

Doubt Medication

Special Message #85
Luke 23:43 4-5-2014

Summary: The men believed Jesus was a prophet, but did not know what to make of the testimony of the women. Jesus calls them fools, because their ignorance demonstrated hearts that were slow to believe the Scriptures. They believed part, but not all (missed the part about the Messiah suffering and dying). Jesus explained the Scriptures to them prior to revealing who He was, showing that the power to remedy unbelief is in the Scriptures. And the highlight of the whole event, in their eyes, was that lesson from Scripture when their hearts burned.

Their Assessment of Jesus.....	2
Summary of Who Jesus is	3
Summary of the Crucifixion.....	3
Jesus' Assessment of Them.....	4
Slow of Heart to Believe	4
Medicine.....	5
Evidence	5
The Bible Is Clear	6
You Are Accountable.....	6
All, Not Part	6
Scripture's Assessment of Jesus	7
Ruined and Redeemed	7
1) The Problem: Sin and the Curse.....	7
2) The Plan: A Chosen People.....	8
3) The Price	8
4) The King	8
5) The Nature of God	8
6) How to Worship	8
7) How to Live	8
The Price of Redemption	8
The Medicine for Doubt Is Scripture	9
Look Who's Coming to Dinner	10
Jesus Comes as Head of the House	11
The Revelation.....	11
Seek the Burning Heart	12
Go and Tell.....	12
Conclusion	13
Application Questions (James 1:25)	13

Luke 24:1 On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. 2 They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3 but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. 5 In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? 6 He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 7 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' " 8 Then they remembered his words. 9 When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. 10 It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. 11 But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. 12 Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened. 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. 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. 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. 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?” 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.

Their Assessment of Jesus

“Maybe you’re right.¹ Maybe we should have stayed in Jerusalem a little while longer, but - you can’t put any stock in what those women said about the angel, that He’s risen from the dead – they’re women.² They’re emotional. There’s a reason why women aren’t permitted to give testimony in a court of law – they aren’t reliable. The men went there, and all they were able to confirm was that the tomb is empty. I mean, I love those ladies and everything, but – if what they were saying were true, if Jesus really were back from the dead – where is He? It’s almost into the fourth day now.

Anyway, we’re going to have to pick up the pace if we want to make it home by dark. Remember it took us almost three hours last time. We just need to get home, and face reality – we were wrong about Him.”

“What about the miracles? What about Lazarus? What about all those things that happened while He was on the cross?”

“I don’t know. I don’t know what to make of any of that. All I know is what the Bible says. Psalm 2 - the Messiah will come, and he will rule over the entire earth with an iron scepter. And all the kings of the earth, if they resist Him, it says He will smash them to pieces like pottery. Jesus was a prophet – I’m not denying that. But he didn’t exactly smash Caesar to pieces like pottery. He couldn’t even handle Pilate.”

¹ Luke 24:13 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.

² When v.13 says “two of them,” the “them” refers back to the group of people who did not believe the report of the women in v.11. **Luke 24:9 When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. ... 11 But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.** It’s no surprise that they did not believe the women. In that culture, women were not considered reliable witnesses. Women were not even allowed to testify in a court of law. If some crime happened, and there were eye-witnesses, if those eye-witnesses happened to be women, then as far as they were concerned there were no witnesses and the person would go free.

“Who couldn’t handle Pilate?”³

“Oh, hi. I’m Cleopas. My buddy and I are headed to Emmaus. Sure, you can walk with us. Oh yeah, Pilate – we were just discussing the events of the weekend.”⁴

“What events? You’re not from around here are you?”⁵

“No offense, but what is it like living under a rock? You don’t know what just happened in Jerusalem?”

And so they went on to tell Jesus all about Jesus. They were talking to Him about Him not knowing it was Him to whom they were talking, because they didn’t recognize Him. If they were His disciples, how could they not recognize Him? Actually, it does not say that they didn’t recognize Him. They didn’t recognize Him, but it doesn’t say that they didn’t recognize Him. What does it say?

16 they were kept from recognizing him.

They were miraculously prevented from recognizing Him by God. Why? We’ll see why in just a minute, but for now let’s take a look at their answer. They start with a quick one-sentence summary of Jesus’ entire ministry.

Summary of Who Jesus is

19 ...“He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people.

The first word that comes to his mind when describing Jesus is “**prophet.**” That’s accurate – Jesus said He was a prophet (Lk.13:33). And the Old Testament test, when someone claims to speak for God as a prophet is

- 1) Their doctrine must be consistent with what the Bible says.
- 2) They must be able to work miracles.⁶

Those are the two tests – what they say and what they do. And those are exactly the things that Cleopas mentions about Jesus.

19 ...“He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed

The deeds of Jesus were powerful - even His enemies admitted that He performed miracles. And His words were powerful. Jesus was always showing how His teaching came from the Old Testament Scriptures. And beyond that – there was something special about the way Jesus taught. He taught with an authority that the people had never witnessed before in their lives (Lk.4:32, Jn.7:45). Jesus proved Himself to be a true prophet because He was powerful in word and in deed. And not just before men, but also before God. People could see that it was obvious He was from God, and God Himself affirmed that – even speaking audibly from heaven when Jesus was baptized.

Summary of the Crucifixion

So that is his summary of who Jesus was. The next sentence summarizes the events of Jesus’ death.

20 The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him

That is accurate. So far everything he has said has been right on. But then verse 21 is heartbreaking.

³ Luke 24:15 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.

⁴ Luke 24:17 He asked them, “What are you discussing together as you walk along?”

⁵ Luke 24:18 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?”

⁶ Dt.18:15-22. Every prophet had to at least be marked by the miracle of 100% accuracy. Many prophets could do other miracles as well.

21 but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel.

We had hoped – past tense. We thought He might be the Messiah, we hoped He would be the one who would redeem Israel. But now – it’s all over. He didn’t redeem Israel and give us freedom from the Romans.

21 ...And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place.

That makes matters worse. Why? Because Jesus said repeatedly that He would rise on the third day.⁷ Passover ended on Saturday night, but these guys waited until late in the day on Sunday before heading home. They waited until the third day, but Jesus didn’t show up, and now it’s almost sundown. In that culture, the next day started at sundown – so it’s almost Monday. But that’s not all:

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.”

“It’s really strange – His body is missing and there’s no explanation. Some women claim that an angel told them that Jesus was alive, but none of the men saw it, so – we don’t know what to make of all this.”

They didn’t believe the women. Everything the women said that could be verified ended up being exactly accurate. That should have shown them that the women were reliable. If they were reliable on the things that could be verified, they should have been trusted on the things that couldn’t be verified. But they refused to believe.

Jesus’ Assessment of Them

25 He said to them, “How foolish you are...”

That is the first thing out of His mouth. This stranger shows up out of nowhere, asks what they are talking about, they recount the facts of what happened over the weekend, and he calls them fools! Jesus called them fools because they were fools and they needed to know that. When someone looks at Jesus and says, “There is a great prophet, a miracle worker, a great teacher, mighty in word and deed – but when it comes to the question of whether he actually rose from the dead, I’m not completely sure one way or the other,” – that is a fool’s assessment. And then Jesus goes on to explain what it was that made them so foolish.

Slow of Heart to Believe

25 He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!

The reason they couldn’t accept the truth, even when all the evidence pointed to it, was because they were slow of heart to believe certain parts of the Scriptures. Their hearts were blinded by lack of faith.

Sluggishness of heart will make even the most intelligent, most informed person a fool.

⁷ Luke doesn’t have to explain that here because he assumes if you are reading chapter 24 of his book, you’ve read all the previous chapters. And so you know exactly what that phrase, **the third day**, is referring to.

Luke 9:22 Jesus said, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.”

Luke 18:31 ... everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. **32** He will be handed over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him and kill him. **33** On the third day he will rise again.” Even earlier in the same chapter:

Luke 24:7 ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’

Medicine

So what do you do with hearts like that? You do what Jesus did – you take them to the Scriptures. God has some secret medicine that can cure the disease of a heart that refuses to believe. And there is only one place you can get that secret medicine that can cure that disease. It is in the Scriptures. Isn't it amazing to you that after all the times Jesus told His followers that He would suffer and die and rise on the third day, He doesn't tell these men: "How foolish you are and slow of heart to believe all that I told you before I died." Instead of saying, "You're slow to believe what I said," He says, "You're slow to believe **all that the prophets have spoken.**" Even though all Jesus' Words are God's Word, still, His main concern is about the written Scriptures. It is in the written Word of God that the medicine exists that can actually spark new life in a spiritually dead heart.

James 1:18 He chose to give us birth through the word of truth

The spiritual medicine in God's Word is more powerful and more persuasive than any other kind of evidence – including seeing it with your own eyes.

When your heart is blind, your eyes are worthless.

When your heart is sluggish to believe, that will twist everything your eyes see, and you still won't come to the right conclusions. If you actually witnessed a resurrection with your own eyes, that would not be as powerful as reading the book of Deuteronomy.

Luke 16:31 If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.

The power to change the human soul is in the Scriptures.

Psalm 19:7 The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. 8 ... The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.

So why doesn't Jesus let them know right away who He is? He is showing us that people like this need the medicine before they will accept the evidence.

Evidence

People today who rejected the gospel and do not believe that Jesus rose from the dead – usually they say, "If there were adequate evidence, I would believe." But that is a smokescreen. The historical evidence is there. The problem is a heart that doesn't want to believe what the evidence points to, because it is so convinced of what it already believes. And when you have a heart like that God could speak audibly from heaven, He could write messages in the sky – it wouldn't matter what He did, no amount of evidence or proof can persuade a heart that is refusing to believe.

God doesn't expect us to believe based on blind faith – ever. That would be irrational. God always gives us adequate evidence. He never requires us to believe something that doesn't have proof. However, He provides the proof on His terms, not ours. He gives us enough evidence, but He does not always give us the evidence we might think we need. God decides what evidence He will provide, but the evidence He provides is always adequate evidence. Especially when it comes to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. For one thing, God gave us multiple accounts from people who were alive at the time. And one of them was given by Luke, who is known even among secular scholars as being an incredibly precise and accurate and reliable historian. There are a lot of ways they discern that – one of them is by the fact that he includes details that do not necessarily help his case. And the appearance to the women is an example of that. That shows us that this is not a story someone made up, because no one would make that part up. If you are trying to convince the world of something so hard to believe as a resurrection, why would you write the story such that the first witnesses were the most unreliable, untrusted people in the culture –

people whose testimony wouldn't even be accepted in a court of law? At that time, that part of the story was just an embarrassment, not anything that would be likely to convince the masses. If you are making up a story, why not make it so the most trusted, reliable people are the ones who first see Him? If you read the accounts we have from these four historians - Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, they have the ring of truth to them. If you read it with an unbiased mind, it is obvious that these are honest men.

The Bible Is Clear

The evidence is clear and compelling. So when a person doesn't believe, it shows a problem in the heart. When these guys don't understand that the Messiah had to suffer and die, Jesus doesn't blame the Scripture for being unclear. He doesn't say, "Yeah - I feel your pain. The Old Testament is a really hard book - it's so complicated and obscure and hard to understand." He doesn't do that. The fault is not with the Scripture.

This is an important point because the trend in evangelical scholarship these days is something they are calling "the hermeneutics of humility." And the idea is, "We have to be humble and admit that we can't really know for sure if our interpretation is the right one." That sounds humble, but really it is just a denial of the principle of the clarity of Scripture. Some things are obscure, but the basic message of the Bible is clear enough to be understood. God communicated in order to be understood, and God is capable of being clear.

You Are Accountable

And so one thing we learn from this passage is the sobering truth that if you have the Scriptures, you are accountable to know what they teach. God revealed Himself, and we are accountable to examine the Bible closely enough, and with enough of a believing heart, so that we know and understand and believe what God has revealed.

All, Not Part

And please notice that little word **all** in verse 25.

25 He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!"

It wasn't that they didn't believe the Scripture. They were just ignorant about some parts of it. "Does God hold us responsible for what we don't know?"

He does when the lack of knowledge is due to a heart that is slow to believe. These men were ignorant, but their ignorance was their own fault, and Jesus was holding them responsible for that, because the part they were missing was clear enough that they should have understood it.

And notice, they weren't rebuked for believing the wrong thing. They didn't believe the wrong thing. They were rebuked for not knowing what to believe. That is important to understand, because so often people think that when things get confusing, it's ok to just punt. To say, "I just don't know what to make of this - so I'm just going to remain neutral. I'm going to suspend judgment on the matter."

There are some things you can afford to suspend judgment on. There are some things that really are obscure and impossible to be sure about. But the gospel of Jesus Christ is not one of them. Be careful about deciding not to decide, because that is a decision. And it is a decision for which Jesus Christ will hold you accountable. It is immoral to be agnostic about something God has made clear. If your boss said, "Everyone needs to be in to work by 6:00am," you can't just say, "I choose to remain agnostic about what time we need to come in." God holds us responsible for what He has made clear.

And so another important lesson we learn here is that a selected, partial understanding of Scripture is so very dangerous. Were they right to expect Christ to come and defeat all His enemies and rule over the

world? Absolutely. But that's only half the story. The Bible also says the Messiah would suffer and die. They believed one but ignored the other, and as a result they missed everything.

Whenever the Bible says two things, and in your mind you can't figure out how they fit together (like, "How can God be totally sovereign, and yet there is still such a thing as free will?" or, "How can God be good and still allow suffering?") – what most people do in cases like that is they latch on to the one that makes sense to them, and they explain away the other one. Don't ever do that. If you can't figure out how they fit together, fine. Just believe them both and let God worry about fitting them together.

Because if you latch on to one and reject the other, you end up with a partial understanding of Scripture. And that was exactly the problem with these two guys. It wasn't that they didn't believe the Scripture. They did. But they were content with a partial understanding, which made them miss the truth altogether. Pick any cult, and I'll show you a group that has a partial understanding of Scripture. They will have all kinds of correct views from Scripture. Every false teacher gets a whole lot of things right. But you can get the entire Bible right and miss on one point and be damned forever. Get the whole Bible right and miss salvation through faith alone in Christ alone and you are lost. Get everything right and miss on the resurrection of Christ and you are lost.

Scripture's Assessment of Jesus

So Jesus rebukes them as fools. But, as foolish as they are, our glorious, redeeming, restoring Master doesn't just rebuke them and walk away. He identifies the problem in their hearts and then proceeds to fix the problem! Instead of condemning them for having a partial understanding, He points that out to them and then provides them with a fuller understanding. Jesus wasn't the type to just point out a problem and then leave you there. If you have a willing heart, He would take you from wherever you are and bring you to where you need to be.

Now remember – at this point they still don't know who they are talking to. They think He is just a stranger on the road who has been living under a rock. But now this stranger is going to point them to Scripture.

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.

He says, "The Messiah *had* to suffer and die, and here's why..." and then goes on to give them the greatest Old Testament survey ever given. What an amazing thing it would have been to have heard that Bible study. He starts with Moses – that's the first five books of the Bible, and then moves through the rest of the Old Testament. He only had a couple hours, if that, and so there wouldn't have been time to get into all the details. What He gives them is the big picture. And if you want to know the big picture of the Bible, let me just give it to you in one sentence: the creation is ruined and then redeemed.

Ruined and Redeemed

God made the world, it got ruined and corrupted by sin, then God fixes it makes it better than it was to begin with. That is the big picture. But the reason the Bible is 66 books instead of one sentence is because God wants us to understand the depth of the corruption - and the details of the redemption – how God goes about fixing it.

And so all of the books of the Old Testament are given to teach us seven basic things:

1) The Problem: Sin and the Curse

The Bible starts out describing the creation, and then, beginning in Genesis chapter 3, God says, "Let me show you the problem..." And we read about sin coming into the picture, the fall of mankind, the

curse, and all of creation is ruined. Death enters the picture, and there is a very fast downward spiral until everything hits bottom and God has to destroy the whole thing with a flood.

2) The Plan: A Chosen People

All of that is God saying, “Let me show you the problem.” The next thing that happens is that God calls Abraham. That is God saying, “Let me show you My plan for fixing the problem.” And God calls out the nation Israel through which He would reveal His Word, and through which would come the Messiah. God sets up a plan for the Messiah to come through that nation and redeem the creation and fix everything that is broken. That is the book of Genesis.

3) The Price

Then, starting in Exodus, God gets more specific. Through Moses God gives the Passover, and the whole rest of the sacrificial system – innocent, spotless animals being killed with a bloody death as substitutes for the people, dying in their place so that the people could be forgiven. All of that is basically God saying, “Let me show you the price of redemption.” And all of it pointed to the cross.

4) The King

Then comes the kingdom, with King David. And with David, God is saying, “Let me show you My king.” David is a prototype of the Messiah, which is why all the kings after him are measured by how they measure up to David.

5) The Nature of God

6) How to Worship

7) How to Live

The rest of the Old Testament is made up of the Prophets and Wisdom Literature. And that is God saying, “Let Me show you what I am like and how to live in light of that.”⁸ God reveals His nature, and what the implications are for how we are to worship and how we are to live our lives.

Now obviously those are not strict divisions – there is lots of overlap. But you can flop your Bible open to any spot in the Old Testament, and you will be reading something that has at least one of those seven purposes. Every passage in the Old Testament is God saying one of those seven things:

- 1) Let me show you the problem
- 2) Let me show you My plan
- 3) Let me show you the cross
- 4) Let me show you My king
- 5) Let me show you what I’m like
- 6) Let me show you how to worship
- 7) Let me show you how to live

The Price of Redemption

And most of the Jews understood six of those just fine. The one they didn’t seem to grasp was #3 – the cross. If we go back to the real simple version – the creation was ruined and then redeemed; broken

⁸ In the exile God says, “Let me show you how to live and worship among the nations, without the Temple.”

and then fixed – the twist has to do with the way God fixes what is broken - the way He redeems what was ruined by sin. Cleopas and his friend understood half of the story - that God would redeem what was ruined by means of His Messiah. The part they didn't understand was what Jesus mentions in verse 26. In order to accomplish all this, the Messiah would have to first suffer and die. They should have known that.

21 but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel.

The word **redeem** means to purchase someone's freedom. If they thought of the Messiah as someone who would redeem Israel, they should have known that a price would have to be paid.

And Jesus goes on to show them that beginning with the books of Moses. Maybe He started by explaining the weeklong feast these guys just got done celebrating – Passover. That lamb that is slaughtered on Passover – that points to the Messiah. The Messiah is the Passover lamb. No animal could actually pay the penalty for our sin.

Hebrews 10:4 it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

Those millions of animals who died on the altar were nothing but illustrations and pictures. The real sacrifice had to be a man - a perfect, sinless man whose life is of infinite value so that He can pay the price for everyone who believes. The entire sacrificial system is a picture of the cross.

Then Luke says that Jesus moved from Moses to the Prophets. One of the most obvious places to go in the Prophets is the book of Isaiah. Isaiah talks about a branch that will grow up out of the roots of the stump of David. That is a poetic way of saying the great messianic King, who would be descended from David – the Messiah that David was the prototype of – He will come as a *suffering* servant. Isaiah calls him the servant of the Lord, and that servant will suffer and die.

Isaiah 53:3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. ... 5 the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed....

7 ...he was led like a lamb to the slaughter ...8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away. ... he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken.9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

That is crystal-clear. The great messianic King, the descendent of David, will be a servant who will suffer and die to pay the penalty for our sins.⁹ And then...

11 After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life

After being put to death, He will come back to life. It is all right there.

The Medicine for Doubt Is Scripture

So Jesus gives them this amazing Bible study. And He continues to keep them in the dark with regard to who He is. Why? Wouldn't it make more sense for Him to have revealed who He was before the Bible study? If He lets them know that it's Him, wouldn't that make them more receptive? When we pick up a book, we want to know the guy's credentials. Does he have an education? Does anybody endorse him? When you are listening to someone you highly respect and trust, you give a lot more weight and credence to what they say. You listen more. Doesn't Jesus want these guys to listen? And wouldn't they listen a lot more closely if they realized this was Jesus? So why does He conceal His identity?

The Bible doesn't answer that question directly, so I won't presume to know all of God's reasons. But I can tell you something very important that we can learn from this. The fact that Jesus wanted to

⁹ Many times Jewish people will try to say that the suffering servant in the book of Isaiah represents Israel, not the Messiah. The problem with that is that the suffering servant bears the punishment of the people as a substitute – dying in their place. It can refer to the people, because the people cannot be punished as a substitute for themselves.

explain the Scriptures while they still thought He was just a stranger shows us that the power is in the Scriptures, not the preacher.¹⁰

And beyond that, Jesus shows them the truth in the Scriptures because that's stronger evidence than seeing something with your own eyes. If they believe because they saw Jesus, what's going to happen 20 years later, when their memories fade, and they start second-guessing what they saw? How many times have you been convinced you saw something, and then later on questioned whether you saw it? And if their confidence is based on what they saw, that's great for them – but what about everyone else? How are other people supposed to know for sure? Jesus wants to give them the most powerful possible evidence, and so He shows it to them first in the Scriptures. When you see something in the Scriptures, it's solid forever. Your memory fades – it's still rock solid. Circumstances make you doubt – you can go back to something that is rock solid. Other people don't believe – you can show them in the Scriptures. These men couldn't reproduce their experience with Jesus, but they could always show people what Jesus showed them in the Scriptures.

This is an important principle to keep in mind when you are listening for God's voice. God speaks to us through His Word. When you pray and ask God for guidance in a decision, if you just wait for an impulse or a certain feeling or a sense of peace, and you take that as God's voice – years later, when you find yourself wondering if it really was the right decision, what kind of confidence do you have?

All you can do is think back, "How did I feel after I prayed?" Have you ever tried to remember what particular feelings you had years ago? That's no confidence at all. And how are the people around you supposed to know that it was God's voice?

But when God speaks through His Word – then you have confidence forever. You say, "God, show me what I should do? Should it be option A or option B?" And God turns on the lights. He opens your eyes to some principle from Scripture, and how it applies to your situation. It's plain as day. You can show anyone – "See this principle right here in the Bible? Can you see the implications for my situation, that I should pick option A?" And they will say, "Yes, we can see that."

And when circumstances get hard, and things change, and you're second-guessing your decision, any time, day or night, years later – you can always come back to that passage of Scripture. Seeing something in Scripture is the most powerful kind of certainty you can ever have – even more than seeing something with your own eyes. Even more than hearing the voice of Jesus audible in your home at your kitchen table.

Jesus wanted these men to really know with absolute certainty that He was risen. Just appearing to them in the flesh wouldn't be enough. He wanted them to be convinced to the point where they would die for their faith. And He wanted them to be able to bring others to that same level of certainty.

But they had the disease of doubt. These men had hearts that were slow to believe, and they needed the medicine from God that can cure that heart problem. And Jesus is showing us how anyone can administer that medicine, because the power is in the Scriptures, not in the preacher. Do you need a seminary degree to persuade an unbeliever to accept the truth? No – just point them to the Scriptures. Do you need to have credentials or an impressive resume? No – just give the Scriptures. Do you need to be able to answer all their questions? No – just expose them to the Bible. Do you have to build a relationship and earn the right to speak into their lives? No – Jesus Christ has already earned that right, all you have to do is pass along what He said to them from the Scriptures. Now, can some of those things be helpful – a seminary degree or being able to answer questions or building a relationship? Sure, but none of those contain the supernatural medicine that can cure the disease of an unbelieving heart. That medicine is found only in the Word of God.

Look Who's Coming to Dinner

28 As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther.

¹⁰ Of course, in the case of Jesus, there is power in the preacher Himself. But Jesus is giving us a model that will work for all preachers.

If you are in the park and strike up a conversation with someone who is walking alongside you, that's fine, but when they get to their house you don't follow them inside. Jesus was not going to impose Himself on them uninvited. But they did invite Him.

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.

So He went inside with them, and they had a meal together. That is always the activity of friendship in the Bible. It's a sweet picture here of fellowship with the risen Christ and two of His brothers.

Jesus didn't wait to be invited to join them in their walk. And He gave them the Bible study unsolicited - uninvited. Jesus will do that. He will sometimes bust into your life uninvited. Sometimes He will crash His way into your life and present you with the truth whether you want it or not. But in order to have friendship and fellowship with Him, you have to invite Him. When you are presented with the truth, you must accept it and welcome it and believe it, and then invite Him to be your Savior, and if you don't do that, He will keep right on walking. Don't think you are in the family of God because of the home you grew up in or the church you grew up in or because of your religious affiliation. There has to be a moment of decision. And it is not mainly a decision to go in a certain direction, but rather a decision to join your heart with a person.

So they invite Jesus in for the meal - nothing especially surprising there. That is just basic hospitality. But the next verse is unexpected.

Jesus Comes as Head of the House

30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them.

The way a typical Jewish meal would begin was the head of the household would take some bread, break it, and bless God for the bread. That was the job of the host – the head of the household, not the guest. So it's very out of the ordinary for Jesus to do this. They invite Him in and suddenly Jesus is the head of that household.

If you believe the truth of the gospel, and you invite Jesus into your life for personal communion and relationship, He will come in. But you need to understand – once He comes in, He is the head of the house. He doesn't come in as your guest. He comes in as a father. He is now the man of the house. He is now the leader, the provider, the protector, the caretaker, the ruler – He is the head.

The Revelation

Well, finally the moment comes when Jesus lets them see who He is.

31 Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight.

Can you imagine the joy? They had hoped He would be their Redeemer and turns out He was. He's alive! And He appeared to us! And as a bonus, we now understand the entire Old Testament.

And at that point Jesus disappears, and these two are left by themselves to talk it over. You know how if you watch a really good movie with someone, when you walk out of the theater you are talking about which parts you liked, your favorite scenes, etc.? Just imagine this conversation. This was, by far, the single greatest thing that ever happened in their entire life. And as they talk it over, what do you think is the biggest thing that comes to their minds? What I would expect was that moment when their eyes were opened and they realized it was Jesus. Can you imagine that moment? You think all your hopes are dashed, and that moment when you realize Jesus is the messiah and He has risen from the dead and He is sitting in your kitchen? You would think that's what they would be most excited about, but it's not. Listen to the first thing they say:

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?”

They had a meal with the risen Christ! That was huge, but even bigger in their hearts was when the Word was being opened to them. When God shows you the truth from the Scriptures and you get that medicine that cures the unbelief disease in your heart- that is the greatest moment of all.

Seek the Burning Heart

If you have never experienced that, *pray for it*. You’re reading the Bible, or you’re listening to a sermon, and you’re thinking, “Yeah, yeah – information, information, information – print on a page...” and then, all of a sudden, your heart begins to burn. Something happens and you just feel joy and delight welling up, and you’re thinking, “This is *true*.” Your soul is just saying, “Yes! Yes! This is what God is saying, and it’s so beautiful and good.” And you can just feel it reviving your soul and giving light to your eyes. And you actually meet God on the pages of His Word. It is one of the most soul-satisfying experiences you can have in this life. When I listen to a sermon, I don’t want to critique it. I want my heart to burn. I am not mainly concerned that the speaker make me laugh or make me cry or make me think. I want my heart to burn. Humor and good presentation can help some, but what I really want is for my heart to go from being cold and hard to being warm and alive. I long for that.

Go and Tell

What kind of effect did all this joy have on these guys?

33 They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem.

They’ve got to tell the others – and they’ve got to do it *right now*. Emmaus was seven miles northwest of Jerusalem – think Lafayette (from here) – two to three hours one way. You just walked from here to home in Lafayette, and now you have to walk all the way back. It is well into the night now, there are no streetlights – no doubt dangerous traveling at night. There were muggers and criminals as well as wild animals, but these guys are so excited they can’t even wait till morning. They have got to tell the others now!

You can imagine their conversation now as they are half running toward Jerusalem.

“I can’t wait until we get there! I’m just going to bust in the door and at the top of my lungs say, “He’s alive! We’ve seen Him!”

And Cleopas says, “No, no, no. Don’t do it that way – you’ve got to build up to it. First we describe what it was like when He first joined us on the road, and then we talk about how He didn’t seem to know what was going on, and from there we tell the part about...” - I don’t know what kind of discussion went on, but I do know they were very excited about presenting this news to the others. You know how it feels when you know something that no one else knows, and it is the best news ever? They are going to be so excited when they hear it, and you just can’t wait to tell them? It wouldn’t surprise me if these two guys got into a little bit of an argument about which one of them gets to break this amazing news.

So, they finally get there after those hours of walking and jogging – they don’t knock. They just burst in the door step inside the room, and just before they have a chance to open their mouth someone looks at them and says, “Hey, guess what? It’s true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.” Talk about stealing your thunder!

But I doubt that diminished their excitement. They still have quite the story to tell. Jesus may have appeared to Peter, but they are the ones that got that whole, amazing Bible study. My guess is they told this story every day of their lives. I am sure they were going to tell every detail of what Jesus said.

Between them telling their story and Peter telling His story and the women saying, “We told you so!” – all the excitement and joy and exuberance that was in that room, it is impossible to imagine anything that could suddenly bring it all to an instant halt, but that is what happened. Right in the middle of all the telling of the stories, this happened:

36 While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.”

Conclusion

The story gets even better from there, but our time is gone. I will just leave you this morning with Jesus’ words to them that night – peace be with you. How will that peace come? Expose your heart to the truth of the Word of God. Believe it, let it ignite your heart with faith, invite the risen Lord Jesus Christ into your life as the head of the house, trust in His sacrifice on the cross to redeem you out of the bondage and guilt of your sin, and when He does, let your joy drive you to tell as many people as you possibly can.

Benediction: Romans 16:25 Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, 26 but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him- 27 to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

Application Questions (James 1:25)

- 1) Are you aware of any pockets of resistance where your heart is slow to believe something from Scripture – that needs more exposure to the medicine?
- 2) Take some time as a group to pray for opportunities to tell the story about Jesus, or to expose an unbelieving heart to Scripture. If you can think of an individual in your life you think the Lord would have you talk to, share that with the group.
- 3) Is there a paradox in Scripture you have a hard time reconciling? Is there one side of that paradox your heart is slower to believe than the other?