

Guest Preacher - Rev. Malcolm Maclean (Retired)

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Preacher: Rev. Malcolm Maclean

[0 : 00] Well, we can turn back to Luke chapter 24, and I'd like us to look at the incident we read about, but we can read again verse 15.

! Apparently, Emmaus was a very nice place to go to.

It was a place where refreshment could be obtained, refreshing times could be enjoyed, away from the bustle of the city.

It's only seven miles from Jerusalem, and it was on the main road that took Jerusalem to the coast. And it would not be surprising for individuals to come across strangers who would be quite willing to talk to them as they made their way along the road.

[1 : 37] So there's nothing too surprising about the two who were making a journey entering into a conversation with someone they didn't know.

What kind of journey was it that they made here? Well, obviously it was a physical journey.

They were traveling the seven miles distant between the places. But surely also a journey of recovery and a journey of discovery.

But for the two individuals, well, they're down, aren't they? Their hopes have been shattered. Life, for them, has virtually lost its meaning. And they also, we could say about them, they knew some things about Jesus, but they didn't know enough about him.

[3 : 05] So, for them, it was both a journey of recovery and a journey of discovery.

And we can look at how Jesus did that. Because he is a great physician, isn't he?

He knows how to recover the soul. Many of the Psalms describe that kind of experience. And here's an example of it.

Who were the couple? Well, maybe the pronoun they, as it's there in verse 14, it must go, or the word them as well in verse 13, it must go back to something.

So, it is possible, it goes as far back as verse 49 of chapter 23, where we're told all his acquaintances and the woman who had followed him from Galilee.

[4 : 29] And that is the last overall plural that appears before this verse.

But in between that verse and verse 13 of chapter 24, there are several references to a they. And one assumes that these people referred to as they in these other verses are somehow connected to the them in verse 13.

So, the they in the immediately preceding verses are all women. So, it is possible that the couple here making their way to Emmaus, that they are Cleophas and his wife.

And that would seem quite a natural way to read it. Now, there is a woman at the cross that's mentioned in the Gospel of John.

[5 : 52] And she's described as Mary, the wife of Clopas. So, the spelling difference between Clopas and Cleophas is only the letter E.

And some scholars wonder if that's the same person. Because it was possible for people to have slightly different spellings of their names. But whether it was or not, this couple were obviously deeply concerned about what happened.

So, where had they been? Well, they had been in Jerusalem. And as we know, Jerusalem at that particular weekend was the high point of the year.

It was the time of the annual Jewish Passover. And here we are now on Sunday afternoon.

They would have been at the Passover on Thursday. And we know that on Thursday evening that the disciples of Jesus were all scattered because he had been arrested.

[7 : 23] And it was hard to go too far from Jerusalem on the day connected to the Passover.

So, they probably stayed somewhere in the city on Friday. And then on Saturday, which was the Sabbath, they wouldn't have travelled anywhere.

So, here we are now on the day after the Jewish Sabbath. And they are making their way home from what had initially seemed to have been a weekend to look forward to.

Because after all, Jesus, they would have known about Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem in the previous week. And they would have been anticipating great things. Because they do say that, don't they, to the stranger.

When they are talking about him, they say, We thought it would have been him who would have redeemed Israel. And this anticipation that they had, well, it just seemed round the corner.

[8 : 32] It's amazing the difference a couple of days can bring, isn't it? They had gone from the heights to the depths.

And they imagined that from the depths they were in, there was no way out of it. As they made their way along the road on this afternoon, they were aware of some things that had already happened that morning, that it made no difference to them.

They were aware that some women, their friends, had been to the tomb, and found it empty, and had even been spoken to by angels.

And the verdict of their friends, the message of their friends, when they had come and told them that they had seen that angel, and the message that the angels had passed on to them, this too didn't believe it.

They do refer to how some of their number ran to the tomb to see if what the woman said were true.

[9 : 59] And of course, we know from the Gospel of John that these two that went to the tomb were John and Peter. And when they got to the empty tomb, they discovered that, as the woman had said, it was empty.

But then there's this very sad comment that this couple make. There they say, down at the end of verse 24, But him they did not see.

So they were down. Their hopes, works, had been destroyed. Even being told good details did not elevate them.

They were down. They were really down. It is interesting, I think, that although the disciples had scattered, they hadn't forgotten what each other was.

Because it's fairly obvious about what this couple say, that the disciples who were living in Jerusalem, they all knew what each other was, or each other were.

[11 : 20] And they passed on information between themselves about what happened to Jesus.

And I suppose we could suspect that if this couple had really believed what they had been told, they wouldn't have gone to Emmaus, would they?

I mean, if these suggestions were true, that they had heard about that Jesus was alive, well, surely they would have stayed in Jerusalem in order to try and see him.

But here they were, just going back home, as it were. Almost a picture of them just going back to what they had been before.

The wonderful thing is that Jesus knew they were going back to Emmaus.

I wonder if we had been in a position to somehow or other make a suggestion to Jesus as to what he should do about these two individuals.

[12 : 39] What would we suggest that he should do? Well, one suggestion would be that he should just appear in front of them and say to them, I'm here.

I'm alive. I have conquered death. Here I am. Would that have been a better thing to do than what he actually did do?

Well, of course not. But on a surface appearance, it might seem to be. But the Savior, as he's about to interact with them, remember he's a great physician, and he's going to diagnose their problem for them.

There was something wrong with them that led to them being on this road to Emmaus.

They weren't with the disciples back in Jerusalem. We can see from later on in the chapter that these other disciples had got together that night. And it must have been prearranged, because the two who had gone off to Emmaus, they knew that this meeting was taking place in Jerusalem.

[14 : 15] But they had preferred to go back to Emmaus. So there's something wrong. And the heavenly physician is going to come and deal with it.

So what are the methods of the heavenly physician, as we see them here? Well, the first one we might find very surprising.

He appears incognito. He comes along as a total stranger.

And he hides himself. If someone has done a great exploit, or if they have made a great discovery, the last piece of advice that they would be given would be to hide themselves.

Rather, be the opposite. Don't leave them in the dark any longer. Dispel their doubts and confusion.

Just appear in front of them. Just appear in front of them. Just appear. Just appear. Just appear.

Just appear. Just appear. Just appear.

[15:35] Just appear. Just appear. Just appear. Just appear. Just appear. Just appear. Just appear. Just appear. Just appear. Just appear.

Just appear. just appear in front of them. But that's not what the Savior did.

And he made sure they wouldn't recognize him. They knew him very well.

They were two of his disciples. They had been with him on many occasions. Why couldn't they recognize him? Well, we're told that their eyes were just held.

Who can hold someone's eyes? Who alone can hold someone's eyes?

[16:44] And prevent a person with, or two people with good vision from seeing the obvious.

The only one that can do that is Jesus as God. So Jesus not only appears, as Mark tells us, in a kind of another form, as it were, not his usual way of appearing.

But they were prevented from recognizing who he was. And it's all to do with the problem that they had.

And he said, the heavenly physician came to them secretly, without revealing who he was.

He said, And spoke to them. And said to them, a question, which is really a, a puzzling one, really.

[17:52] He said to them, as he, um, just asked them, what are you talking about? As you are going along the road, and as you walk.

He's come to diagnose their problem. But they have to discover what the problem is. And the problem is connected to the topic that they're speaking about.

And they're puzzled by his question. And, and they, um, their response to, to them, you know, his question just seems, what a normal person would say, when you're joining another, two individuals walking along the road, what are you talking about?

And their response in verse 18, is, are you the only visitor in Jerusalem, who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?

Their answer, to the question, what are they talking about, is to suggest there must be something very unusual about him. because, there's only one topic, in the conversation of anyone, in these days.

[19:23] It's what's happened in Jerusalem. And people are talking about this, uh, crucifixion that has occurred. And this couple, as almost the impression you get from them, is that, every person they've met that day, we're not told about it, but, every, it gives the impression that every person they met that day, is talking, about what happened in Jerusalem, to Jesus.

And all of a sudden, they think, they're with somebody, who doesn't know about that. And they ask him this, they give him a strange response, and, are you the, only one in Jerusalem, who doesn't know what's happened?

When the reality is, he is the only one, in Jerusalem, who does know what has happened. Because he's been involved, in every single stage of it.

He knows every detail exactly. And yet, this question, they say to him, they're speaking out of, of course, ignorance, they don't realize, it's Jesus is with them.

But there's, the question is asking, the one who knows best, what has happened. They ask him, don't you know, anything at all, about it.

[20:54] That answer was, very uninformed. They're speaking to Jesus. And he understands, their sorrow, their sadness.

But he still, doesn't reveal himself to them. Because they still haven't yet, got to the root of the problem. So, in response to their, reply to him, when he, they said, don't you know these things?

He says to them, what thing? The problem, has got to be revealed, by them.

Jesus, in a sense, is not going to tell them. So, he asks them, what thing?

And they give, the answer that's, that's recorded there, in, in verses, 19 and following. And what they, say about Jesus, initially, is, true, but it's not, all the truth.

[22 : 15] They say about him, in verse 19, well, he, he was from Nazareth, and he, was a, great prophet, and he, performed mighty deeds, and, clearly, God approved of him, because he did all this, actions, and teachings, before God, and all the people.

That's, that's, true, about Jesus. And then, they say something else, true, about him. Our chief priests, and rulers, delivered him up, to be condemned, and crucified him.

That's, true, about him as well. And, they point out, that, to Jesus, that is now, the third day, since these things, have happened.

And, surely, they already knew, that Jesus, had already said, many times, to his disciples, that on the third day, he would rise. But, here, they refer to the third day, and they don't have any, seeming awareness, of the significance of it, even though, they go on, to say, that some woman, and, have told them, that he's, they saw angels, and he's alive, and, Sam went to the tomb, and he wasn't there, and, they, didn't, see the connection.

They spoke the truth, but, they didn't speak, all the truth. But, we're getting closer, to their problem.

[24 : 02] The heavenly physician, is, bringing it out. And, therefore, his response, to them, is, to gently, rebuke them, before, highlighting, the problem.

And, his gentle, rebuke, is, rebuke, is there, in, verse, 28. What is, he speaks, very gently, to them, oh, foolish ones.

It's a tender, way of speaking. It's almost, how, a parent, would say, to a child, don't be so silly. And, he, Jesus, looks at this couple, and we can, almost see, the love, in his heart, coming through, his voice.

Oh, foolish one. And, he, comes straight, to the point, and says, to them, slow of heart, to believe, all, that the prophets, have spoken.

There's an absence, of heart involvement, but, the, the heart involvement, is not, what we would say, a lack of heart involvement, towards Jesus.

[25 : 35] Jesus. I mean, they, it's clear, from their words, that they love Jesus. But, what, what was wrong, with them?

And, what was wrong, with them, was, they hadn't, paid attention, to the word, of God. They, were slow of heart, to believe, all, that the prophets, had spoken.

The Old Testament, and all, its predictions, of Jesus. They, had, ignored that. Of course, they weren't, the only ones, that ignored it.

The, the other disciples, had also, ignored it. Despite, all the time, that they had been, with Jesus.

And, despite all the time, that they had, professed, their, devotion, to Jesus.

They, didn't accept, everything, that the prophets, had written. When Jesus, had said to the disciples, that he's going up, to Jerusalem, to die. These disciples, had said to him, far be that, away.

[26 : 56] Peter, was very vehement. You, cannot die. And, Peter, would have known, about Isaiah 53, which, tells us, that this, Messiah, when he comes, is going to die.

They, have known about, Psalm 16, which tells us, that this, this, this, my saviour, when he comes, he's going to, die and be raised, again.

And, there's numerous, Old Testament, predictions, that, that revealed, very clearly, nothing mysterious about it stated there in words that are obvious in what they mean that this Messiah when he would come would not only live a good powerful way of life would not only be a good powerful teacher but that he would die and that he would die for sin and then after he had done that he would rise from the dead and Jesus says to them doesn't he there in in verse 28-26 was it not necessary that Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory who were the glorious people in Jerusalem that day who of all the inhabitants had entered into glory there was political glory in Jerusalem there was military glory in Jerusalem there was religious glory in Jerusalem and all of it was passing away the political powers that seemed to reign they were on the way out the religious activities in the temple it was on the way out the mighty Roman army it was on the way out but there was one person walking around Jerusalem who had entered into glory and that's the Savior because his resurrection is the first step in his ascension to glory there was someone walking around Jerusalem who had truly understood and who is now experiencing what glory meant and these individuals and not just the two couple the couple here but all the disciples would have known that if they had paid attention to what the Old Testament said but they hadn't done it it's not a wonderful thing to realize that these two disobedient disciples were now walking beside the

man who had entered into his glory and he spoke to them and Luke doesn't tell us all the details that he mentioned he just says there in verse 27 and beginning with Moses and all the prophets he interpreted to them in all the scriptures

the things concerning himself I mean the Old Testament is full of Christ he's not as it were hidden out of sight even the way in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve fell he's first mentioned and after that he appears again and again and as these two people as they're making their way along the road to Emmaus they're making their way to the pleasant village and they had dreaded the walk that would take them there but now they found the walk to be very pleasant as the Savior took out from the scriptures things concerning himself and their hearts started to burn within them the hearts that had been slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken but now as they were reminded by Jesus himself of these wonderful predictions their hearts were transformed and what had seemed to be a disastrous day had become a delightful day and from a certain point of view they had been quick to get out of Jerusalem and they didn't want to go to the meeting arranged that evening and now we're having this conversation with Jesus they said to him as he neared their home and as he made a gave the impression that he was continuing in a way they said to him stay with us and he went in to them they had now a desire they had a desire rather than being full of being disconsolate because their hopes had been crushed they now had optimism they wanted to hear more whatever else whatever they had heard on the road to Emmaus was not enough for them they wanted this stranger who seemed to know so much to come in with them and continue his conversation and he went in and he had a meal with them and as he asked a blessing they recognized him they no longer had their eyes held and I suppose this shows the the value of remembering little things because what was it that triggered their recognition he's breaking the bread was there something unique about the way he did it or was it when he was asking a blessing was it something about the way he said it

I mean Mary Magdalene when Jesus appeared to her in the garden and she thought he was the gardener she recognized him by his voice when he said to her Mary and she just replied immediately well this couple had been hearing his voice as they walked along and while what they heard was precious to them they hadn't realized who was speaking but now as he breaks the bread and asks a blessing is Jesus just the benefit or the preciousness of little things how he moved his finger how he emphasized words and then we see their response because the great physician his process has worked and we see their response and they he disappears and the absent [37 : 16] Christ is not a source of unhappiness to them the absent Christ when he thought his cause was over and even as they walked along with him they were sad because they thought he was no longer there but now having recognized who he was and he disappears and is no longer there they're not sad but we can see from their response just very briefly they now appreciate God's word don't they did not our hearts burn within us while he spoke to us about the things concerning the prophecies that

God had made did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road while he opened to us the scriptures it's a precious thing isn't it when God opens up his own word these passages that they perhaps had known all their lives but had ignored were now living and causing their hearts to burn within them and each of them knew that the other one had had it did not our hearts burn within us they just had this awareness Christ had not just been speaking as it were to one of them but to both of them and they were healed of their illness their spiritual illness they were healed of it together that's only one part of their response the other response was now the meeting that they had chosen not to go to in Jerusalem they now couldn't wait to get to it some form of wisdom would say to them just wait till the morning and tell them after all it's dark but they couldn't wait they had to the last time they had seen these other disciples these other disciples that they had been with were just consoled themselves they didn't know that by this time

Jesus had appeared to Mary Magdalene and that he had appeared to some woman as they walked along the road they didn't know that they thought these disciples were still in their state of ignorance but they had met the risen saviour and they wanted to tell that to the group in Jerusalem and when they got there they discovered that not only had he appeared to them but he had appeared even to Peter and maybe Jesus as it were rushed away from his meeting with them to go to meet Peter who knows but anyway they got to the room and there's all these disciples and they're sitting there talking about that Jesus has appeared to all these individuals and if we had read on in the chapter we would discover that

Jesus and appeared to them all apart from Thomas a wonderful day sad morning happy evening when the great physician worked changes occur their cold slow heart is on fire there's three lessons I want to mention in order to get a touch from Jesus we need to talk about Jesus these two are speaking about him and what they knew was not as good as it should have been but they still spoke about what they knew and the little that they did know it greatly increased because they have been talking about him and he himself had drawn near he could have talked about something else to try and raise their spirits!

But if they had done that see what they would have lost talk talk about Jesus there's plenty to say second lesson is that no matter our spiritual highs we cannot forget rather love these two had got to the top of the mountain from their point of view but they couldn't forget those who were down in the valley and therefore they went to tell them and they couldn't get a taxi they had to walk but they did it and what joy they got and the last thing is here we're seeing wonders of the resurrection body what the savior was capable of the one this morning that we thought about whose body was not strong enough to carry the cross yet here he is can come from nowhere and in the countryside just find them and start talking to them when he decides he can just leave and they don't have to show him to the door he just goes and in

[45 : 55] Jerusalem when they get to that room that were told elsewhere that the doors were locked that's no barrier to the risen king and whatever it means one day we're going to be like him and all the things in this life that are hindrances will be gone forever it's a wonderful day for this couple from Emmaus shall we pray Lord we give you thanks for the way you guided Luke to record this event we don't know how we found out about it he does tell us that he searched diligently for all the information he included and it's there for us to read it's also there for us to imitate to learn from it and to expect that the risen saviour can by his holy spirit walk with us down the various roads of life help us to see him and to be looking to him to deal with our issues whatever they might be and help us to be thankful that the saviour is a great physician the physician of souls so bless us lord we pray for your own name sake amen we'll sing from psalm 119 and sing psalms the first section of the psalm and psalm 119 verses 1 to 8 blessed are those of blameless ways who live according to god's word blessed are those who keep his laws who with their whole heart seek the lord you can sing the section verses 1 to 8!

blessed are those of blameless which who live according to God's word blessed are those who keep their choice who with them own hearts in the lord they keep themselves from doing wrong by walking in his perfect grace you love is the place for us the heart near being known in all ways! O that thy grace! is us!

the heart peace my name! So when I think of your commands I would fear of distress grace or shame I miss you with heart by heart as you're just all star there by me all your deep peace I will owe thee do not forsake me utterly May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all Amen