

# 118. Slow of heart to believe

April 15, 2018

When you go to a restaurant, they hand you a written description of the food they serve there. It is called menu. While you are looking at your menu, your waiter comes to you and expounds the menu to you. You can even have a question and answer session with your waiter. You can ask, "What about this one or that one?" After all the questions, if you get up and leave the restaurant, you are missing the main point of going to a restaurant, aren't you? Reading the menu itself does not fill your tummy, nor will hearing the waiter's explanation satisfy your hunger. You come to that restaurant to experience the meal, not to read the menu; you came to fill your hunger, not to hear the smooth talking waiter.

Far too many followers of God are satisfied with the Bible itself, though it is an inerrant and perfect Book. Others are satisfied with a pastor's sermon. In our 21st century Christian culture, many Christians put their pastors on a pedestal in such a way, they take cues from their pastors more than from the Lord Jesus.

This morning we are going to meet two of Jesus' disciples. If we were walking next to these two men, we would be able to tell that these two people were in deep depression by looking at their drooped shoulders, the confused look on their faces and a low, harsh tone in their voices, because they didn't want to be crucified as the followers of Jesus Christ. To them, all of their hope was gone for good. But all of that was about to be changed. These disciples knew the Messianic prophecies in the OT, but the prophecies didn't click with them concerning Jesus. They were looking for the glory, but not the suffering; the crown, but not the cross. This happened to them, because they were slow of heart to believe what the Lord Jesus told them.

## A. HOPELESSNESS

*Luke 24:13-16 Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. 14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened. 15 So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. 16 But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.*

We all know what it is like to be in hopeless situations. One way or another all of us have been there. And some of you might be right in the middle of it. It is the season when the life is not working and when God does not seem real. We all know what it is like to have heartaches, headaches, and life aches, because pain of life sets in like a migraine and nothing is helping to heal it.

We have two disciples walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus, a 7 mile walk. The resurrected Jesus joined them, but they didn't recognize Him. Why? For two reasons: first, they didn't believe that He could be resurrected, though He told them about His death and resurrection umpteen times. Second, the idea of a person coming back from the dead is beyond what they could comprehend emotionally. Because life can be so hard and disappointment can be so deep that Jesus can be standing right in front of your eyes, you cannot recognize Him. In other words, their emotional pain has overridden the reality of the risen Savior Jesus for these two.

## B. WHO IS CLUELESS?

*Luke 24:17-24 And He said to them, "What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?" 18 Then the one*

whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, "Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?" 19 And He said to them, "What things?" So they said to Him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, 20 and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. 21 But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. 22 Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. 23 When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. 24 And certain 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."

Have you ever been disappointed by God? You really thought that He would take care of your situation in a certain way, but He didn't come through. You even thought that God didn't keep the promise He made to you.

In v24, they said that they could not find Jesus, though He was looking right at them at that moment. These disciples' hope and dreams have been dashed and they couldn't find the Savior. So they were on their journey home with sad and long faces.

When you are discouraged long enough, it becomes depression; when depression lasts long enough, it becomes despair; when despair lasts long enough, you feel like you just want to die. I hope and pray that none of you in this room is in that difficult situation. If you do, look up to Jesus. He is ready to pull you up if you only reach out to Him.

### **C. THE BEST BIBLE STUDY EVER**

*Luke 24:25-27 Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" 27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.*

Why foolish? A believer's spiritual foolishness comes from his faithlessness of God and it adds to his frustration. When a believer is stacked up against spiritual foolishness, faithlessness, and frustration, he gets to have spiritual blindness.

Young Michael Jordan went to Las Vegas to get married to his bride-to-be. At the wedding chapel, a guy saw Jordan and said, "You are pretty tall. Have you ever thought about playing basketball?" Greatness stood right in front of that person, yet he did not recognize him due to foolishness.

Why were these two disciples foolish, faithless, and frustrated? Because they did not take what the Lord Jesus told them in the past seriously. Instead of listening and taking what the Living Word, Jesus told them into their hearts, they wanted to insert their own agendas into what it would be like after Jesus sits on the throne. It is the same for us. The biggest disappointment with God is not that He doesn't keep His promises, because He always does. The problem we have with God is that He doesn't do the things we ask in our ways. There is a reason for that.

*Isaiah 55:8-9 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord. 9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.*

Get this, guys. From the Scriptures, Jesus explained to these two disciples the things concerning Himself while they walked that 7 mile journey. It would take about 2 hours plus minus. It took 2 years for us to go through the OT in our Midweek studies what Jesus spent only 2 hours doing.

Beginning with Genesis, Jesus threaded the scarlet truth of redemption all the way through the OT, weaving a tapestry of both suffering and glory of the Messiah. It might have looked something like this:

In Genesis, Jesus is the Seed of the woman.

In Exodus, the Passover Lamb.

In Leviticus, the atoning sacrifice.

In Numbers, the bronze serpent.

In Deuteronomy, the promised Prophet.

In Joshua, the Captain of the Lord's host.

In Judges, the Deliverer.

In Ruth, the Kinsman Redeemer.

In the Books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, the promised King.

In Ezra and Nehemiah, the Restorer of the nation.

In Esther, the Advocate.

In Job, the Redeemer.

In Psalms, the All in All.

In Proverbs, the Pattern.

In Ecclesiastes, the Goal.

In Song of Solomon, the Beloved.

In the prophets, the coming Prince of Peace

This has to be the greatest Bible study ever, because the Living Word is explaining the written Word. It cannot be any better than this.

Listen, the entire Bible is centered around Jesus. The OT prophesies Jesus of the NT and Jesus of the NT fulfills the OT prophesies. The purpose of the Bible is to introduce the Savior and God the Holy Spirit wrote about Him in that Book. So if you missed Jesus, the Bible doesn't make sense.

#### **D. BY INVITATION ONLY**

*Luke 24:28-31 Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. 29 But they constrained Him, saying, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And He went in to stay with them. 30 Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.*

Why did Jesus indicate that He would have gone farther without them? It is one thing for us to hear the Word of God, but it is another thing for us to desire Jesus in our lives. Many people don't mind coming to the church hearing the Word, but after the sermon, they want Jesus to continue to go on without them. That's why there is disconnections between Sunday morning and the rest of the week in their lives.

The Lord Jesus was testing these two – "Are you satisfied with just hearing the Word or are you wanting more than head knowledge of the Bible and desiring the fellowship with Me?" I remember what I heard from a graduate of the Dallas Theological Seminary. He said before he started to attend the Seminary, he was in love with the

Savior, but by the time he graduated, he was in love with the texts of the Scriptures, not his God. If we just have the Bible knowledge, but miss the Lord, we are no different than the legalistic Pharisees of Jesus' time.

Listen, Jesus only went in when He was invited in.

*Revelation 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.*

Our Lord Jesus will not impose Himself to anyone of us. Though God's invitation for His salvation is open to everyone, He never forces anyone of us to receive it, nor will He force His ways in our lives after we become born-again Christians. Getting near to Him does not start from Him, rather from us to Him. If you feel that He is far away from you, He has not moved, you did.

*James 4:8a Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.*

Jesus wants more than y'all coming to church on Sunday, but He also wants to go home with you after the service is over. Actually, He wants to go wherever you go all day, every day by your invitation.

When the disciples were listening to Jesus on the road, they did not recognize Him. But when they invited Him and were having fellowship with Him, they realized that He was the Lord.

### **E. DID NOT OUR HEART BURN**

*Luke 24:32-35 And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?" 33 So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, 34 saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" 35 And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.*

As Jesus taught these two, their hearts were burning. They could feel something special as He taught them. The problem with these two disciples was that their fire had burned out. They had hoped that Jesus was the Messiah and that He would set up His physical kingdom; but when He died on the cross, their hope died as well. But as Jesus spoke to them from the Scriptures, the fire in their hearts was rekindled into a flame, and they knew it was true. They couldn't wait to go back to Jerusalem and to tell the others.

If the fire burns low in our lives, how we need to sit at Jesus' feet and hear from His Word! Then, as our hearts begin to burn once again, as we get on fire for Him, we will go out to share the Good News.

If some of you older saints might be thinking, "I've been in the Lord all these years. I don't need to evangelize. That's young people's job. No, absolutely not. Evangelize or be fossilized. Besides, for that kind of mindset, there is a Southern Swedish phrase: "Esta loco?"

Do you know when Jesus becomes real to you? It is when you cannot keep Jesus to yourself and eager to share the Good News to others.

I want all of you to notice two things that these disciples experienced. The first one was the ultimate Bible study by the Lord Jesus Himself. The second one happened at the table as the Lord broke the bread. It is the intimate setting between the Lord and the disciples.

When we take communion at our church on the first Sunday of the month, many people casually take communion. In their minds, it is just another communion ritual they take. During the First century, the Lord didn't deal with them like He does now:

*1 Corinthians 11:26-30 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. 27 Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.*

If the Lord continued to deal with the people who took communion with the wrong attitude, there would be many dead people in church pews.

## **F. APPLICATIONS**

- 1) Getting near to Jesus does not start from Him, rather from us to Him.
- 2) Jesus wants to go wherever you go all day, every day by your invitation.
- 3) When you cannot keep Jesus to yourself and eager to share the Good News to others, that is when Jesus is real to you.