

A Study of Luke's Gospel
Week Thirty-Four
Luke 24:13-53

Day One

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

vs. 13-16 – I guess when you walked seven miles, you had lots of time to talk! I would estimate that walking that distance would have taken about 2.5 hours (The disciples were also in good shape.). It says that they were “kept from recognizing him.” I am always interested in how many times God opened and closed eyes in the Bible. I always think of Proverbs 20:12 concerning that phenomenon: “Ears that hear and eyes that see — the LORD has made them both.” Revelation is never about hard work or discipline although they play a part; revelation is a result of God's grace. When I “see” something that someone else doesn't see, I try not to judge them, for perhaps God hasn't chosen to show that to them for some reason. And what's more, I'm sure they see something that I don't “see.”

There have been times that I didn't think Jesus was with me, but He was. He was there walking with me, but I was so consumed by my circumstances that I couldn't see Him. Perhaps that is why Paul wrote:

I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way (Ephesians 1:18-23).

May God open your eyes today to see Jesus, in all His glory and might. May you see just how close He is and how He is orchestrating your current situation.

Day Two

17 He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?" They stood still, their faces downcast. 18 One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are

you only a visitor to Jerusalem and do 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. 20 The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; 21 but 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.

v. 17 – I have often discussed and contemplated things, having a dialogue with others or myself. When I did, I forgot just one thing: to include the Lord in the conversation! When I have left the Lord out of my deliberations, I was downcast and even depressed. I also “stood still,” not making any progress in my walk with the Lord when I have not included His perspective. But thank you, Jesus, that you have interrupted me time and again in my meditations. He entered my conversation as a casual visitor and often I didn’t recognize Him or even the fact that I was talking to Him, and Him to me. Does that make sense?

v. 18 – Obviously the whole city buzzing about what had happened to Jesus, so the two men were flabbergasted that this stranger didn’t know what they could have been talking about. I have always felt that the question they asked Jesus was a bit demeaning and condescending, but I may be wrong. If I could summarize this question in my own words, it would be: “What? Are you stupid? How could you now know what we were talking about?” But they were the ones who were “out of it,” for they were talking to Jesus and didn’t even know it! I could be wrong about that.

v. 19 – So now we see what these men thought about Jesus—He was powerful prophet. And He was—and is!

v. 20 – This was an accurate statement. As stated previously, the people loved Jesus and actually knew more of God’s purpose through Jesus than their leaders did. Just because someone is a leader doesn’t mean they are more spiritual than their followers—it just means that God has chosen them to lead. Don’t assume if you are “hearing” something that your leaders aren’t that you are automatically wrong. You may be right! Just don’t be proud or arrogant, but don’t abandon what you know, either.

v. 21 – These men were confronting their dashed hopes, for they had hoped that Jesus was going to redeem Israel. The problem was that they thought they understood what that meant. They had a preconceived idea of how God would redeem Israel, which actually prevented them from seeing how He was actually going to do it through Jesus. Do you have any preconceived ideas about how God is going to deliver, bless, prosper or use you? Perhaps you need to release those ideas to the Lord and let Him do it the way He wants to do it? Maybe you can hasten your deliverance if you stop telling God how and when it has to happen.

Day Three

22 In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning 23 but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. 24 Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." 25 He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

vs. 22&23 – The men continued their report to Jesus, which then included the story of the women coming to the tomb, encountering an angel and not finding Jesus' body there. They still could not comprehend what this all meant, even though the evidence was overwhelming that Jesus had done what He said He would do—come back from the dead. Have you ever been given one of those pictures that has a hidden picture in it? You know there is something you should be able to see, but you can't, no matter how hard you stare at it.

I wonder how many thing like that are in my life right now? The answer, the picture, or the story is right there, but I can't see it. That is why we need God's help; He must open our eyes to be able to see what is right in front of us. So I guess the first step is that I must want to see it; the second step is that God will grant me His grace to see it. Ask God today if there is anything that is right in front of, so much so that you will feel like a fool when you finally see it. Ask God then to show you, to open your eyes.

v. 24 – Since their companions didn't see Jesus, the men didn't know what to make of the reports they had received. Our eyes can play tricks on us, and what we see isn't necessarily the final truth.

vs. 25&26 – Jesus called these men “slow of heart” to believe. This term “slow of heart” literally means “backward, not easy to be persuaded of the truth, always giving way to doubtfulness and distrust.” So I must confess that at times I am “slow of heart.” Notice that Jesus did not rebuke the men for not believing the reports of the women and associates. He rebuked them for not believing the Word that came through the prophets.

That is why these studies are so important. It is critical that we understand what the Word says and what the promises of God are. When I went back to school in 1997 and enrolled in a Systematic Theology course, I was dumbfounded by how much of the Word I didn't know. It was at that point that I made a commitment to pursue my doctorate in pastoral ministries. It required eight years to finish, but I am so glad I did! The main reason is that the program gave me opportunity and even at times “forced” me to learn more about the Word.

I know that you are reading these studies and that's a very good thing. But you must also be open to any other way the Lord would want you to become more familiar with His promises in the Word. Remember what Peter wrote:

We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain. And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:18-21).

Peter reported that they had heard the voice from heaven, presumably at Jesus' transfiguration, but that we had an even more certain word—that being the word of God. That is a powerful statement, don't you agree? So the Word is the key to life and success, so do all you can to not only know but then also believe God's word.

v. 27 – I heard speaker say once, “How would you like to have the tapes of that conversation on the road to Emmaus?” Yes, those tapes or notes would be wonderful as Jesus explained everything from Moses to the Prophets about Himself. But in a sense, we have those notes, because we have access to the same verses that Jesus was referring to. But it is interesting that Jesus proved His legitimacy using not New Testament verses, but Old Testament ones. That is why I always try to draw some lessons from the Old Testament when I write and preach. If Jesus did it, then I should be able to as well!

Day Four

28 As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther. 29 But 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. 30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. 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?"

v. 28 – Jesus then put these men to a bit of a test. He pretended like He was going farther to see what the men would do. Sometimes God will do that, just to see what your response will be. You cannot be passive and receive what you want or need from the Lord. At times, you must be strong:

From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it (Matthew 11:12-13).

Perhaps you don't have what you need because you have been too timid or bashful to “press” God. Why not start today to aggressively seeking God and His purpose for your life?

v. 29 – The men talked Jesus into staying. Little did they know that they had just prevailed on the Son of God to stay and break bread. They were obeying the writer of Hebrews before he ever wrote the epistle!

Keep on loving each other as brothers. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it (Hebrews 13:1-2).

In this case, the men took advantage of an opportunity for hospitality and they didn't just entertain *a* messenger from God, but *the* Messenger from God. Is it time that you practiced some hospitality and had a friend, fellow believer or even someone you don't know well into your home?

v. 30 – Then Jesus performed a simple act that He had done for the disciples before. He broke and blessed bread. Jesus was always giving thanks to the Father, as we should be doing as well:

Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).

I was walking through an airport today, thanking God for health and life. I thanked Him for giving me opportunities to serve Him in foreign lands. I was thanking Him for the purpose message, which has blessed and helped so many people. What can you give thanks for today?

v. 31 – Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Jesus. As soon as they did, He was gone! Isn't that like the Lord? He "hung around" when they didn't recognize Him, but as soon as they did, He left! God is hard to figure out sometimes. Do you agree? Don't ever try to devise a system that will explain God or develop rules that govern His behavior. It won't work; God is God and He won't be controlled or contained by any system that man can devise.

v. 32 – Now the men recognized the inner witness that they had when Jesus was with them, describing how their hearts burned within them as Jesus taught them from the Word. Does your heart ever burn? Mine does, but I have found that I can ignore that. There were times I knew something wasn't quite right, but I pressed on ahead and got myself into trouble. Have you ever done that? I wonder that burning isn't the witness of the Spirit in our hearts that John described:

I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him (1 John 2:26-27).

What did John mean by this, for teachers are one of the five-fold ministry gifts given to the church (see Ephesians 4:11)? I think He meant that the Spirit will give us a witness, a “gut feeling,” that we would be wise not to ignore. These men had an inner witness that the words their road visitor were speaking were true—the Spirit was bearing witness to the words of Jesus. Do you have a sense of what is right, but you are doing something else? Please don’t ignore this inner witness. Don’t rely on it solely for decisions or guidance, but don’t ignore it either.

Day Five

33 They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together 34 and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." 35 Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread. 36 While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." 37 They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. 38 He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? 39 Look 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."

v. 33 – They got up from the table and were so excited that they walked the seven miles they had just walked back to Jerusalem! You could say that they were “pumped up” and the adrenaline was flowing. They had good news that Jesus was alive and they just had to tell their fellow disciples. What do you have excitement and energy to do? Then why aren’t you doing it? Stop telling yourself it doesn’t make sense—go do it!

vs. 34&35 – It was not the two disciples who told the rest that Jesus was alive, but these two found the group saying that it was true. How often I have been excited to tell someone something I found out in the Lord, only to find out that they already knew! That made me come across as condescending at times, for I was there to tell someone else what they needed to know, naively assuming that I knew something they didn’t.

But the men were able to bring an exciting testimony nonetheless and confirm what the group already knew. Do you have an exciting testimony? Who can you share it with today? This week?

v. 36 – Now the topic of their conversation, Jesus, showed up in person! And what did He bless them with? A blessing of peace! Jesus comes to bring peace, and any “upset” He brings is because things are so out of line with the will of God that putting them right will cause some upset. But Jesus Himself is the source, in fact, He is the Prince of Peace. So He came and blessed them with a word of peace. Do you have peace? Why or why not? What can you do to get or retrieve it? Do you know? Are you willing to know and then do what is required? I hope so.

v. 37 – Jesus’ greeting didn’t work, for they were startled and frightened. They still didn’t believe, even though they were talking about the fact that Jesus was alive. Some

still thought that they were seeing a ghost (they believed in ghosts, obviously). What Jesus had said to the men on the road was true—they were slow of heart to believe! I am slow of heart too, and I think you may be as well. We talk about the Lord, but then when He does what we talk about, we can think we are seeing things or that it's too good to be true. Is there any area, as we finish this study, that you are slow of heart to believe? Jesus is standing in your midst and you are still slow to believe? If so, then repent and take God at His word.

vs. 38&39 – Jesus accepted them where they were and He accepts us, too. He talked to them, and allowed them to touch Him to prove that He wasn't a ghost. He was the real deal! Jesus, even in His glorified state, had flesh and bones. We will have a body in our post-resurrection state. It will be a body just like the one Jesus had when He appeared to these disciples in this room.

Day Six

40 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. 41 And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate it in their presence. 44 He 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."

v. 40 – Jesus showed Him His hands and feet so they could see His scars. That is a good practice for leaders and followers—examine the leaders scars. If they haven't paid a price to be a leader, then be careful. They may not understand the price of leadership and can be too heavy-handed in their approach. Jesus allowed His followers to get close enough so they could see His scars.

I know many leadership philosophies state, "Don't let people get too close. Don't be vulnerable. Only talk to other leaders about your problems." I disagree. I think leaders should be transparent, honest and should acknowledge their weaknesses, so they can build on their strengths. I also know that most leadership experts, especially in the Church, would disagree with me. But that's all right. I am not asking other leaders to do what I am not willing to do. Transparency is one of my leadership tenets; I would urge you to make it one of yours.

vs. 41-43 – Jesus went all the way to help His followers get their minds "around" His resurrection. He now asked for something to eat. So that tells me that we will eat in our resurrected state – or at least we could eat. Where will get the food? I don't know. Will we put on weight? Lose it? I don't know. But Jesus had a resurrected body and He ate a piece of boiled fish.

The disciples now couldn't believe it because they were so happy. Jesus was alive again! Their Lord and friend had returned, as He had promised, in spite of their unbelief. Jesus wants to give you joy. I think of one of my favorite verses in that regard:

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For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning (Psalm 30:5).

You may be weeping now, but don't give up. Stay faithful and your tears will turn to laughter.

v. 44 – Jesus reminded them of all that He had told them before His death, and it foretold what had happened. Now He was turning them over to the Holy Spirit, who would finish the word that Jesus had begun:

But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come (John 16:7-13).

Now the disciples would begin to remember, with the Spirit's help, what Jesus had said and they would then bear witness to His words after He ascended to heaven. We continue their work with help from the same Spirit! Don't try to remember or understand what Jesus said in your own strength. Ask the Spirit to help you with both—that's His "job."

Day Seven

45 Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. 46 He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 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." 50 When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. 51 While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. 52 Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. 53 And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

v. 45-47 – Father, I pray that Jesus would open our minds to understand the Scriptures in the power of the Holy Spirit. I pray for every reader, whether they started this study at the beginning or last week. I ask that you would give them insight and wisdom to both teach and apply your Word.

vs. 48&49 – You and I are also witnesses of what we know and have learned. And as we stated yesterday, we must do this in the power of the Spirit, whom Jesus promised that

the Father would send. He told them not to try to witness until they had what they needed. Keep in mind, they had no idea what they were waiting for. All they knew was they had to wait. You may be waiting too, and you're not sure why. Perhaps God doesn't want you to know; maybe you're not ready. But just trust Him and wait!

vs. 50-53 – This doesn't seem to mesh with Luke's own account in Acts of how Jesus departed. Why would the two versions be somewhat different? Without spending a lot of time on this, my guess is that Luke had no intention of doing Acts. He ended his account quickly, leaving out many details as he finished his book. But later, not happy with his ending, he went back and started over from the end of the first book and gave us more complete information. Feel free to reject that theory.

At any rate, we have reached the end of another study, which we began ten months ago. I pray that God will open your mind to understand His word. I pray also that He will make you an effective witness of what you have seen and heard. And may you continue to study His word and see marvelous things. But remember, it's not about what you know; it's all about Jesus. If you keep that in mind, you will do well no matter what your endeavors are where the Word is concerned. Amen and amen.