

Luke's Gospel The Road to Emmaus (Luke 24:1-35)

*[Please note: sections in blue type are not broadcast on every radio station.
King James Version of the Scriptures used unless otherwise stated.]*

Today's chapter, Luke's Gospel chapter 24, has, recognisably, five sections, all with significant points and matters of great, relevant interest. I think that what impresses me about the five sections can be summarised in five words. Resurrection, Revelation, Demonstration, Dedication, Ascension. We will consider the first three sections in today's talk.

Section 1 is given in verses 1-12. The message given? "The Lord is risen!"

The closing words of what we have as chapter 23, and the opening statements of chapter 24, make it plain that Jesus had previously taught His disciples that, at the end of His life here on earth, He would die and rise again. As we read in John chapter 10,

'No man taketh [my life] from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again' (v.18).

But the disciples had evidently neither absorbed, nor fully understood, what the Lord had said, and the need for both His death and resurrection.

However, verses 55-56 of chapter 23 say,

'The women...which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to his commandment.'

Following on from that, the opening verses of chapter 24 say, quite clearly,

'Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they (that is, the same women) came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared.And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus' (vv.1-3).

His body was not there. It had gone. It is evident that none of the disciples really anticipated His resurrection, although He had predicted both His death and resurrection. Indeed, when the angels later reminded them (see verse 8) of the very words that He had said to them, they did remember them.

However, verses 4-6 tell us,

‘And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men (who were actually angels see John 20:12) stood by them in shining garments: and as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee.’

He had indeed been resurrected. He had risen, out from among the dead. His dead body had been brought out of the grave to resurrection life. This was entirely in line with what He had prophesied during His time with them (v.7). The message was here brought to them by angels, in the form of simple men, but in shining garments, so that the glory of the situation might be understood by the faithful women who had received such a terrible shock.

They had to learn, and all believers have to learn, that resurrection was God’s answer to and His expression of entire satisfaction with the perfect life and service of the One Who had had His life on earth taken away. Actually, He had, necessarily, but voluntarily, given it up. But verse 7 onwards says clearly,

‘The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words, And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, who told these things unto the apostles. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not’ (vv.7-11).

In verse 12, we are not surprised to read,

‘Then arose Peter, (who characteristically could wait no longer), and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.’

The Gospel of Luke is the Gospel which emphasises the Perfect Manhood of the Lord Jesus, Who came into this world to give expression to the wonderful love of God for mankind. And this is the One Who has died for our sins and been resurrected out from among the dead. You and I, if we believe in Him Who died for our sins, and was raised again for our justification, can rejoice in everything that is said about the Lord Jesus, the Perfect Man of the Gospel of Luke. Praise the Lord for that! And the fullness of wonder that this arouses in the hearts of those who know Him is only one of several examples that are appropriately placed in Luke, the Gospel of the Son of God, The Perfect Man. These examples make sure we don’t miss the message of what we are intended to learn about Him.

Section 2. Verses 13-27. The Road to Emmaus.

‘And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. 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 ye have one to another, as ye 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 they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself' (vv.13-27).

These verses consider the two disciples of Jesus who evidently lived at Emmaus. One of them was a man named Cleopas. There is no record of the identity of the other. It may possibly have been his wife. The two were sadly recalling the death and burial of the Lord as they made the return journey from Jerusalem to Emmaus. This was a journey of about seven and a half miles. As they walked, a stranger joined up with them. They did not recognise Him, but it was, in fact, their risen Lord. He asked them what subject their conversation was about. They were obviously full of depression. Then Cleopas expressed surprise that even a stranger in Jerusalem could be unaware of what had happened. In v.19, Jesus drew them out further with the question, "Why! What happened?"

Cleopas answered,

"The centre of it all was a Man called Jesus of Nazareth. He was a true prophet of our God, in the life He lived and in the message He preached, before God and before men. Yet the chief men of our Temple handed Him over to the leaders of the Gentile authorities for execution. We had hoped that He was the long-awaited Messiah of Israel, Who would deliver us from the yoke of the Roman government. But He has been crucified and now is buried. It's now three days since this all happened. Our expectations have been wrecked. To disturb us still more, there is a report from some of our women folk, who visited His sepulchre this morning, that the body has disappeared. They claimed that angels had told them He was risen from the dead saying, "Some of our fellow disciples went to check for themselves. They found there was no body in the tomb.""

Jesus then carefully and gently chided them for not realising that this was exactly what the prophets of the Old Testament had foretold about the long-awaited Messiah. First, He must suffer; then He would be glorified. So Jesus began at Genesis, and then continued through the Books of the Old Testament, reviewing all the passages which referred to Himself, the Messiah of Israel. We Christians would say that it was a wonderful Bible study, and we would have loved to have been with Him then. But, we do have the same Old Testament scriptures, now in our own language, and, as believers, we have the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth, so that we can verify every word.

What a wonderful term the scripture gives us here; 'things concerning Himself'. We do, of course, enjoy the fellowship that we have locally with other Christians. [This leads us on to enjoy fellowship with Christians further afield, as we travel about.](#) But, whether the fellowship is enjoyed locally or while away from home, the prime matter to consider is 'things concerning Himself.' This includes

both the Person and the works of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, all made good to us by the power of the Holy Spirit. The measure in which this is true of us, as individuals, or as local Christian companies, the more true, and helpful, our witness will be.

We must always, of course, distinguish between that which is real, and of God, and that which is prompted by Satan. Wherever and whenever he can, Satan does his best, or I should say his worst, to lead us away from the will of God and encourage us to follow his, that is the devil's, will, and is clearly leading us away from the will of God.

How can we possibly put all these things into true spiritual balance? Put into practice what we so readily advise the little children:

“Read your Bible, Pray every day, and you'll grow.”

Indeed, as we learn from Second Peter chapter 3 verse 18:

‘Grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.’

Section 3. Verses 28–35. At Emmaus, then back to Jerusalem.

‘And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.’

By now, the disciples were nearly at their own home. They invited their fellow traveller to spend the night with them. At first He acted as though He was going to continue His journey, without accepting their invitation. But they prevailed on Him to stay with them. How richly they were rewarded! When they sat down for their evening meal the One Who was their Guest acted as their Host. The two had opened to Him their home. Now, He opened their eyes. As He broke the bread and passed it to them, they recognised and identified Him for the first time. As soon as this happened, He vanished from being with them.

Then, left alone, they retraced the day's journey, no doubt in a very excited frame of mind. Their hearts had burned within them while He talked to them and explained the significance of the scriptures. They then realised that their Visitor and Teacher had been the risen Lord Jesus Christ.

It is no surprise that instead of continuing to spend the night at Emmaus, they raced back to Jerusalem. They found ‘The Eleven’ and others already assembled together. By the way, this term ‘The Eleven’ here is a good way to indicate the original band of the twelve disciples, but excluding Judas, who had betrayed Jesus to His enemies. Actually, not all ‘The Eleven’ were present, as we learn from John 20:24, but the term ‘The Eleven’ is used in a collective, characteristic sense, identifying those who had a special relationship with Jesus, their Lord and Master.

Before the Emmaus disciples got the opportunity to share their joyful news, the disciples at Jerusalem jubilantly announced to them that the Lord had really risen and had appeared to Simon

Peter. Then it was the turn of the two from Emmaus, who were able to respond by saying, “Yes! We know. He joined us and walked with us on our journey home. He came into our home. He revealed Himself to us at our supper table. He opened our eyes to recognise Him.”

It was for their immediate benefit then, and for our continuing benefit now, that, while He was with those disciples during that vital period between His resurrection and ascension, that He summarised the significance and result of His life, death, and resurrection, and that His resurrection was the fulfilment of His own words to them. He had told them plainly more than once that all the Old Testament prophecies concerning Himself had to be fulfilled.

What was the underlying burden of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Christ of God? They were that He should suffer, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name unto all the nations, beginning at and from Jerusalem. There can be no doubt at all that, in that vital time that He spent with them, the Lord Jesus opened their understanding to comprehend the scope and detail of all these scriptures.

Indeed, this chapter gives us, almost incidentally, a promise of great things being opened up to them. They are the theme of many good well-known sermons preached unto this day. These are:

- 1) the opened tomb (verse 12),
- 2) the opened home (verse 29),
- 3) the opened eyes (verse 31),
- 4) the opened scriptures (verse 32),
- 5) the opened lips (verse 35),
- 6) the opened understanding (verse 45), and
- 7) the opened heavens (verse 51).

This is another example indeed, if not in specific word, but in substance, of spiritual blessings being dispensed in sevenfold groups.

Another of the several lovely ‘sevens’ in Luke gives us seven occasions where He, the Perfect Man, demonstrated His perfect, dependent manhood by allowing Himself to be ‘led’ (that is I – e – d led) in a way that was clearly the will of God for Him at that moment. Such groups highlight the fact that He was, is, and ever shall be, the One in Whom and by Whom the will of God is achieved.

Communications (words and/or numbers?)

By the way, I am aware that most people are either literate, or numerate. That is, they are either good with words, or good with numbers. Some of us are good with neither. A few are good with both. God has so wrought in us that we use letters and numbers in our communications with one another. Both have significance in Holy Scripture.

We Christians spend a lot of time studying the words of scripture, words made up of letters. That is good; very good. We tend to pay less attention to the numbers included in scripture. We should perhaps pay a little more attention than we do to their significance. There can be little doubt that many numerals are used in scripture as symbols. By comparing the instances in which any numeral is employed the idea hidden in it may very often be arrived at without undue trouble or delay. The signification of some numbers is too obvious to be mistaken; that of others is less apparent. In some cases the symbolical number may be discovered where the numeral itself is not mentioned, but where the names of groups of examples are given and compared. Perhaps there will be time for more detail in another talk, if the Lord will.

Let us seek grace to live in the light of what we now realise is true. If we are believers on the Lord Jesus Christ, we have the capacity and the power to enable us to rejoice over the picture it gives

us of Jesus, the Son of God. The scriptures give us so many pictures of what was involved and necessary in order to bring us into relationship with and enjoyment of the love and beauty of God and His wonderful Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The path of that life lay through death to the right hand of God, the only appropriate terminus.

What a joy to our souls to be brought into the spiritual realm where He, our Saviour and Lord, is the centre and fullness of such spiritual blessing! Once we've noticed that for the first time, we are thrilled to follow up the fact that, time and time again, our attention is drawn to His complete and utter excellence.

Now, if the Lord will, and He has not yet returned to take us to be with Himself, next week's talk will cover the Lord's joining and meeting His disciples to expound other wonderful things in the rest of Luke chapter 24, certainly 'things concerning Himself.'

In the meantime, let me say, "Thank you very much indeed for your patience and interest in listening to this Truth for Today talk number T1224, entitled Luke 24:1-35, bringing before us 'The Road to and at Emmaus.'"

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