

NOTES FROM STEVEN DRIVER'S SERMON 16th April 2023 am

Series from Luke – "God's love for the lowest" Pt 16

Text: Luke 24 verses 13-35

Title: "The road to Jesus"

Scripture references from the ESV

Luke 24:13-35 That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles^[a] from Jerusalem,¹⁴ and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened.¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them.¹⁶ But their eyes were kept from recognizing him.¹⁷ And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad.¹⁸ Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?"¹⁹ And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,²⁰ and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him.²¹ But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened.²² Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning,²³ and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive.²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see."²⁵ And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

²⁸ So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther,²⁹ but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them.³⁰ When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them.³¹ And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight.³² They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?"³³ And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together,³⁴ saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"³⁵ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

It is easy to mix up people we don't know well and put the wrong name to a face. Mostly it doesn't matter and is easily corrected.

Where it does matter is when it comes to Jesus

We can all do this. We mistake him for someone else or completely ignore him. We can see him as

- An excellent example to follow, but **NOT** as the King of Kings who is worthy of our praise and obedience
- Someone who said some good things, **NOT** as someone whose words give life
- We can see his sacrifice on the cross as a display of his love, but **NOT** as a display of his justice and the central point on which all creation hangs.

The reason for this is that we don't really know him and as a result we do not really live for him. We can look very religious – we have perhaps gone to church for decades – but still not really know him. Our vision statement calls us to

Delight in God to the glory of God for the good of all people.

We cannot do that if we do not truly know him. How can we know him?

Peter had been to the tomb and then **went home marvelling at what had happened (Luke 24:12)**. He was confused and didn't understand what it all meant. The two men in the passage above were also confused. The week had started with Jesus riding in to Jerusalem on a donkey, with all the people praising him, but had ended with his death on a cross. Following that, they had heard about the angels appearing to the women, who had declared that Jesus was alive! As they walked to Emmaus, they were trying to make sense of it all.

It is ironic that they were busy chatting about Jesus, and had clearly followed him for some time, and then he actually appeared but they were kept from seeing him who he was. In their conversation with Jesus, they told him all that had happened, and even wondered how he did not know what had gone on.

They were sad because they did not know Jesus. They had placed their hope in him as the one who would redeem Israel (**vv19-21** above). They had heard the news from the women and the disciples, but they were sceptical.

They had not seen the risen Christ for themselves, so did not know what to believe. Jesus spoke to them, calling them **foolish** and **slow of heart (v25 above)**. We are in a similar position as we cannot see Jesus standing in front of us. We need to remember that, just like them, we have a historical account not just of Jesus' death but also of his resurrection.

- Jesus is not a fairy-tale, nor is he just a good teacher or a great prophet (even Islam refers to him as this).

If that is who you believe Jesus to be, it proves that you do not really know him.

- How then can we know Jesus, since he is not standing in front of us, and be assured of who he truly is?
- How can we be sure that what happened on the cross really did what we are told it did?

On the road to Emmaus, Jesus and showed the two men, and shows us, the road to knowing him personally and intimately and how to find our delight in him.

1. His word assures us of who he is (vv26-7). All the scriptures point to Jesus, not just the parts we know the best. All the books of the Law, as well as the prophecies and the Psalms, point to Jesus, and all the prophecies find their true fulfilment in Jesus. As we read scripture, we can see Jesus everywhere, and know that everything that happened was part of God's plan and promise for his creation.

- Scripture shows us the need for Jesus' sacrifice, as we learn the utter horror of our fallen state and see the ever-increasing evil in the world
- Scripture teaches that sin can only be paid for with a perfect everlasting life. The system of sacrifices shows us the cost of getting back in to a right relationship with God. We learn that the scarifies don't work and no human can be their own priest, because of sin. We need the perfect priest administering the perfect sacrifice.
- Scripture teaches us the need for an everlasting King, who will reign forever in an eternal kingdom, leading his people into ever closer fellowship with God.
- Scripture alone teaches us the need for God to establish his people by transforming their hearts.

All of this has come to fulfilment in Christ, and is taking place because of his work on the cross. As a result, we can know that everything else promised about Christ is true.

Jesus is King now, ascended on high at the Father's right hand now, acting as priest on our behalf.

If you want to know who Christ truly is for yourself and hear him speak to you, read God's word in your Bible.

There is always more to be discovered, as we peel back the layers and see how it all points to Jesus, and was written for our benefit. Jesus promises that whatever difficulties and sin we fall into, he will never leave us. We can take all this on board on a personal level. This quote helps us see that: *There is no Christian alive who has not had Christ mention their name to the Father. Indeed, if you are a Christian, it is precisely because the Son presented your name to his, and now your, Father.* (Mark Jones 'Knowing Christ' (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 2015) 179)

Jesus, your King, promises to keep you. Jesus, as prophet, promises to speak to you.

Jesus as priest means that your sins have already been dealt with.

We need that assurance every day as we go about our daily lives in this fallen world. We need the assurance that God is in control no matter what we are facing. We need the assurance that there will be a day when there are no more tears, and the powers of evil will be dealt with because of what Jesus has done. We find that assurance in scripture.

There is a danger, however, and it is that our knowledge of scripture can fuel pride, and then pride in our knowledge can replace our trust in God. We stop letting the Bible challenge us or stretch us, and use it just to confirm our view of how we are living.

Rather than coming **under** God's word, we stand **over** it. Instead of seeing Christ for who he really is, and having him shape our lives, we merely cement our own view of who he is. We might tell others **about** him but we do not know him.

His Word assures us of who he is

2. It is his work that opens our eyes to who he is. (vv28-35). The two men did not recognise Jesus when he opened the scriptures to them, even though it was Jesus himself who was doing this!

They had a meal with him, a simple intimate time of eating with the man they had walked with and who had opened up the scriptures to them on the way. It was as he broke bread at the table that they saw Jesus for who he is. Through a supernatural work, their eyes were opened and they recognised him as the risen Lord Jesus.

Everything he had shared with them started to make sense. All the scriptures that pointed to him were no longer just in their minds but were now in their hearts (v32). The message of scripture had been sown into their soul, and they were no longer standing over scripture, but were having their lives transformed by it.

When we teach the gospel to others, particularly to children, it is like putting the cogs of the Gospel in their mind. The cogs don't move at that point, but this not wasted effort because later, God willing, God himself sets them in motion. Then everything they know about Jesus becomes true and real. It is not enough to have lots of information about Jesus. It needs to be the fuel for our intimacy with him.

- We need to start with the basic truth that the men on the road to Emmaus had.

Christ has risen and we can meet with him.

The results were immediate (vv33-35). The men had spent time walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus, but without a second thought, once they had met with Jesus, they set off back to Jerusalem. Their hearts were transformed as they saw Jesus for who he is and their immediate reaction was to go and tell the other disciples.

- Heart transformation leads God's people to go and tell everyone else about him.

The best evangelists tend to be those who spend the most time reading God's word, and speaking with him in prayer.

Knowing Jesus should overflow into making him known. Does that describe you?

We need to come to his word and open our hearts to Jesus, not just our minds. We need to let him speak to us and let his word fuel our time with him. We may struggle with prayer, and if so, the best thing we can do is to go to the word and truly get to know who God is and who Jesus is. Then let him direct your prayers.

Be intimate with him and let him speak back to you. If possible, go to a quiet place where it is just you and him, and

- get to know the one who loves you more than anyone else does.

- get to know the one who took your punishment for sin
- get to know the one who rose from the dead and promises to give you new life with him for all eternity.

If you are someone for whom all you know about Jesus has only ever been head knowledge, now is the time to come to him and truly get to know him. Don't leave it another day.

We can all find ourselves in the position of taking pride in knowing about him rather than taking time to know him. It is tempting to stand over God's word rather than sitting under it and letting Jesus build our lives.

**We need to come to him and sit with him, getting to know him more intimately.
We need to find our assurance in him, living our life for him and getting the strength to do so from him.**

**We need to rejoice in the reality of Christ.
That is the reality of knowing Christ for yourself.**

Are you on the road to Jesus?