Luke 24:13 - 35 The Road to Emmaus Pt. 3

13 And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. 14 And they were conversing with each other about all these things which had taken place. 15 And it came about that while they were conversing and discussing, Jesus Himself approached, and began traveling with them. 16 But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him. 17 And He said to them, "What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?" And they stood still, looking sad. 18 And one of them, named Cleopas, answered and said to Him, "Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?" 19 And He said to them, "What things?" And they said to Him, "The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people, 20 and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him up to the sentence of death, and crucified Him. 21 "But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened. 22 "But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning, 23 and did not find His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, who said that He was alive. 24 "And some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said; but Him they did not see." ***25 And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 "Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" 27 And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures. 28 And they approached the village where they were going, and He acted as though He would go farther. 29 And they urged Him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is getting toward evening, and the day is now nearly over." And He went in to stay with them. 30 And it came about that when He had reclined at the table with them, He took the bread and blessed it, and breaking it, He began giving it to them. 31 And their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight. 32 And they said to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us***

while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?" 33 And they arose that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found gathered together the eleven and those who were with them, 34 saying, "The Lord has really risen, and has appeared to Simon." 35 And they began to relate their experiences on the road and how He was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread.

This morning we will finish our thoughts on Jesus meeting two disciples who are walking to the village of Emmaus, about 7 1/2 miles from Jerusalem on the afternoon of the morning of Jesus resurrection from the dead.

I never intended to spend 3 weeks in this passage, but apparently the Holy Spirit did. There is so much here to consider that is foundational to ***our*** experience, different from the jewish experience. It's as if Luke makes the transition from old testament judaism to the experience of the church era, the church age as these men walk together.

And it's not that the church is completely disconnected with the old testament, it is totally reliant on the foundation stones of the old testament, but the jews had painted themselves into a corner of unbelief that left them forfeited. Set aside in their own unbelief and resulting wickedness that had crucified their own Messiah.

They had set themselves up in a selective theology that had designed a certain form of Messiah who has super powers to "redeem" Israel. And redemption for them was not from sin unto righteousness. They didn't believe they had any sin. They thought they were perfectly acceptable to God in their own self generated righteousness.

In their selective theology they conveniently forgot about Isaiah's statement given under the inspiration of the Almighty that stated ;

Isa. 64:6 NASB 1977
For all of us have become like one who is unclean, <u>And all our righteous</u>

<u>deeds are like a filthy garment</u>; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

Our righteousness, our own self generated righteousness is like a soiled garment. The language is much more toxic in the original. The picture is of someone who took a swim in sewage and now comes into the house of God, the presence of God and thinks they are just fine. Our righteousness is vile to God. The lowest filth.

And yet the jews in the generation that Jesus came unto believed that God was completely satisfied with their law keeping and self generated righteousness. They had no need for moral redemption. They only needed a super power Messiah to crush Rome and set their nation back on top of the world order. That's the messiah they looked for. And Jesus was NOT that Messiah.

Actually, He ***IS that*** Messiah, which I believe we will soon see on this planet, but more important than world conquering is moral regeneration. Without moral regeneration, each and every created person is defiled and condemned to judgement. Without addressing the sin question, all humankind would be eliminated, judged and removed to hell.

Israel was fine. They didn't need any moral help. They were solid. But God says, no, you are filth and cannot be in my presence.

And so, in a nutshell, what happens, and we're just seeing the first rays of sunshine on this road trip to Emmaus, what happens is that God's people, Israel, are blinded in their own self righteousness and dis-belief and the risen Jesus will set Israel aside, temporarily, and the church will be formed and it will receive regeneration with a righteousness not our own, the righteousness of the risen Saviour, will be offered to the nations.

And what we will witness in our final portion of our story this morning is the opposite of blanket national blindness. Israel has been blinded by God. They are under a veil of darkness of judgement by God. Because of

unbelief they are actually blinded by God. But the opposite of blindness is that God, in His own sovereign act of will, chooses those whom He gives sight to.

The whole world is condemned under the same judgement because of sin that Israel is also condemned in. But God will begin to call out of the condemned world a people to be His own possession from every tribe and nation on earth.

God blinds some and He lifts the veil of blindness quickens others to life. Sovereignly. We'll witness the first couple of those miracles of sight this morning.

But first a warning; You cannot understand the mind of God that blinds some and quickens others to life. That inscrutable wisdom and sovereign will of God Almighty is beyond our abilities to understand. All we can do is worship a God who is Perfect in His righteousness and holiness and marvel that for some reason, He chose us.

So, to recap our situation on the road to Emmaus; Israel is looking for a political redeemer, they have no need of moral redemption, they are righteous enough, they have no need for a moral saviour, only a political one. And Jesus clearly is NOT that person.

Not only that, Jesus mere presence of actual real holiness in the midst of the hypocritical self righteousness of the pharisees is explosive. Their hatred of Him is almost like the reaction of explosive elements. It's like He is water and they are potassium. Combined they explode. They don't just hate Him, they have to eliminate Him. There can be no co-existance with evil that believes it is holy, and with real Godly holiness. Explosive hatred has murdered Jesus.

That leaves a few broken hearted individuals who did love Jesus who are profoundly confused. What just happened??!! Our own leaders killed our Messiah. Only someone from God could do the mighty works. Only

someone from God could prophecy with the powers that this Man had. But He's dead. What just happened.

And Jesus comes along with them on the road and says; ***"O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 "Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?"***

You idiots. Dull men. Slow men. You retards. Their lethargy, that's what the words mean. They are lethargic in their beliefs. They are bogged down in sand. Bogged down in tar pits that have retarded their forward motion in faith. And what's bogging them down is the belief system of contemporary Israel.

Israel believed their righteousness was sufficient. They believed God was pleased as punch with them as a whole. They believed they did not need moral redemption. They believed Messiah was wholly a political figure who would redeem them from their current occupiers, the Romans, who by the way, had been put there as judgement for their very unbelief.

These followers and lovers of Jesus are bogged down in that system. They can't help but be. They are victims of the overwhelming belief system of the generation they dwell with.

And Jesus says, You retards. Retarded by your own false belief system. A belief system that was selective in it's theology. A belief system that had cherry picked a few things the prophets had said and disregarded other things.

You retards. You're retarded because you haven't understood and believed ALL that the prophets said. And then this; ***26 "Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?"***

They are victims of a stunted theology. Hampered by an incomplete and cherry picked theology. But these men, unlike the pharisees who are

locked down by their own unbelief, these men are open to understand a more complete theology of Messiah.

And Jesus spends the next couple of hours unlocking a complete theology that explains why Messiah must suffer and die, for them, in their place. Beginning with Moses.

Death of innocents began when God slew animals to make the first coverings for Adam and Eve's nakedness. Animals died to cover our nakedness from the first day of the fall, all through the Old Testament.

Rivers of blood flowed out of the temple as animals died to cover our sins. And Jesus would have explained all of the typology of animal sacrifice looking forward to the final sacrifice of His death on that cross. He IS that lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world.

Let me quickly interject a story that Luke relates later on in the book of Acts that is a picture window into what happened to these two lovers of Jesus on the road to Emmaus. We don't have details of what was said to Cleopas and the other fellow, but it must have sounded very much like the dialogue in Acts chapter 8. Let's quickly look at a nearly identical situation.

Acts 8: 26 *But an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, "Arise and go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a desert road.) 27 And he arose and went; and behold, there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure; and he had come to Jerusalem to worship. 28 And he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah. 29 And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go up and join this chariot." 30 And when Philip had run up, he heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" 31 And he said, "Well, <u>how could I, unless someone guides me</u>?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. 32 Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this:*

"HE WAS LED AS A SHEEP TO SLAUGHTER;
AND AS A LAMB BEFORE ITS SHEARER IS SILENT,
SO HE DOES NOT OPEN HIS MOUTH.

33 "IN HUMILIATION HIS JUDGMENT WAS TAKEN AWAY;
WHO SHALL RELATE HIS GENERATION?
FOR HIS LIFE IS REMOVED FROM THE EARTH."

34 And the eunuch answered Philip and said, "Please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself, or of someone else?" 35 And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him. 36 And as they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?"

I have to believe, Philip here is regurjitating the same teaching that these disciples received on the road to Emmaus. Jesus was a sheep led to slaughter to pay for my sins. His death was necessary to purchase my life.

That's the difference between Israel, still looking for a political messiah, no need for moral redemption, even today, and the church, looking to Jesus for redemption from sins and a righteousness given to us, not our own, His righteousness accounted to my account, and my sins, past, present, and future, spent on that sacrifice of the Lamb of God.

That's what happened to two disciples on the road to Emmaus. The scriptures were opened. ALL of the scriptures, and the lights came on. Boy did the lights come on. As we shall see;

28 And they approached the village where they were going, and He acted as though He would go farther. 29 And they urged Him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is getting toward evening, and the day is now nearly over." And He went in to stay with them.

This is the bond of friendship and value and love of those who are taught for those whom are their teachers. What is more valuable to true believers

than someone who can deepen the bond of understanding of the scriptures. What is more valuable than someone who can help you draw closer to the Saviour in His living word.

Look around you. The reason this church is empty is not because the scriptures have not been opened. They have. As poor as I may be, the scriptures have been unapologetically taught. Verse by verse. The whole council of God.

The reason the church is empty is because the Word of God is of no value to most who have come to listen. Not only of no value, but to some, downright repulsing. Some are repelled.

Not so these travelers. When they get to the fork where Jesus would have left them, they entreat Him to spend more time with them. Please! Extend the teaching session. We don't want to be separated from this book. Please stay a while longer with us. I've experienced that value, that bond of fellowship with some brother who could help me learn, often.

We don't want the real times to end. On the other hand, we can't get away from the phony guys fast enough. I've experienced that too. Not so this session. They don't know how they possibly could already be at Emmaus! Where did the time go! We want more!

Please stay with us, just a little while longer. It's late. The day is almost spent. Please stay the evening with us. Anything to extend the connection of hearts.They are hungry for this knowledge that is filling in the aching hole in their hearts. They simply can't get enough of the teacher and the book.

30 And it came about that when He had reclined at the table with them, He took the bread and blessed it, and breaking it, He began giving it to them. 31 And their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight.

Why is a stranger to the home the one who is breaking the bread? It would have been out of order in that culture for the guest to give the blessing and break the bread. That's the job of the master of the household, not the visiting Rabbi.

It tells us that these men had become subject to this teacher. They were in submission to Him who was obviously their teacher. They were learners, He was teacher, and some how it is Him who blesses and breaks the bread. That should be very telling to us. They deferred what was normal to the one who was obviously Master.

But something happened when the Master broke the bread and gave it to the disciples. Suddenly, in that moment, their eyes were opened and they recognized Jesus. And then immediately He vanished.

I began two Sundays ago describing my old favorite painting of the Road to Emmaus by the Swiss artist Robert Zund in 1877. But there is a second painting I'd never heard of. Rembrandt painted not the road to Emmaus but the table and the bread as the eyes of the disciples are opened.

In Rembrandts painting we find ourselves in a cathedral like stone building with a very french 1600's looking table with chairs and light comes through a small window and surrounds Jesus head in an iridescent glow. The two disciples are seated with Him at the table and a servant boy is serving the bread.

The Robert Zund painting is treasured by fundamentalist (and other evangelical) protestants. The Rembrandt painting is treasured by the Roman Catholic tradition. It seems that the two paintings are representative of the two very different views of what to do with the resurrected Jesus.

For our Catholic friends, the experience of Jesus is all about the magic that they believe happens at the Eucharist. The bread transubstantiates and physically becomes the body of Christ being sacrificed over and over millions upon millions of times. Not once for all time as the writer of

Hebrews plainly states. The essence of religious experience is in the bread which becomes the body.

Rembrandts picture captures that. But Robert Zund wanted to capture in his artwork what the disciples say immediately after they recognized Jesus. From Luke's account, we don't even know if they ate the bread. He broke it, they recognized Him, He vanished.

Then the immediate reaction of the disciples;

32 And they said to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?"

On August 26 1970 at about 8:30 - ish in the evening, after supper, in a large group setting of teenagers, I was barely 18, a man was opening the scriptures to that group teaching *How to Know the Will of God* in your life. He had several points. One of his points was that you had to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Indwelt.

He quoted from the same book Jesus opened to these disciples. The scriptures. On that occasion it was Romans 8:9. *If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His*. If you don't possess the Holy Spirit, living inside you, you aren't a christian. And if you are not a christian, knowing the will of God is a moot point. *If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His*.

Suddenly my heart caught fire. That explains why all of these kids have something real that I don't have. I didn't even know there was a Holy Spirit. So obviously, I'm not a christian. *"Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?"*

My heart caught on fire that night, in that room, and it was the opening of the scriptures to me that caused the fire. I waited for everyone else to leave

that room and then that man prayed with me while I asked Jesus to dwell inside me.

From that day to this one, I have had a hunger for the word of God, because I find in the book, the experiential fire of a personal relationship with the living Lord Jesus. It's the book that keeps the fire hot. Nothing else. When it burns the hottest I have this amazing longing inside me to be with Him, worshipping Him. When the Word wakes our hearts we want to worship Him. It's a longing to complete that for which we were created in the first place.

Some day I am promised, it's in the book, I will meet Him face to face and I will sit at His table in the kingdom of God and break bread with Him. For me at least, our little humble communion service that we keep monthly is a remembrance of, a reminder of that promise that we will indeed break bread together in His coming kingdom.

His body was broken, once for all time, in my place, it should have been me on that cross after the beatings. He did it for me. And the grape juice is a reminder that His blood flowed in my place. It should have been my life blood that flowed out of me because of my sin. He shed His blood to purchase me. Once for all time. Then He rose victorious over death and brought me with Him in that victory.

So, don't get me wrong, I'm not making light of the bread and the cup. It is a remembrance of the cost involved to purchase the promise of dining with Him at His table in His kingdom. It's important. But honestly, it doesn't set my heart ablaze. And I want that fire. That's what I crave on this side of the grave.

I long for the fire of the Holy Spirit living inside my heart, but I don't find it in the breaking of the bread, I find it in the discovery, the opening of this book. Sometimes it's personal study. Sometimes it's listening to other men teach the book. Sometimes it's reading other men's accounts about the book. Always it is a collaboration between the indwelling Holy Spirit and

finding Jesus in the pages of this book. In the beginning was the Word. The logos. The book. And the book is Jesus. If you want more of Him, open this book.

"Were not our hearts burning within us <u>while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures</u> to us?"

I come from a tradition that single mindedly believes the key to meeting Jesus is in the exposition of the scriptures.

If that doesn't explain anything else, it explains why in my 8th year of exposition of this book, although I seem to have emptied the place, in my heart of hearts I still believe that the formula those men just stated is the single course of true religious experience with the Holy One.

"Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was opening the Scriptures to us?"

I can't state it any more plainly than these two disciples stated it 2000 years ago. Jesus exposited the scriptures to them and their hearts were quickened from spiritual death to spiritual life. The Words of the Book set them ablaze.

I'll let you in on a little secret. I have zero confidence in me. Absolutely none. If I thought for one minute it was dependent on my personality or my talents or my great magnetism to somehow fill this pulpit and make a success of it, the answer would have been the simplest solution I ever came to.

Absolutely NOT. Not just no, but expletive NO. You couldn't get me to do this task for all the tea in India. I am painfully aware of my talents and personality and magnetic draw. Have been since junior high school. I have more in common with a mesquite bush that casts out poison so that no other mesquite bush can grow within a certain distance.

The single reason I am in this pulpit faithfully, in my eighth year, and from a success standpoint you could make a very good argument that "we need to do something differently", the single reason I said I would do this and continue faithfully to keep on filling this pulpit is because of what those disciples stated so long ago.

Even though the place is empty, I believe that verse is formulaic. I Still do! And if that formula has changed, I haven't gotten the memo. *"Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?"*

Well, the rest of the passage really only needs to be read. The result of hearts on fire isn't that you go into your closet and just enjoy the fire. No, their reaction is immediate. Go tell someone. Go and share the fire.

Walk all the way back to Jerusalem in the dark! True fire causes true action. They can't wait for morning. When Jesus lights a fire under you, you MOVE

33 And they arose that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found gathered together the eleven and those who were with them, 34 saying, "The Lord has really risen, and has appeared to Simon." 35 And they began to relate their experiences on the road and how He was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread.

He's alive! Simon saw Him, and we definitely saw Him. We spent the afternoon with Him! Wait til you hear all the stuff the prophets said about His suffering and His death and resurrection. Sit down and get comfortable boys.

It turns out the two pre-emminent teachers in the entire christian church, at that moment, are Cleopas and the other un named disciple. They know more about prophecy and Jesus and what comes next than anyone else present. Even the apostles will sit at these two guys feet and . . .

Real living religion, totally different from their countrymen, real experiential fire will come to this assembly of saints as these two men re-expound everything Jesus just taught them on that road.

Our tradition from that day to this one is opening the scriptures and praying for the Holy Spirit to visit us with fire. John doesn't begin his gospel by saying "in the beginning was the bread," he says ***In the beginning was the Word***. It was the words of the book that caused the fire that turned the world upside down.