

The Road to Emmaus

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Preacher: Rev. Douglas Mackeddie

- [0 : 0 0] For a little time this morning I would like us to turn to the words we read there in Luke's Gospel in chapter 24. Luke chapter 24 and let me read again from verse 13.
- I'm reading from the authorised verse in here. And behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem, about three score furlons. And they talked together of all these things which had happened.
- And it came to pass that while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near and went with them, but their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that you have, one to another, as you walk and are sad?
- And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering, said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?
- And he said unto them, What things? And so on. This account of the resurrection, or this part of the resurrection story, is one again that is very familiar to us.
- [1 : 2 5] It's one of those stories that we have learned since a very early age, I am sure. And this story of the two disciples and the road to Emmaus, certainly is one that clarifies a lot of things for us, and also for those two men who had this encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ.
- And it's quite significant that after the resurrection of Jesus, that Jesus' great interest was always to be towards those who were his own, his followers, his disciples.
- And that is something that is still the same today. In fact, is that not borne out for us in the great intercessory prayer, when Jesus said, I pray for them.
- I pray not for the world, I pray for those whom thou hast given me out of the world. For thine they are, and thou hast given them me. And I have lost none of them. We all sit under the gospel week after week, and I'm sure that we appreciate that very much.
- But then I'm sure we always ask the very searching question ourselves. What do we take from what we hear? Are we hearing without hearing ear?
- [2 : 4 3] Are we listening to the benefit of our hearts and souls? And please, I don't say that with any degree of criticism, unless I'm criticizing myself, because we can all sit under the gospel ministry and find ourselves in a far distant land, even while we're doing so.
- There can be many things that can distract us. But what is good, I think, is this, that if there is an interest there, if there is a desire within the heart of any one of us to hear more of this Jesus, then surely that is always a good thing.
- Because it is after all only Christ that can satisfy the longing soul. And it can be said without any shadow of a doubt that these two men, these two disciples, were ones who were obviously disturbed in their heart and in their mind with regard, as it's said, of all the events that had taken place.
- The one whom they had great hopes in had been crucified. He was buried. Yes, we know that he rose again.

But they weren't sure what had happened. They were still in that state of unbelief. But before we would ever criticize these two men, we have to take a hard, long look at ourselves when we want to find ourselves criticizing.

[4 : 18] Yes, we could easily say they should have known if they had listened to Jesus. And that is true. If they had listened properly in the way that they should have done, then all things would have become clear to them as each event was taking place in the life and in the ministry of the Lord Jesus and even in the very end of his life, in his crucifixion, in his dying.

And they should have known because he had told them he would rise again. But it's strange, isn't it, human nature? We might know these things and we might say put our imprematura on it and yet at the same time we can walk down the road of unbelief.

As Christians, we can very easily. We know what the Bible says but sometimes we have great difficulty in applying what Scripture is saying.

until, of course, once again the Word of God is opened up to us. And I don't mean by any preacher of the Gospel.

We are the poor vessels at the very best. But we have a precious statement to make. And the statement is not ours. Although it should be ours by conviction.

[5 : 38] But the statement, all the statements are Christ's. It is the Word of God. The Word that, yes, as Isaiah the Prophet says, will not return unto me empty.

It will accomplish what I please. It will prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. And as you and I sit under the ministry of the Word, preacher and hearer alike, it will have one effect or another.

It will either be a savor of life unto life or it might be a savor of death unto death. I wonder if we ever thought of that.

And I speak here and I speak, and I hope with compassion to anyone who has not yet put their trust in the Lord Jesus. have you ever thought that the Word of God that comes to your hearing might become a savor of death unto death to you?

Because you either didn't listen to it properly or you didn't respond to it in the way that Christ wants you to. At the end of the day, a righteous God knows exactly your heart and mine.

[6 : 55] But what we want from the Word of God surely as we meet together here on the Lord's Day morning is that that Word would have free course in our hearts and that God would be glorified as we sit and listen to the Word and to the testimony.

Various preachers are different styles and sometimes people might be more some preachers might appeal to one more than another and so on.

But it's not the preacher that's important. It is the Word and the testimony. But on this occasion it was the preacher. And I suppose even we who are called upon to minister the Word if we're called upon to minister and we're dutiful in it and we're honest and we come with a heart of integrity to the Word of God and we proclaim it with integrity of heart and through experience then in a real sense it is Christ that is preaching it is Christ that is teaching and that's what we want to listen to.

The events of these days were yes a culmination culmination of lots of problems and difficulties we have never ever experienced with these two men and not just these two but many others who were the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And here you can have sympathy or empathy with them given the fact that they were under duress through persecution and the threat of persecution.

[8 : 36] And here they are in some respects you would say running away from a problem. You don't do that. You don't face up to the problem you take the problem to the Lord Jesus.

That's what they should have done. But here they were contemplating everything that had happened. They were so gobsmacked they were so cast down in spirit as a result of these events that had taken place.

Listen to what they say here in verse 15. came to pass that while they communed together and reasoned. That's an interesting statement in itself because it covers a multitude in the life of each and every one of us.

We can commune with one another and we can reason with one another but what level is that communing and reasoning? What are we trying to reason out? What is it that we're trying to do?

What are we trying to convince ourselves of? Maybe someone is saying well at the end of the day you know God is a God of love and the gospel came to because he loved the people.

[9 : 43] That's what John 3.16 tells us. But then they try to have this presumptuous spirit and say well it doesn't matter what I do in this life I can do what I like and I still have salvation.

Don't count on it. You must put your trust in Jesus. You must put your all upon Christ. Now these two men we cannot speak of them as total unbelievers.

Yes they were unbelieving in their faith. They weren't exercising faith as they should have done. But let's not criticize them over much.

But let us learn from them because they have a lot to teach us. Because this communing they have together yes it was distorted because they were not speaking out of the word of God.

They were speaking just about their own experience and the trial and the difficulty of all. It's almost as though they were inward looking. Looking too much to themselves and not to the one who came into this world and suffered and died in the room instead.

[10 : 55] It's very interesting isn't it not? how Jesus here in his plan and purpose and again I say this with great emphasis.

Christ has a plan and a purpose and in that plan and purpose you and I are to be here on this Lord's Day morning to hear the word of God proclaimed but what are we going to do with it?

What will we do with it? As a believer or as an unbeliever? Or as a believer who has wandered away for a time and walking on the road this road to Emmaus spiritually speaking as Jesus draws near them they don't recognize this man they're almost astounded that this man should speak in the way that he did because this is what they said their eyes were holding that they should not know him and he said unto them what manner of communications are these that you have one to another as you walk and are sad they came right at the very beginning just like the woman of Samaria that we spoke of last week Jesus knows these people just as we said with the children this morning God has the barcode of each and every one of us

Jesus knew exactly what was going on with these two men but like them and us his great concern is that we understand what we are talking about and not be led astray by just the circumstance of life at the present time now I am the first one to readily admit that when a providence can come upon you it can as it were flail all your exercise of faith and you can lose trust and you begin to question things and you ask why why why I understand these things and that I am sure many people here have experienced the same thing but that is not what we live and eat out of what we live and eat out of is the word of God itself that is what we are dependent upon and not dependent just on some of it it's not that these men didn't know anything and I would never even suggest that there was any one person in this building this morning that didn't know anything about the word of

God about the teaching the word of God about the Bible but experimentally and experientially surely it is the case that many of us are not approaching it in the way that we should Jesus wants these men to come back on track again to understand that these things had to happen they accused this man they who were the ones who didn't understand are accusing the one who did understand of all things one of them whose name was Cleopas answered said unto him art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem and hast not known the things which have come to pass there in these days here they are speaking to the Lord of course the Lord has not shown himself yet to them their eyes have not been opened at least at that physical level but he is penetrating in his talking with them and yes whatever they want to say in way of accusation are you a stranger in

[14 : 51] Jerusalem it's very odd isn't it we can look at it with hindsight we have the word of God here and we can say well why didn't they understand but if you put yourself in their position you would understand and Jesus then just simply asked what things what are the things that are really bothering you what is it that's causing you the problem and they said unto him concerning Jesus of Nazareth which was a prophet mighty indeed and word before God and all the people again exemplary in the statement that they make but they haven't gone far enough in fact they have not applied what they had already known just like many of us have done and I can speak to many of the brethren here the brothers and sisters in Christ and you remember the days when you would listen to the word of God but it just went straight over the top of your head but there were many things that you didn't know how the chief priests and the rulers yes you've got that right delivered them up to be condemned to death and have crucified them but we trusted this is the bit we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed

Israel and besides all this today is the third day since these things happened or these things were done they've got it right so far and that's the irony isn't it so many of us can have things so right and yet we come so far short for those who are in unbelief at this moment maybe you know a lot you could sit in a panel I'm sure of people and be asked questions about the Bible and you would have no problem with them you could answer 1 2 3 X Y Z or whatever but when it comes to the gritty of application of that word and what you are seeking to do you know how so often we want to shift it on to somebody else seems to be a kind of an instrument of the devil he wants to push it away from yourself let's to question myself about my relationship to the

Lord Jesus let's question other people's relationship so they wanted to accuse all those people instead of really getting down to it and thinking you know who's the problem here certainly not Jesus and for these men whatever persecutions might have been threatening to them it wasn't the those who had crucified Jesus that was the real problem here the problem was theirs the problem is so often just like that for you and me well Jesus gets it out of them anyway and when they found not his body they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels which said he was alive and so on but then what does Jesus do he opens up the truth to them and this is I think one of the most amazing things and wouldn't it have been just a treasure for all of us to have sat under that sermon so to speak because to remember having gone through all of this with these two men as they unburdened themselves to a certain degree

Christ knowing exactly what was in their heart as he knows what's in your heart and mine is it not the case that this Jesus now turns on them and says look you are foolish now that's not something any one of us would like it said of us we certainly would take umbrage if somebody said if the minister or an elder said to you you are foolish but when Christ says it you cannot deny it because Christ knows the truth of your heart Lord you have searched me you have known my life you know me through and through I cannot hide anything from you no more than these men could hide anything from Jesus he said to them oh fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets the emphasis must be on the all there's no point in being half understanding of what the word of God is saying concerning redemption and salvation brought about as a result of the giving of his only beloved son we must take the whole compass of it and it saddens me very often to listen to people saying

I really can't don't find myself reading the Old Testament very much I'm much happier reading the New Testament I ask myself what is it that's the problem with the Old Testament what is the problem with regard to revelation with regard to truth when you consider these two men they have walked with Jesus before he was crucified they have listened to him they've seen his miracles and so on yes what's the problem the problem lies fairly and squarely with our misunderstanding or lack of understanding search the scriptures that's what Jesus said to those who are the religious rulers search the scriptures for in them you think you have eternal life now these two men were not in the same position spiritually with

[20 : 58] Christ I'm not saying that they were like that but they certainly had gone off beam a little bit they hadn't taken on board everything that the word of God had said and when you think of what Jesus is what is saying here recorded of Jesus beginning at Moses you've got to start there at the very beginning of things in the garden of Eden you've got to begin with the beginning of the creation you've got to begin with the fall you've got to see your link to all of that and working through the histrionics of the whole development of God's plan for the redemption of mankind for the redemption of the physical Israel for all the teachings that is taught to us in all the historical books of the Old Testament everything was pointing to Christ was it a lack of knowledge of the Old Testament maybe it wasn't but certainly it must have been at the very least a lack of understanding of what the

Old Testament was saying beginning at Moses and all the prophets imagine that Christ being privy to a sermon addressed by Jesus that's why I say it I say it again you know we have the opportunity to sit under the ministry of the word of God a preacher that is called to preach the gospel but that's not the one you want to listen to it's Christ you want to listen to if Christ is not in the word that is proclaimed then it falls short of what was the intention beginning at Moses what a treasure that was and maybe it does lend itself for you and I to maybe go back to the beginning again I know it's very easy just to dip in here and there and go to the passages that we like that we're familiar with and read them again because these are the ones I got comfort from before is that what

God wants us to do by way of his word surely not many other religions would have a different perspective of what we do with their word that they say is their word of God so to speak for you and I we neglect it to our peril and when you find yourself in a fix and having difficulty understanding what is happening then surely it's the word itself well beginning at Moses and all the prophets imagine Jesus talking about himself I only pick one or two things say for example Isaiah 52 and 53 the suffering servant that was at the back of it all of course wasn't it for these two men the total misunderstanding and comprehension of a suffering servant one who was to come and suffer and die in a room instead and then the third day rise again but in

Christ rising again these two men were to have a privileged position oh yes there was many others I'm sure he could have gone to and he did go to but these two men are ripe pickings for a resurrected Christ to show to them and to show that they might continue to be a true and a faithful witness having seen and heard of what Jesus had said who has believed a report says Isaiah to whom is the arm of the Lord been revealed he shall grow up as a tender plant and as a root out of a dry ground ah but there's a rab there was no form in him there was nothing in him that we saw of beauty there was no beauty in him that we would have a desire for him that was the case when we were on belief and

I'm sure it is the case for many today who might believe in a historical Christ who might believe that there is a savior and one day maybe I will believe maybe I will or I might take the route or go down the route and say well if I'm of one of the elect then I will be saved that's not what the gospel is saying to any one of us who has believed or report you must believe it I must believe it yes Isaiah tells us all we like sheep have gone astray we have turned every one to his own way and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all is that not true I wonder if I could ask I would love to ask does everybody here believe that you have gone astray but that you also believe that the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all was that in the thinking of these two men as they were on the road there communing with one another sad in heart desperate to know what was going on and yes overwhelmed with the threat maybe of their life taken from them but

[26 : 41] Jesus comes and he is the most opportune person that you could ever think of Christ is there he is here he is everywhere and he is there for each and every one of us if only we would lay our hand upon him what does the psalmist say in the metrical psalm lo I do stretch my hands to thee my help alone for thou will understand all my complaint and mourn there's the picture the picture yes of the disciple of Christ who wants and has this great longing for Jesus to keep them but he wants you and I to stretch forth our hands to him Jesus spoke to them and they communicated did they not after realizing who this was after realizing that yes they had been walking in unbelief as believers they were walking in unbelief not taking the word of

Christ to heart as they should but Christ opened to them the scriptures so if I can suggest something again I'm sure I hate I don't want to offend anybody by anything I say but every time you come to the house of God every time you have the opportunity to open this word come with anticipation that Christ will open the word of God for you today and that he will give you even a crumb from the master's table so that you don't go out of this door at all empty flat with nothing to go with nothing for your soul that's what was wrong with these two men they seemed to have nothing for their soul even although the momentous event that had taken place was to satisfy God's divine justice for the good of those who were poor wretched sinners well the open scripture that is important

Genesis to Revelation the book of Psalms they're full of Christ but just don't think of the passages that give the appearance of speaking of Christ every single word is pointing to the Lord Jesus and that is true and you see the effect beautiful effect what did the disciples say what we heard what the woman said last week come see a man that told me all things that ever I did is not this the Christ what do these folks say what's the influence of this encounter with the Lord Jesus upon them did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way and while he opened to us the scriptures that's the best when you can sit under the word of

God and you can hear Christ speaking to your heart and soul not a preacher but the word and testimony itself the burning heart that experience that inner feeling of Christ speaking to your heart and soul what is he saying to you come come unto me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest take my yoke upon you and learn of me for I am meek and lowly of heart oh I know these words have familiar rings to us but let them ring from the lips of Christ to each and every one of us I often think of the psalm I'm sure I've referred to it here before psalm 27 which I make no bones about it's one of my favorites but I love the psalmist and his introduction to psalm 27 drawing attention to the light that has come upon him the

Lord is my light and my salvation whom shall I fear the Lord is the strength of my life of whom shall I be good if these two men had that prayer on their lips instead of this doleful conversation that was misdirected then the psalmist says one thing he said one thing I desire of the Lord that will I seek after that I may dwell in the house or you can put it in the very presence of God all the days of my life to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple what one is glad about that these two men had an assurance brought upon them and yes I know that people sometimes can lack assurance but we should never have that position within us of lack of assurance if faith is an exercise looking unto

[32 : 31] Jesus the author and the finisher or perfecter of our faith who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross despising the shame and is now set down at the right hand of God friends the road to Emmaus is not an unfamiliar road as believers we will travel on it from time to time but the Lord is with us and he will always bring us back I pray for you that your faith fail not said Jesus to Peter and Jesus was there the resurrected Christ and in his communication in his opening up with the scriptures in order that their faith would not fail shall we pray

O eternal and ever blessed God thy word is a lamp to our feet and a light and to our path and we know the many stumbling blocks we know the many difficulties through which we go even our own unbelief can so often cause us to be distressed and cast down in spirit O Lord give us the grace of faith continually that we may walk by faith and not by sight looking unto him who is its author and finisher Lord bless us then throughout the remainder of this day and leave us not to ourselves loving us freely in Christ for we ask it with the forgiveness of every offence Amen we're going to conclude by singing in Psalm 119 in the traditional version verse 404 page 404 verse 57 and we're going to sing four stanzas verses 57 to 60 verse 57 thou thou my sure portion art alone which

I did choose O Lord I have resolved and said that I would keep thy holy word with my whole heart I did entreat thy face and favour free according to thy gracious word be merciful to me I thought upon my former ways and in my life will try and to thy testimonies pure my feet then turn dying I did not stay nor linger long as those that slothful are but hastily thy laws to keep myself I did prepare these verses then of Psalm 119 verse 57 thou my sure portion thou my sure portion are not old which I give to so I have resolved and said that

I would keep thy holy word with my old heart I did increase thy grace and favor free according to thy gracious word be merciful to thee thy God thou fall my former ways and did my life well try and did thy test him all be pure my feet then turn

I I did not stay nor linger long as those that sloth love love but it still leave thy laws to keep myself I did prepare and now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father the fellowship and the comfort of the Holy Spirit rest upon and remain with you and with all the Israel of God both now and always Amen

[38 : 26] Amen