week. Swapping their stories. And interestingly. Which I had not realized before. Cleopas and his companion. Whoever that companion is.

Were present. For all three of the stories. They were there. When the women turned up. Talking about the empty tomb. In the morning. They were the ones. Walking along the. Long journey.

With Jesus to Emmaus. And then later in the night. They are back in Jerusalem. With the other disciples. When Jesus shows up. And speaks to them all. Cleopas. And his companion. Are I think. At the center of Luke 24. And why is that? Why are they so central? On what earth is Cleopas?

Well it is because. Luke wants you and I. To see that what happened to them. Is not because they were unique. But because they weren't. Simply because.

[20 : 08] What was happening to them. Was indicative. Of what was happening to a bunch of people. Like them at the same time. And what happened to them. Is at the end of the day. Is something that Luke happens.

Hopes will happen to you. And will happen to everyone. Who reads his gospel. He hopes that like them. We will be transformed. By what we discover.

In Luke's gospel. That we will be amazed to learn. That Jesus is the Christ. And that he is alive. And he hopes too. That we will get our walking legs. And our talking mouths going.

And we will bear witness. To what we have come to see. And that is certainly the transformation. That these two underwent. They began the journey to Emmaus.

Simply as sad friends. Companions in their sadness. But they end their journey. They end this section. As joyful witnesses. On the journey.

[21 : 07] They were downcast. But on the way back. They are elated. They had news that must be told. They had a song in their hearts. And the difference was simple. They had met.

And listened to the risen Jesus. And that is what Luke hopes. Will happen to other people too. That is what this chapter. Is in the Bible for. But it is a very important point.

To grasp. Because you can treat the gospel. And people do treat the gospel. In all sorts of ways. Don't they? People treat the gospel. As a work of fiction. Some might see it.

As merely. An historical artifact. Some would say. As a mystical form. Of spiritual inspiration. But none of those. Descriptions hit the mark.

This book. Of Luke. Was written. For a specific purpose. It was written. To transform your life. It was written. To change people. Like you and me. Luke wrote.

[22 : 07] Because he had come to know. That the risen Lord Jesus. Wants to take your life. And he wants to move you. From being sad. And downcast. Or lonely.

Or perhaps driven. Or successful. Or content. Or obsessed. Or disappointed. Wherever you are. He wants to take you. And move you.

From where you are. To being a joyful witness. Of the risen Lord Jesus. And down through the. Last 2,000 years. That is what has happened.

To millions. And millions of people. Who have read this chapter. Who have read this book. And that has happened. To some of those people. Who are in this room. Right now.

We have found. That as we have read. It. Our hearts. Have. Begun to burn. And our eyes. Have come to be opened.

[23 : 03] And as the lights. Have come on. We realise. That we have met. Jesus Christ. Who was dead. But behold. Is now alive. Forevermore. And since he is alive.

And since we have met him. We have come to realise. That actually. We want nothing more. Than for others. To see that. To know what we know. And see what we see.

And that is how this story. Intersects. And transforms. Our story. And my hope is that. If it hasn't happened to you.

Then it will happen. This Easter day. There couldn't be a better day. For there. And even if it has. Happened to you. Then this transformation. This chapter.

Describes. What will take place. In your life. More and more. As you grow. As a Christian. That's what I hope. For myself. Too. And as I finish.

[24 : 00] I just want to point out. To you. What I think. Are the two ingredients. In this transformation. If you are not. Very interested. In being transformed. By Jesus. Now is the time.

You can tune out. Alright. You can go to sleep. But if you want. God. To change your life. If you want God. To enrich. And empower.

Your life. If you want to know. Jesus. Better. There. Then I want to urge you. This morning. To pay attention. To the two things. That come out. Of Luke 24. Two things. Okay. Let's wake up. Firstly.

What we can do. And secondly. What only God can do. Firstly. What can we do. From Luke 24. Well.

What we can do. Of course. Is open the scriptures. Because. Because. That is the way. We pay attention. To God's words. As we've seen.

[24 : 56] This morning. It is the word of God. That brings clarity. Where there is confusion. So we ought to expect that. Even now. The word of God.

Will be the best remedy. For our confusion. And when we open the Bible. And when we get the Bible open. We will find. What the disciples. In Luke 24.

Find. Found. That the whole Old Testament. Bears witness. To Jesus. And that Jesus himself. Shines light. On everything. And that the New Testament.

Has even come down to us. Because of the very experiences. Described in this chapter. The New Testament. Of course. Is basically.

Written by. Eyewitnesses. Of Jesus resurrection. People who were transformed. By their encounter. With the risen Jesus. And so.

[25 : 52] If you want to know. The risen Jesus. Read. The scriptures. And if you want to be transformed. By the risen Jesus.

Study the scriptures. If you want. His resurrection power. In your life. Develop an appetite. For the scriptures. Treasure God's word.

Bathe in it. Don't take it for granted. Learn to love it. Learn from it. Live by it. And if we do that.

We will be joyful witnesses. About Christ. Because. For no other reason. Than we've come to know him personally. The Jesus who died.

Lives. And he speaks. He speaks to us. As he spoke to them. And when we listen attentively. We will be transformed.

[26 : 47] That is what we can do. We can open the scriptures. And so for us. As a church family. That has got to be the litmus test.

Of what we're doing. Isn't it? We've got to get the Bible open. And teach. I. I. I. I just. I'm baffled. I'm bamboozled. Of how. The church in this country.

The church in this city. Thinks that we can. See people come to Christ. Without teaching the Bible. Without showing them. Without letting them hear Christ's voice.

What we can do. We can open the scriptures. The other key ingredient. In this transformation. Is something that we can't do. That only God can do. And what is it.

That only God can do. That is open our eyes. And that was the experience. Wasn't it? Of the two travelers. That they had on the road to Emmaus. And it is the experience.

[27 : 45] That verse 45 describes. When it talks about the disciples. Verse 45 says. Doesn't it? Can you see it? Then he opened their minds.

To understand the scriptures. Jesus. And so at the end of the day. We won't believe.

That Jesus was raised from the dead. Unless he opens our eyes to see it. We won't know him.

Unless he opens our minds. And we won't see him for who he is. And be transformed by the risen Jesus. Unless God flicks the light on for us.

What that means of course. Is that if you don't believe in the risen Jesus yet. If you don't follow him.

[28 : 44] Or live for him. Or love him. But you want to. Then you can't manufacture that. But instead.

What you need to do. Like what we all need to do. Is call out to God in prayer. And ask him to bring light to your eyes. And what it also means.

Is if you long for greater transformation. In your Christian life. If you long for a clearer vision. Of the resurrected Jesus. If you long to be a more joyful witness for him.

Then the answer to your longings. Is no different is it? But you need to pray. And I need to pray constantly. That God would bring a light to our eyes.

And when we pray like that. Earnestly. And humbly. And when he answers. And it is a prayer that he loves to answer. We will see. And we will know.

[29 : 42] And we will live like Jesus. Who really did die and rise again. And who really is alive today. And that we really do have a relationship with him.

And that of course is astonishing to say isn't it? You cannot say that in Islam. You cannot have a relationship with Allah.

You cannot have a relationship with Muhammad. But in Christianity you can have a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's almost too incredible to believe. But that is what is on offer. And this chapter was written that we might take it up. That we might like those disciples.

That we might find our confusion evaporating. In the light of his clear words. And that we like those disciples. Might find our eyes opened.

[30 : 44] To see the risen Jesus. And to be irreversibly changed by him. I don't know about you. But as I studied this chapter this week. I find myself this Easter.

Freshly stunned. That the Jesus who lived and died 2,000 years ago. Lives in 2016. And I know him. Not just as someone who is a central character.

In an ancient story. In a passion play. But as someone who I'm actually in a relationship with. And once again this is. We need to pinch ourselves as we come to Pinnah.

This is an incredible thing. I can't speak for you. But I can speak for myself. And I really do want to know him better. I really do crave in my relationship with him.

I do really want to be changed by him. And that is why Luke 24 is so encouraging. Isn't it? That it really is possible. And that the risen Lord Jesus is up for it.

[31 : 43] Luke says. Then their eyes were opened. And they recognised him. And I'm going to pray the same would be true for us.

Will you join me?