

# Luke 24:13-53

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ] We are looking this evening for a very little while at Luke chapter 24, verses 13 to 53.
- And as I begin, I want to congratulate you for coming to the service this evening.
- Because in our day and age, it is common to come to the service in the morning, but skip the evening service.
- For some people there are good reasons for not being here, but for others, maybe the reasons are not all that good.
- But you are here, I am forced to be here, so I congratulate you and I congratulate myself.
- [ 1 : 0 2 ] But what are we here to do? What difference is an hour in this place going to make in your life and in mine?
- Singing a few songs from an ancient past, is that going to make an iota of difference in our lives?
- Mumbling a few words in the expectation that somebody out there will hear and answer us?
- Is that sensible in our intellectual age? Sitting there and listening to a man going on for half an hour or more.
- What difference is that going to make to you and to me? Well, all scholars, religious scholars of all the theistic religions, agree that worship is a divine human encounter.
- [ 2 : 1 9 ] And that means it is an encounter between human beings and God himself. That is what worship is. It is a divine human encounter.
- But what makes Christian worship special is that Christian worship is a meeting with the risen Jesus. And so the writer to the Hebrews tells us that today when you and I come into worship, you and I come to a heavenly Jerusalem, you and I worship God in the midst of an innumerable company of angels, and you and I come to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant.
- So Christian worship is supremely a meeting with Jesus Christ. And it is most interesting that after his resurrection, Jesus Christ almost exclusively only meets with his followers.
- He only meets with Christians. And most interestingly, if you and I are to take the gospel accounts to be complete, Jesus almost always meets his church on the Lord's day.
- And so in Luke chapter 24, we have the account of the appearances of the resurrected Jesus. Jesus has been raised from the dead.
- [ 4 : 0 3 ] And Jesus reveals himself to Mary at the tomb. And from verse 13 onwards, we see that there are two followers of Jesus Christ, one whose name we are given in verse 18, which is Cleophas.
- The other is unnamed, probably the wife of Cleophas. Two disciples of Jesus Christ, two followers of Jesus Christ, now leaving Jerusalem on their way to their home village that is called Emmaus.

And as they are traveling along on that road, Jesus meets with them. And their meeting with Jesus transforms them.

And I want to suggest to you this evening, that every encounter with Jesus is life transforming.

And when you and I are here, when you and I are sitting under the faithful preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ, you and I have a meeting with Jesus Christ, and you and I will never be the same people when you and I leave this place.

[ 5 : 23 ] You and I came in as a person, you and I will leave this place after meeting Jesus as a different individual. What do I mean by these things?

Well, let's look at how these disciples were. These disciples on their way to Emmaus, they were talking to each other, verse 15.

And they were discussing all that had happened in Jerusalem, how Jesus had been crucified. And so Jesus draws near to them, and he overhears their discussion.

And in verse 17, he says to them, what are you discussing as you walk along? And they begin to explain to him, just all that has happened to Jesus of Nazareth.

And so you and I see, that as these people were walking together, verse 17, their faces were downcast.

[ 6 : 33 ] So the two disciples were joyless. They were lacking in joy. And you notice in verse 21, they were hopeless.

They say to Jesus, the chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him.

But we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And so they look at Jesus and they say, this Jesus, we had hoped he was going to be the savior of Israel.

You notice it is in the past tense. They had once hoped, the hope was now dashed. So here were two people who were joyless, and they were hopeless.

And they were not only joyless and hopeless, they were also fearful. Verse 13, we are told, now that same day, two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem.

[ 7 : 45 ] Why were they leaving Jerusalem? Why were they withdrawing from Jerusalem? The answer was simple. The body of Jesus was missing from the tomb.

And the Jews suspected that Jesus' disciples had stolen his body. And so there was a witch hunt. And so there was a hunt for the disciples of Jesus.

And these two disciples were terrified. They were frightened of facing the same fate that fell upon Jesus.

So here were two disciples, joyless, hopeless, and yet full of fear. And then they meet Jesus.

And Jesus begins to open the scriptures to them. Verse 25, he says to them, How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.

[ 8 : 48 ] Did not the Christ 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.

Jesus begins to speak. Jesus begins to speak. And they begin to listen to Jesus. And then they finally recognize Jesus.

And then Jesus disappears from them. Verses 30 and 31. What do they say? Verse 32, They asked each other, Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road, and opened the scriptures to us.

Verse 33, They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven and those with them, assembled together and saying, It is true, the Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.

Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

[ 10 : 01 ] Two people who were joyless, who were hopeless, and yet full of fear. They meet with Jesus. Jesus speaks to them.

They listen to Jesus, and they are transformed. The joyless people become joyful. The hopeless people become hopeful. The fearful people become fearless.

You notice something there? They were so afraid of Jerusalem, and yet the moment they recognized Jesus, they are so confident, and they are traveling to Jerusalem.

They are so fearful for Jesus, because it is evening. They don't want him to travel, and yet this is night time. The darkness has fallen, and they are on their way to Jerusalem.

You know, dear friends, why you and I should take every opportunity to come to church on a Sunday? Because Jesus meets with his people, because Jesus meets with his people, and Jesus will change the way you and I feel.

[ 11 : 18 ] You and I come in here joyless, sometimes hopeless, always fearful. life is not going the way you and I planned it to be.

Children are going off the rails. You and I don't know what to do. We are feeling down. This place, the presence of Jesus, has the power to transform the way you and I feel.

So, Jesus changes the way you and I feel. Secondly, Jesus will change the way you and I think. Let's look at verse 19.

Jesus inquires, what things? And so they respond, about Jesus of Nazareth. He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people.

The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel.

[ 12 : 32 ] And what is more, it is now the third day since all this took place. And so these two disciples on their way, traveling from Jerusalem to Eneus, and they were completely confused.

They had believed in their own hearts. They had seen with their own eyes, and they had proven within their own experience that this Jesus whom they had followed for three years, that this Jesus was the Messiah that God had promised.

And yet, confusingly, their religious leaders, the religious authorities, decided that he was not the Christ, he was rather a criminal, an imposter.

So who was this Jesus? They continued to ask themselves. Is he an imposter, or is he the Messiah? Is he the Christ, or is he a criminal?

Their minds were confused. But they were confused also by what took place in verse 22. Jesus was now three days dead.

[ 13 : 49 ] There was no possibility of revival, of resuscitation, or resurrection. And yet verse 22 tells us that some of these ladies had gone to the tomb early in the morning, and they did not find his body.

And yet they came back and told these two disciples that they had seen vision of angels who had told them that Jesus was alive.

You see, to the Jewish mind, they were trained to think that after three days, there was no hope of life anymore. If the person was dead, and if he had been dead for three days, he was never going to be alive again.

And yet, these ladies had come back from the tomb, and they claimed that they had seen angels who had told them that Jesus was alive.

And not only the ladies, there were other male disciples who had gone to the tomb and had found it empty. And so these two people on that Emmaus road were completely confused.

[ 15 : 03 ] Was Jesus dead? Or is he alive? If he is alive, how can he be alive since it is already three days since he died?

So here were two people who were completely perplexed, completely puzzled, completely confused by the complexities of their situation.

And then they meet with Jesus, and Jesus begins to speak to them. And as we saw in verse 27, beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained, or rather he opened up to them all that was said in the scriptures concerning himself.

And immediately in verse 31, their eyes were opened, and they recognized Jesus, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the scriptures to us.

a people who found themselves confused. When they met with Jesus, all their confusion was taken away.

[ 16 : 27 ] Suddenly, everything began to make sense. Suddenly, they began to understand everything. Sometimes, you and I are told that in the Protestant church, especially within the Reformed church, our worship lacks liturgy.

And so, it is alarming to me to see so many people in the Protestant churches, even within the Reformed churches, going back to the medieval church, looking for liturgy.

We want to have an inflexible structure built in to our worship. we want to have a form of prayers that can be read out.

But I want to suggest to you that we actually do have a liturgy of worship. And it is the biblical liturgy.

And when you and I come into worship, you and I come to the liturgy of listening. In Christian worship, God speaks to us.

[ 17 : 45 ] Jesus addresses us. And you and I ought to get into the habit of listening to Jesus or learning to listen to Jesus.

Because Jesus illumines our mind. Jesus enlightens the eyes of our hearts.

and when Jesus begins to teach you and me, you and I will find that our hearts are burning.

And that word in the Greek is a word that is used for passion. When Jesus begins to speak to us, when you and I listen to the authentic voice of Jesus, you and I will find a passion aroused within us.

What does that mean? It means this. Sometimes when you listen to a good sermon, it will make you very happy.

[ 18 : 51 ] Other times, a very good sermon will make you very angry. Don't get angry with the preacher. It is Jesus' voice you are hearing.

Sometimes what he says will hurt you. Sometimes all that he says will break you. And you and I will get very angry.

But let us never forget that when you and I come into this place with all the perplexities of life, when you and I are so confused that you and I do not know what to do in confusing circumstances, when you and I meet with Jesus in his house, this Jesus will speak to us, this Jesus will enlighten us, this Jesus will drive away the chaos and the confusion from your mind and my mind.

So, meeting with Jesus means he changes the way we feel, he changes the way we think and finally he will change the way we live.

He will change the way we feel, the joyless become joyful, the hopeless become hopeful, the fearful become fearless.

[ 20 : 19 ] he will change the way we feel, but secondly he will change the way we think. The confusion will be taken away, in the place of darkness he will bring light, in the place of perplexity he will give solutions, and thirdly he will change the way we live.

From verses 36 onwards we see that the disciples have gone back to Jerusalem, and Jesus meets with them, and they are thrilled, they are delighted to see Jesus, and they are hoping, and they are expecting that life is going to be the way it once was.

They wanted to be in Jerusalem, they wanted the physical presence of Jesus, they wanted to spend all their time at the temple in Jerusalem.

But you know what? Jesus surprises them. Jesus tells them that they cannot go back to the security of the past, that they will have to move out of their comfort zones, and they will have to move into the adventure that is the future.

How does he do that? well, we see that they went back to Jerusalem, and they wanted to stay in Jerusalem. They wanted to be part of the disciples in Jerusalem.

[ 21 : 56 ] They wanted to minister to the Jews in Jerusalem. What does Jesus say to them? Verse 48, 8, you are witnesses of these things.

I am going to send you what my father has promised. They wanted to stay in Jerusalem. Jesus says to them, you are my witnesses, and I will send you out from Jerusalem into Judea, into Samaria, and into the uttermost parts of the earth.

He surprises them. They wanted to stay in Jerusalem. He drives them out of Jerusalem. They wanted the physical presence of Jesus.

He says to them in verse 49, I am going to send you what my father has promised, but stay in the city until you have been closed with power on high.

Jesus is implicitly saying to them, I am no longer going to be with you. My physical presence is going to be taken away from you.

[ 23 : 11 ] In my place, my father will send my spirit to be with you. They wanted the physical presence of Jesus.

Jesus gives to them his spiritual presence. And then we see verse 52, Then they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and they stayed continually at the temple praising God.

They wanted to worship God. They wanted to spend all their time in the temple. Jesus surprises them and he says, this temple is going to be destroyed, and I want you to go out and build temples everywhere, and the temples will be the bodies of every Christian person.

And so maybe you are here this evening, and you want the security of the past. You want life to be the way it has been in the past, with all its comforts, with all its knowledge, with all the control it has given to you.

And Jesus surprises you. He never promises to take you back into the past. He promises to take you into the future.

[ 24 : 40 ] and this future is going to be full of surprises. Sometimes it will be tragedy. Sometimes it will be laced with pain.

Sometimes it will be the loss of a job, or the loss of a relationship. The future and the surprising future is all that Jesus promises you and me.

But in all these things, and Luke continues into Acts, and in Acts chapter 1, the angels meet with the disciples and they say to them, this Jesus who has gone away from you, this same Jesus will come back to receive you unto himself.

And my dear friends, the truth is this, for all the uncertainties of the future, there is one certainty.

History is his story. The future is in his hands. And in all the uncertainties, in all the fears of the future, this Jesus, this God, goes with you and he goes with me.

[ 26 : 09 ] And so let me conclude. Why are we here this evening? What difference does a worship service like this make? Well, worship is a divine human encounter.

And in our Christian setting, it means a meeting with Jesus himself. When you and I meet with Jesus in worship, Jesus speaks to us and you and I listen to him.

And when you and I listen to him, you and I will realize that he changes the way we feel, he changes the way we think, and he will change the way we live.

and it is not just me, is it? Every one of our lives is filled with complexity, is filled with confusion, is filled with pain, it is filled with sorrow, it is filled with grief.

And in my moment of total confusion, when I don't know where to turn, when I don't know what decision to make, I am able in the words of the psalmist to come to Jesus, and in my moment of perplexity, he takes me to a rock that is higher than me, and there he will drive out my confusion.

[ 27 : 52 ] And in my moment of loneliness and pain, when I am not able to carry my cross on my own, he promises to go with me, and he promises never to forsake me, he promises to go with me until the end of my life, and at the end of my life, he promises to take me to be with him.

may God bless the understanding of his holy word. Let's pause to pray. Our Father in heaven, forgive any wrong word that we may have spoken in thy name.

Bless, bless the truth to our hearts, for we ask it in Jesus' name, and for his sake. Amen. God does do anything can bezone