**PRAY**

An account of two disciples having a personal revelation.

Also Jesus explaining the Scriptures to them – a personal teaching time.

Two disciples were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus, probably discussing the recent Passover, the arrest and death of Jesus, who they themselves describe as,  **a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people.**

They discussed the fact that there had been some strange occurrences at the tomb where Jesus had previously been laid.

About the two, we know very little – just that one was named Cleopas.

In worldly terms they weren’t anyone special - but in terms of God’s revelation of His work to His creation, they were examples of how announcements seem to be made – to the ordinary people, those who are seeking the Lord.

The place was not special either. The precise location of Emmaus is unknown, being situated on a road out of Jerusalem.

Despite this ‘unspecial’ event, they were joined by their Messiah, God Himself, as **Jesus himself came up and walked along with them**…

Spurgeon said, *when two saints are talking together, Jesus is very likely to come and make the third one in the company. Talk of him, and you will soon talk with him.*

Jesus enters the conversation by asking them what they were talking about. He already knew – He knows everything that we feel, speak or do.

He could see that they were sad – Luke tells us that their faces were **downcast** – but as often is the case, Jesus wants us to come before Him to bring our concerns. Despite being in control of everything, God wants us to come to Him.

Clearly they didn’t know the full events of that day, or they would not have been sad. Cleopas says to Jesus, **‘Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?’**

No doubt Jesus smiled to Himself – He certainly knew what had happened – yet He asks, ‘w**hat things?’**

Jesus wanted those men and us today, to reveal their hearts. There is immense value in telling God even what He already knows – whether it is in gratitude, praise or even repentance.

What did they tell Jesus, concerning Himself? How much could you tell Him? They knew:

* His name and where He was from.
* He was a **Prophet**.
* He was **mighty in deed and word**.
* He was **crucified**.
* He promised to **redeem Israel**.
* They knew others had said He rose from the dead.

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

For me, Luke’s comment that Jesus explained all that was written about in the Scriptures, is one of those great teasers that should have us all wanting to know exactly what He did say. That would have been one of the best Bible studies ever – being taught about the Messiah, by the Messiah.

*Books available – now is not the time to go into those things.* Suffice to say, they would have seen, as we can, the OT Scriptures show a consistent divine purpose being worked out – that required the end to be at the cross.

In all Jesus said to those disciples, He let Scripture speak for itself – it was and remains sufficient.

But Jesus also says that His listeners are **slow to believe**. Although that may be harsh, it shows us that the problem with their belief was more in their **heart** than their head. Their problem was the same as we often have – obstacle to belief can be both in the head and heart.

But if we actually read the Scriptures fully, we see as Jesus says, **Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?**

If you have any doubt that the Messiah had to suffer, read:

* **Isaiah 53:3-5 - He is despised and rejected by men… He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities… by His stripes we are healed.**
* **Isaiah 50:5-7 - …I gave My back to those who struck Me and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard…**
* **Daniel 9:26 - The Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself.**
* **Zechariah 12:10 - They will look on Me whom they pierced.**

We don’t know how long these disciples walked with Jesus, but as they approach Emmaus, Jesus seems to want to go on, but for their eternal glory, the disciples persuade Jesus to stay.

Jesus will never force His company on anyone, this is a perfect example of what In Revelation 3:20, Jesus said, **I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person and they with me.**

He wants that relationship and He will try to get our attention – but ultimately, we need to open the door and let Him in. To eat a meal with someone in Jesus’ time meant you were friends and at peace with each other.

Even though they didn’t know this was Jesus, the disciples wanted the company of this man to continue. In stopping Jesus going on, the NIV says **they urged him strongly**, whilst other translations say **they constrained Him…**

Spurgeon said of this verse, …they not only invited him, but they held him, they grasped his hand, they tugged at his clothes, they said he should not go.

In requesting His presence, they got to spend a meal time with Jesus, as **He took bread, blessed and broke it**.

It has been observed that this ‘was in no sense a sacramental meal, as we use that word sacrament in our theology. It was a frugal supper in a village home of two tired travellers. Yet it was then – in the breaking of bread and not in any vision of resurrection splendour – that they knew that their companion was the Lord.’ (Morrison)

Whatever happened in that meal, Jesus’ actions left them in no doubt as to who He was - **their eyes were opened and they recognised Him**.

In that moment too, Jesus **disappeared from their sight**.

Jesus may not be physically visible to you, but the Holy Spirit is with you at all times – in His presence, we have an assurance that God is with us.

That is a comfort that He is with us at all times and in all places. But it should also act as a restraint to measure our actions and words against the knowledge that God sees all we say and do.

Those disciples acknowledged that Jesus had been with them as they said, **did not our heart burn within us while He talked**.

There was something so real in Jesus’ teaching and presence that cut through the fact the disciples didn’t know it was Jesus, nor did they believe He was risen from the dead – yet their **hearts burned** because of God’s Word and Jesus, the Living Word of God.

How do you feel about His work and promises today?

Do you truly believe Jesus is risen?

Do you allow that fact to get your heart to burn?

Granted it was Jesus doing the teaching, but He spoke nothing that was not within Scripture – something we have access to – there is no excuse for us not to have burning hearts as well.

The disciples response was immediate – they got **up and returned at once to Jerusalem.** They had already walked seven miles one way, but probably covered the return trip faster. Their desire to tell the others could not wait.

They found the others agreeing that Jesus had risen and appeared to Simon – so their own beliefs were confirmed as they told their own good news.

Your personal good news also comes from Jesus – He has told us that God will never leave nor forsake you **Hebrews 13:5** . He has given His Son Jesus to shed His blood on the cross to atone for your sins – all we need do for Salvation is admit our sins, repent of those sins and ask Jesus to be your Saviour.

That is the gospel good news – Jesus has risen and remains risen.

If anyone in that group had any doubts as to the resurrection of Jesus, they were dispelled as **Jesus Himself stood among them**.

**John 20:19-25** seems to cover the same meeting and John adds the details that **the doors were locked**. The disciples were in fear, but this event would start to change their fear to confidence.

This was a meeting of which John said, **the disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.** This is another of passage where the Bible writer makes a magnificent understatement.

Jesus said, **Peace be with you**.

Being beyond death, those words brought new meaning - they meant that truly man could have a restored peace with God, one which had been missing since the Fall.

Jesus shows His disciples the wounds by which that peace had been achieved and He encouraged them to see and touch.

His identity had not changed, He remained the same person – the Son of God, the Messiah, as He had been since birth and had been less than a week previously as He was arrested.

Jesus wanted to assure them that He was a real, physical body, though of a different order than our own bodies. The resurrected Jesus was not a ghost or an apparition.

One commentator has noted: ‘Jesus wanted to establish both His identity and His bodily existence. It is remarkable to consider that the resurrection body of Jesus retains the wounds He received in His sufferings and crucifixion.

The possible reasons are:

* To show the wounds would show the disciples it was the same Jesus.
* To be the object of eternal amazement to the angels.
* To be His trophies of His great work for us.
* To retain a memory of the weapons with which He defeated death.
* To serve as advocates in His perpetual intercession for us.
* To preserve the evidence of humanity’s crime against Him.’ (Guzik)

That last one is important – in our disbelieving or unrepentant human state, we are in rebellion towards God, we are perpetuating a crime against God that denies His place as our Sovereign Creator.

But fortunately we have the gospel writers to bear witness to the fact of Jesus’ resurrection – that disbelief can be put aside.

Spurgeon wrote, ‘In the apostles’ case the facts were tested to the utmost and the truth was not admitted till it was forced upon them. I am not excusing the unbelief of the disciples, but I claim that their witness has all the more weight in it, because it was the result of such cool investigation.’

The disciples were clearly suffering from seeing something that was too good to be true. Luke tells us, **they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement…**

This isn’t the only time in Scripture that people seem to be kept from faith through being over-joyed at news that was too good to be true:

* **Genesis 45:25-26** – Jacob could not believe that Joseph was alive because the news seemed to be too good.
* **Job 9:16** - Job said that if God would have answered him he would not have believed it.
* **Psalm 126:1** - God brought the Israelites out of captivity.
* **Acts 12:13-14** - Peter was miraculously set free from prison, the church didn’t believe it.

In all of these occasions, the joy of the people prevents belief taking hold and maybe there is a point to that - God wants us to have a reasoned, though-out faith, rather than something that is based on a shallow experience.

Jesus wanted them to accept and believe, but only after thinking.

Jesus then did a wonderful thing for those gathered in that room John says that, **He opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures**.

Once again that day, Jesus revealed God’s Word to His people - Jesus made them realise that the cross was not some unfortunate obstacle that had somehow got in the way, but it was a necessary part of God’s redemptive plan for man.

He explained that through His Name **repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.**

Importantly, Jesus hands the responsibility of that witnessing to His disciples – He says, **…You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.’**

As Spurgeon summarised, ‘they were told by their great Master what to preach, where to preach it, how to preach it and even where to begin to preach it.’

As believers we remain under the same instruction – we should be witnesses to God’s work through Jesus, to restore mankind.

The disciples were told to **begin at Jerusalem** - that enabled the accounts to be tested and verified by those who had been eye-witnesses, when the events were so fresh in everyone’s memories.

Jesus’ commission has moved beyond Jerusalem. **Acts 1:8** records that Jesus said to His disciples **…you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.’**

We are in the stage where witness to the gospel has been taken to the ends of the earth, so whilst we are still under an obligation to be witnesses, we need to be ready.

Although we are not told the time or date of Jesus’ return, all the things that are going on in the world today point towards us being at what Jesus described as being the end of the age.

There is a necessity for everyone to be ready for Jesus return. It is not something that you can do for anyone else, it is a personal readiness, that depends on your repentance of the things that you have done wrong, coming before God to ask for His forgiveness whilst being reliant on that forgiveness through Jesus blood.

That is ultimately what Jesus taught about on that road to Emmaus.

* The need for and promise of a Saviour – **Genesis**
* That the Messiah would come as a servant, born of a virgin, work miracles that would declare Him as being God, then die on a cross whilst shedding His blood as the ultimate atoning sacrifice that could and would be made to God, by and on behalf of man - **Isaiah**

Today, many people refuse to acknowledge their need for God, let alone their need for Jesus, but when Jesus returns that will change.

Whether people choose to or not, they will acknowledge Jesus and bow before Him.

**Zechariah 12:10** prophesies that for some, there will be regret - **They will look on me, the one they have pierced and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.**

Don’t let that be you. Don’t let Jesus’ return be for you a time for grieving. It should be a time of joy as those disciples found in that room when Jesus appeared in their midst.

**OFFER / PRAY**

**LUKE 24:13-48**

**13Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. 14They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. 15As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; 16but they were kept from recognising him.**

**17He asked them, ‘What are you discussing together as you walk along?’ They stood still, their faces downcast. 18One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, ‘Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?’ 19‘What things?’ he asked.**

**‘About Jesus of Nazareth,’ they replied. ‘He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. 20The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; 21but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. 22In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning 23but didn’t find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. 24Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.’**

**25He said to them, ‘How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?’ 27And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.**

**28As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going further. 29But they urged him strongly, ‘Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.’ So he went in to stay with them. 30When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. 31Then their eyes were opened and they recognised him, and he disappeared from their sight.**

**32They asked each other, ‘Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?’ 33They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together 34and saying, ‘It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.’**

**35Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognised by them when he broke the bread. 36While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’**

**37They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. 38He said to them, ‘Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? 39Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.’**

**40When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. 41And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, ‘Do you have anything here to eat?’ 42They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43and he took it and ate it in their presence.**

**44He said to them, ‘This is what I told you while I was still with you: everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.’**

**45Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. 46He told them, ‘This is what is written: the Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, 47and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48You are witnesses of these things.**