

April 20, 2014
Community Baptist Church
Sunday Evening Service
Easter
643 South Suber Road
Greer, SC 29650
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To Ponder . . .

Questions to ponder as you prepare to study Luke 24:28-35.

1. Describe the heartburn or warming of the heart described in our text as you have experienced it.
2. What was the ultimate reason for the heart warming for the disciples?
3. What did the two disciples do when their hearts were warmed?
4. Describe the kind of work or sacrifice you were motivated to do when you became convinced about the truth of Jesus you found in the Bible.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT HEARTBURN Luke 24:28-35

Most of us have had heartburn. If you need relief from the malady, just watch television long enough and several different advertisements will tell you precisely the medicine you need to feel better . . . for a price. Or you could go to your doctor and let him make an accurate diagnosis and prescribe what you really need.

Some of us have had a different kind of heartburn. We have felt our hearts strangely warmed because of Christ's work in us.

Heartburn Diagnosed

Two of Jesus' disciples had spent some time with Him after He had risen from the grave. *They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us" (v.32a)*. What was this heartburn? It seems that these two fellows sensed a noticeable work of some kind going on in their spirits. The Greek word used here might truly be compared to heartburn. When we have eaten something that doesn't agree with us, we get a burning sensation that might be hard to locate or describe. But we know what it is. Or more accurately, if our heart literally aches when we hear distressing news, we have the kind of feeling these men had.

But their response was not the kind we sense at hearing bad news. Probably in this case, it was more of a warming of the heart. It would have been like a strong compassion we feel when we hear good news about a friend or when our children are honored. This kind of burning heart is a strong sense that what I am experiencing is good and right.

To describe it as burning is most accurate. Most of the dozen uses of the word in the New Testament refer to literal burning. It is like a light that burns (Mat. 5:15), or branches thrown in the fire to burn. Five times the word is in the Revelation, most expressively to describe the lake that burns with fire forever (Rev. 21:8), the final destination of Satan, his demons, and sinners.

But sometimes the word is used figuratively like it is here. Jesus told the people that John the Baptist was a burning light. He meant that John was a testimony to the truth about the Christ. *"You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. Not that the testimony that I receive is from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved. He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given Me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent Me" (John 5:33-36)*.

The idea expressed by the two disciples in our text was rooted in the Hebrew concept of conviction in the heart. When David came to grips with his sin he confessed, *"There is no soundness in my flesh because of your indignation; there is no health in my bones because of my sin" (Psalm 38:3)*. Likewise, Asaph the song writer expressed

a similar sense of conviction. *“When my soul was embittered, when I was pricked in heart” (Psalm 73:21).*

Have we not experienced this same kind of heart warming? Someone might conclude that it is similar heart warming like when you got a new puppy for Christmas. Or maybe the sense of warmth we feel when our child was promoted or honored. Or when you rediscovered your long, lost friend. But what these two disciples experienced happens only under one condition.

So why did these two guys get to enjoy these unique circumstances? Why did only certain people get it? God was dealing in their hearts. This was a spiritual matter. What they felt was not at all something you feel like physical heartburn. It is the Creator moving in the spirit of the created being. Sometimes we forget that God our Creator creates all people to be reflectors of His glory. Because of sin, all people do not have the ability or the desire to reflect the Creator’s glory. Out of His heart of love, through grace and mercy, God sometimes stirs up the spirit of His creatures because He desires to do a work in them.

Therefore, what these men experienced was a God-sent, supernatural act. Because it is from God, no person has the ability to create this special kind of heartwarming. Heart-touching or heart-rending stories do work on our spirits. They stir our emotions. But this was a case of the Creator doing a unique work in the lives of two individuals according to His own purposes. This miracle cannot be manipulated, demanded, or invoked by any human means whatsoever. Anything and everything that looks like this but is not the work of God the Holy Spirit is fraudulent.

Since this kind of working by God in our hearts is a special work of God’s grace, we ought to count conviction a blessing. This is how conviction works in our hearts. Therefore, conviction is not a bad thing. Sometimes we conclude that conviction always tells us that we are wrong. Often it does. One ministry of the Holy Spirit is to convict the world of sin (John 16:8). It is true that the verb John used in that verse means to rebuke or correct. It does mean to tell someone his fault. But if we are traveling down the wrong road of life about to drive into the chasm because the bridge is out, we should appreciate the Holy Spirit’s work of telling us we are wrong. Or there are times when our error is simply not paying attention to God’s Word, and the

Holy Spirit needs to prod us to pay attention. Or maybe the issue is a matter of not understanding who God is in relation to us or what His will is in relation to us. That God is gracious enough to warm our hearts in such cases is a blessing from Him, not something to avoid. Two disciples were a bit confused and Christ warmed their hearts.

The Cause of Heartburn

The disciples concluded that their heartburn occurred *“while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures” (v.32b).* The warming of their hearts was due to the Master’s presence. Often a sense of Christ’s presence with us will cause our spirits to burn for Him. At the same time, it is true that there may be a sense of fear because we sense Christ’s power in a new way. We can react to God like the people of Israel who saw God’s power at Mt. Sinai and they were afraid. Or maybe the thought of Christ’s presence causes us to respond like Peter, James, and John who saw Christ’s glory. Or we react like John who saw the vision of Christ on Patmos and fell down before Him in fear.

Responses like that are typically caused when we have a sense of guilt because we have sinned against Christ. That is why Peter went out and wept bitterly when Jesus looked at him. Knowing the presence of Christ when he had just swore with an oath and denied any association with Christ caused him to have serious heartburn. Or maybe the worst case is like Judas who felt remorse for sin too keenly, too late. At the same time, it is possible, yea, more often than not, that there will be a sense of joy and confidence in our hearts when we are in the presence of Christ. Probably this is what the disciples were experiencing.

Especially at times when we become keenly aware of Christ’s presence with, us our hearts will burn. When the two disciples were able to share their experience with the other disciples, they confessed when the sense of Christ was strongest. *Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread (Luke 24:35).* Jesus is always revealed in His Word so that meditating on His Word warms our hearts. But special times like Communion should remind us of His love for us and warm out hearts

toward Him. This is the ministry of the Holy Spirit as He testifies with our spirits.

Ultimately, we learn from this story that the cause for the disciples' heartburn was the Master's teaching. Jesus revealed the truth about Himself from the Old Testament Scripture to these two followers. The disciples' hearts were warmed because Jesus unfolded the truth about Himself. Surely they had read and studied the Old Testament. But just as surely, they had not grasped all that is said and promised about Jesus. Suddenly, being able to see in their minds the truth about their Master, the disciples sensed a confidence and peace. No longer were they distraught, confused, and as the text described them, *standing still and looking sad* (v.17).

Jesus continues to reveal the truth about Himself from the entire Bible. The story of Jesus is all through the Scripture. Beginning in Genesis, He is part of the plural (*elohim*) God who created all things. He is part of the triune Godhead who said, *"Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness."* In every book, we discover Jesus foretold, Jesus typified, Jesus illustrated, Jesus born, living, teaching, doing good, dying, rising from the dead, ascending to heaven, interceding. At the end in Revelation, we discover Jesus opening the seals of the title deed to all creation, purging the earth through judgment, returning to earth to judge, issuing eternal condemnation, and reigning forever.

It is our privilege to be able to read the pages of the Bible daily and find Jesus revealed. As we meditate on what Jesus reveals about Himself, our hearts are strangely warmed. But what if we read the Bible and cannot find Jesus throughout the Bible? Obviously, in such circumstances the person's heart will not be warmed. There might be a couple of reasons for that. It is possible that such a person is not born again; and being devoid of the Holy Spirit, he or she cannot understand Scripture. Or it is possible that the person might be quenching the Holy Spirit's ministry and unable to grasp spiritual truth because he or she is living like unsaved people.

There is no doubt that Jesus can be found throughout the Scripture because the Holy Spirit teaches us from the Bible. At the end of this chapter when Jesus was sending the disciples out to establish the Church with the gospel, He told them, *"And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city*

until you are clothed with power from on high" (v.49). The promise from Jesus was the coming of God the Holy Spirit. He indwells each Christian today. To what end or purpose? A few nights before the event we are reading about in Luke, Jesus promised the disciples, *"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you"* (John 14:26). The "Helper" is God the Holy Spirit who does for us the same thing that God the Son did for the two disciples. As we submit ourselves to the Word of God, God the Holy Spirit opens the eyes of our understanding. When we see Jesus in the text we are reading, our hearts are warmed.

Response to Heartburn.

After this disciples experienced the divine heartburn, they got real serious about their relationship to Jesus. They made a huge sacrifice to tell others the good news. *And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"* (Luke 24:33-34). We can understand a little about the sacrifice these men made when we realize that it was a long way back to Jerusalem. It was about seven miles according to verse thirteen. At a good brisk pace, it would take them about 2 ½ hours to walk that far. And they didn't leave until after supper that evening (v.29), which means that they probably didn't arrive in Jerusalem until sometime between 9:00-12:00.

That would definitely be a serious sacrifice in light of the fact that most adult Americans can't even walk seven miles. That on top of the fact that they had already apparently walked the seven miles from Jerusalem to Emmaus. That would have required some serious motivation to go and tell the good news.

The disciples made the sacrifice because they had something important to say. That the risen Christ had meet with them and revealed Himself to them was the most important news imaginable. Absolutely nothing was more important in life at the moment. It was important news because Jesus was their friend and they loved Him. It was important news because they believed Jesus was their Messiah, though they were even still confused about what that entailed.

The level of importance we hold regarding the news about Jesus will determine the level of sacrifice we are willing to make to tell someone about Him. Maybe this fact explains American Christianity better than any other truth. As a whole, people in our culture who claim to be Christians want a convenient religion. They want just enough religion to keep them out of hell. Entrance into heaven may not be that big of a deal to them. A good life on earth is really the goal . . . as long as we can stay out of hell. Thinking right thoughts about Jesus is okay, as long as you don't expect me to tell other people about Him. "Okay," they say. "Maybe I'll concede to tell other people about how Jesus has a wonderful plan for their lives, and if they would just add Him to life everything will turn out just rosey. But don't expect me to get into that stuff about the person being guilty of sinning against God because he or she breaks God's law all the time and needs a Savior from sin who is Jesus." Oh, of course not. That kind of news is way too negative and unpopular.

As a whole, human nature is satisfied with a kind, gentle Jesus who will give them a ticket out of hell if they ask Him for it nicely, but then He will leave the person alone expecting nothing in return. That does not describe the person whose heart is warmed because he sees Jesus in the Scriptures.

Not so with the disciples. They would give their lives to tell the good news. The disciples now knew the good news. Jesus had given all the disciples the story of the gospel many times (even though they didn't grasp it). Toward the end of the story we read, *Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled"* (Luke 24:44). When Jesus opened their minds, they got it. *Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures* (Luke 24:45).

The wonderful truth of the gospel was settled in their hearts. Jesus taught that truth succinctly. *"Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem* (vv.46-47). Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection were necessary so that He can offer repentance and forgiveness of our sins. It is an amazing story of God's grace. No matter how bad the sinner might think he or she is,

forgiveness for sin is available because of Christ's work. Shouldn't a story like that be told? Yep. Jesus said that it *should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem* (v.47b). So why are Christians reticent to tell the good news?

The disciples were eye-witnesses of the good news. Jesus reminded them, *You are witnesses of these things* (v.48). They saw the suffering, death, and burial of Christ. They talked with and had fellowship with the risen Christ. Of course they believed it! Do we? Their hearts were warmed when God the Son opened their minds to truth in Scripture about Jesus Christ the Savior from sin. They all gave their lives *literally* to tell the good news. If we have not come to understand what the Bible says about Christ, it is not likely that we will give our lives to tell others about it.

Being merely religious will never compare to knowing Christ intimately in our hearts. Shawn Barr wrote about how a famous Christian gave up religion to embrace Christ by faith. He wrote, "John Wesley was miserable. If anyone should have been confident about their "religion" it was Wesley. After all, he had been a missionary to the Indians; he was an Anglican priest; he had done open air evangelism; he had been involved in prison ministry. He was an Oxford scholar. His personal spiritual habits included reading the Bible and regular prayer. He was sensitive to sin and tried to do what was right and holy.

However, none of these activities or positions had given him peace about his own destiny. Was he right with God? Was he saved? Was he going to heaven? All of these questions plagued him. He had spent considerable time praying, studying the Bible and reading various books during his dilemma. He had sought counsel from other preachers and friends. All to no avail.

On a now historic night he was invited to a meeting where all of this changed:"

In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading *Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans*. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that

He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death. (*Wesley's Journal*).