

## **Sermon for Sunday 27 April 2025 Luke 24 13-35**

In this passage we meet two of the disciples who were travelling on foot on the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus. It is probable that they were returning from the Passover celebrations in Jerusalem. The distance between Jerusalem and Emmaus seems to have been about 7 miles. So these two disciples had plenty of opportunity to talk. We do not know their names initially, but later in this passage we find out that one of them is called Cleopas. It seems that they were not the well-known disciples, not two of the 12 disciples originally chosen by Jesus, but quite ordinary people. They talked about all the things that had happened so recently, the arrest and then the crucifixion of Jesus. They must have been very shocked and deeply saddened by what had happened. Whilst they were walking along and conversing, Jesus drew alongside them and walked with them. But the disciples did not see him; indeed they seem to have been almost miraculously prevented from seeing him.

Jesus was listening to their conversation as they walked along and in verse 17 Jesus asks them what they are talking about and why they are sad. Now the two disciples see this 'stranger' walking alongside them. Cleopas responds perhaps somewhat incredulously and says: "Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?" Jesus probably smiled when they said that, as he knew exactly what had happened and then he says "What things?" In saying this, Jesus skilfully plays along with the conversation and encourages the men to reveal their hearts. The disciples then told the man walking with them what they knew about Jesus: They knew his name and they knew where he was from. They knew that he was a prophet, they knew that he was mighty in word and deed, they knew that he had been crucified. They knew that he had promised to redeem Israel and this is what they were hoping for. They also knew that others had said that he has risen from the dead. The only thing these disciples had to go on was the testimony of others, but they were slow to believe. The report of the women meant almost nothing to them, and the report of Peter and John who had seen the grave clothes also meant little – because the two disciples had not seen the risen Jesus.

Jesus wanted to know from these two disciples what He wants to know from us today: can we believe without seeing with our own eyes? We can believe and we should believe based on the reliable eyewitness testimony of other people, which we can find in the Bible, particularly in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

In verses 25 to 27 Jesus teaches the disciples why the Messiah had to suffer. In verse 25 Jesus tells the disciples that they are foolish and slow of heart to believe. The problem with their belief was more in their heads than in their hearts. This is a problem with many people – they may know of Jesus in their heads, but not in their hearts. Then Jesus says ‘Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and come into glory?’ The two disciples should have believed what the prophets have spoken, that the Messiah would suffer first and then be received into glory.

One example of the prophets speaking is found in Isaiah 53 v3-5: *‘He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. <sup>4</sup> Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup> But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.*

Then Jesus began to teach them perhaps one of the most comprehensive Bible studies ever taught. He started with Moses and all the prophets and explained to them in all the Scriptures the things which concerned himself. If you are part of one of our Life Groups, can you imagine a meeting, where Jesus is leading and explains the whole of the old Testament and how it points to his coming.

V28 The disciples and Jesus walked on and they approached the village, Emaeus where they were going. Jesus indicated that he would like to go further on, as he did not want to force himself upon the disciples. But the disciples obviously were enjoying conversing with this stranger and they urged him strongly to stay with them, as evening was approaching. They went into the house and sat down at a table. Jesus then took the bread on the table, blessed it, broke it and gave it to the disciples. At that point the eyes of the disciples were opened and they now knew that this stranger who had walked and talked with them was Jesus. But as soon as they knew that Jesus was with them, Jesus disappeared. These two disciples were not present at the last supper that Jesus shared with the twelve disciples and they knew nothing of the sacramental breaking of bread in theological terms. But they knew now that this was Jesus and when he vanished suddenly, both the disciples said what was on their hearts, that their hearts burned as they had heard Jesus speak and teach.

So in v 33 the two disciples got up and went back to Jerusalem. They had just walked seven miles from Jerusalem to Emaeus, so they must have been feeling rather tired. But they were going to walk the seven miles back to Jerusalem, as they were desperate to tell of the good news of Jesus' resurrection. When they arrived in Jerusalem they met the 11 disciples and others gathered with them. The group told the two disciples that the risen Lord has appeared to Simon. The two disciples told of all that had happened to them and that they knew Jesus when he took the bread, blessed and broke it.

So what can we learn from this passage? We know Jesus with our heads, but do we know him in our hearts? There is plenty of historical evidence to confirm the life of Jesus, so that we can easily know him in our heads. We have sung this morning 'Open the eyes of our heart' – the eyes of our spiritual hearts. We can know the risen Lord by the power of the Holy Spirit. In the power of the Holy Spirit our eyes can be spiritual eyes and our ears can have spiritual hearing if we accept the risen Jesus as Lord and Saviour.

We must keep our eyes, the eyes of our heart, our spiritual eyes and ears open. The risen Jesus may be right in front of us, walking with us and sitting down with us at our mealtimes – and our eyes could be restrained from seeing Him and we could be completely oblivious to his presence. We therefore should pray that God would open our eyes and our ears to see Jesus as He is, as being with us all the time.

Prayer:

Open our eyes Lord, we want to see Jesus  
To reach out and touch him and say that we love him  
Open our ears Lord and help us to listen  
Open our eyes Lord, we want to see Jesus.  
We praise you that you are alive, and that you long to meet with us.  
We thank you for the ways you have met with us in the past.  
Forgive us for the times we have been oblivious to your presence,  
and open our eyes and ears afresh today, that we may  
know you more clearly,  
love you more dearly,  
and follow you more nearly, day by day.  
Amen