

April 4, 2021  
Sunday Evening Service  
Easter Evening  
Community Baptist Church  
643 S. Suber Road  
Greer, SC 29650  
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## WARM HEARTS ON AN EASTER EVENING Luke 24:13-32

We live in stressful, difficult, and sometimes chaotic days. Even apart from our problems, our schedules are often so packed that we wear ourselves out trying to accomplish everything that everyone thinks we ought to do. And from what I hear, that same reality holds true even after you retire.

In that kind of setting, I often find myself longing for peacefulness and quietness in my heart. Psalm 37 is one of my favorite psalms. In that song we read: *“Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices!”* (Psalm 37:7). In Psalm 46 God quiets us by saying, *“Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!”* (Psalm 46:10). Often are the times when I see the turmoil of my soul like the raging winds and waves on the sea and I ask our Lord to stand and rebuke the turmoil and say, “Peace! Be still!”

We should be so encouraged to know that He who is able to calm the raging sea is also able to calm our troubled souls. However, there are also times when it is good for God to stir our hearts so that they will burn within us.

As we gather on this evening of celebrating the Lord’s resurrection, it will be profitable for us to consider other followers of Jesus who walked together in deep conversation at about this same time almost 2,000 years ago. They were deeply troubled. Their souls were in turmoil. Then Jesus came to walk beside them, but they didn’t know it. In patient love our Savior taught them what the Scriptures says about Him. Later that evening Jesus clearly revealed Himself as their Lord. The two disciples confessed, *“Did not our*

*hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?”* (v.32).

This evening we will spend a few minutes rehearsing the story as a challenge to ourselves. How long has it been since your heart burned within you as you saw Jesus Christ revealed in the Scriptures?

### A Sad Situation (vv.13-24).

Luke informed us that on Resurrection Sunday evening there were two disciples walking. The two “of them” were sad (vv.13-14; 19b). As they walked they talked about things that happened. *That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened* (vv.13-14).

The identifying term “two of them” refers to the doubting, confused disciples described in the first part of the chapter. They were terrified by Jesus’s arrest, torture, crucifixion. They were baffled about stories that Jesus’s tomb was empty. They had a lot to talk about and so they were discussing all these things that had happened, trying to make sense of life. Lots of conversation, trying to figure out what has happened, is a pretty fair description of you and me. Unplanned circumstances and trials tend to upend our nice, neat schedules and plans. Often we strongly suspect that God is in the middle of it all or at least involved in some way.

Someone who appeared to them to be a stranger showed up and joined them in their walk. This gave the two followers opportunity to voice their explanation of “things that happened.” They told the man that their religious leaders had been responsible for the killing of their Leader. While the two followers of Jesus were discussing their problems, it was actually Jesus Himself who showed up and wondered about their conversation (v.15). We will talk more about that later.

For now, consider the disciples’ explanation to this “visitor” about what happened. *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”* (v.19b). They were talking about Jesus of Nazareth who they had chosen, at great cost, to follow in order to become like Him. They understood that it was fully known that He

was a prophet. He had a reputation for doing mighty works approved by God. The word translated *before* means to be in the presence of, which is a way of saying that God approved of Jesus's work.

His teaching was also powerfully (*dunatos*) validated by God's presence. A large majority of the people (not all of them) also were convinced that Jesus was approved by God. But the most important religious authorities in the nation delivered Jesus to the civil authority to be crucified. So the disciples were talking about "*how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. 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*" (v.21).

How discouraging to realize that you have been wrong all along! The devout followers of Jesus were honestly convinced that Jesus was the promised Messiah. The promised Messiah could not be killed. But apparently, He was in the grave for three days already.

Try to understand how empty and defeated those disciples felt. They were far more distraught than the person who liquidates all his assets to invest in a surefire deal only to discover that it was a bad investment and he loses everything. This is worse than the young person who is quite sure the man she is dating is going to become her husband, only to have him walk away.

Furthermore, and to make things more complicated, the disciples explained that some of our people claimed our Leader's tomb is empty. "*Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, 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. 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*" (vv.22-24).

Some of the women disciples had completely astounded the group. Sounding like they were insane (the meaning of *existeemi*), they vigorously claimed the Leader's body was not in the empty tomb. Some of the men leaders of the group (Peter and John) went to see for themselves and came back with the same report. Okay. Was that a source of fear, concern, uncertainty about who took the body?

Or was it a source of great joy because Christ was risen? The disciples' explanation to Jesus reveals what they were thinking and how they felt. It would appear that the former statement is the case.

Two sad followers did not recognize their Leader (vv.15-19). At the outset, let's not blame them because their eyes were kept from recognizing. *While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them* (v.15). Putting the story back in the right order as Luke wrote it, Jesus Himself, about whom they were wondering and discussing, showed up.

What a great story! Yes, but, it was not a good situation because *their eyes were kept from recognizing him* (v.16). The Greek text translated literally makes the point quite clearly: *The eyes of them were being held the not to perceive Him*. This is an amazing statement. It means that something or someone took control over their literal eyes and spiritual perception so that it was impossible for them to know or perceive that this stranger was Jesus. It is possible that Jesus's resurrected body could have looked different, but in subsequent appearances the disciples readily recognized Him. Their circumstances, fears, doubts could have been the culprit that kept them in the dark.

But it seems likely that God Himself held the disciples' perception. What?! Why would God do that? He is not a bully or ogre! He is good and kind, and only does nice things for His people. Oh, but why would God keeping His servants in the dark for a time not be nice? Consider what happened.

They were incredulous when the "stranger" asked, "*What things?*" (vv.17-19). The failure to recognize Jesus and Jesus's question about their discussion created a most amazing opportunity for the sad disciples. Move back a little further in the story and hear Jesus say to the disciples, "*What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?*" *And they stood still, looking sad* (v.17). When Jesus asked, "What are you talking about?" they were incredulous. *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?"* (v.18). That was a fair but somewhat disrespectful response. How ironic that no one knew what really happened in Jerusalem better than Jesus did.

Jesus's response was not dishonest, but a divinely appointed invitation to be instructed. They tried to explain "what things" to this Stranger, which opened the door for Jesus to lovingly, wonderfully explain the real truth from the Scripture. Instead of being discouraged or upset with circumstances, we do well to analyze them to determine if the Lord wants to use the situation to unpack Scripture for us.

### **Wonderful Enlightenment (vv.25-27).**

Jesus's response to the disciples' explanation of what they thought He did not know offered a fitting admonition and question (vv.25-26). The admonition is quite plain: *And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!"* (v.25). The Lord's admonition can feel pretty pointed or direct sometimes. In this case, Jesus told the people who loved Him and followed Him that they were foolish because they were not directing their minds properly. The Greek word for *foolish* is built on the word *noeo*, which means to direct one's mind to a particular subject. In this case, the prefix attached to the word negates it which leaves us with disciples who were without understanding because they were unwilling to use their minds correctly, beneficially.

Furthermore, Jesus said that they were slow to believe what the prophets had spoken. The Lord's implication is that these men were not ignorant about the prophets' messages. They knew what the "Bible" said, they were just slow in heart to consider the Scriptures trustworthy.

We are not so much different from those men. We are foolish and slow of heart when we do not pay attention to the Bible. People who have no desire to read the Bible are foolish and slow to direct their hearts to fully lean on the Bible's message. But, the result is that we will be, and ought to be, confused, discouraged when we are not familiar with Scripture. We will be doubtful if we know what the Bible says but refuse to fully lean on it. It is to our own disadvantage to be slow to trust God's Word.

Having pointed out the disciples' lethargy in embracing Scripture, Jesus posed a question that Scripture demands to be answered. *"Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"* (v.26). Apart from knowledge of

and trust in the word from God's messengers in what we call the Old Testament, this is a most foolish question. Because most people, including the disciples, did not understand or believe the old prophets, this question would actually sound senseless.

The Christ was the promised Messiah. The Scriptures made that clear. According to popular opinion, He would come as a mighty warrior to defeat Israel's enemies and reestablish the kingdom. But the Scripture promised the suffering Messiah. Far from a suffering Savior, the people expected a vanquishing king. Their idea of the king's glory was to confine Him to all the sinfulness and frustration of earth! The people did not understand God's promises and, therefore, could not trust the Scriptures.

If we do not apply our minds correctly in regard to the Bible, we will not understand what God says to us. If we do not understand the Bible, we certainly will not trust what it says. If we do not trust what the Bible says, can we possibly be living in God's will?

Jesus did not leave the disciples in a quandary. He offered them a beneficial explanation. Jesus opened His Word. *And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself* (v.27). Jesus unpacked the essential message of Moses, that is the books of Genesis through Deuteronomy. That section of Scripture would include the first great promise of the Redeemer, the Seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15). It is called the proto-evangelium – the first Good News. Jesus would have unpacked the history of God working through Abraham to build the nation and deliver them from bondage. He would have explained the law, the manifestation of God's character.

Revealing the writings of Moses and the prophets would have also included explanations of the all the covenants and promises. Jesus would have unpacked all the prophets' statements about His birth, life, suffering, death, and resurrection. He explained things hard to understand. *He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself* (v.27b). The word translated *interpret* means that Jesus would have intensively, formally explained the meaning of Scripture. With one exception, all the other five uses of this Greek word in the New Testament are found in connection with interpreting tongues, telling what they mean.

Most importantly, Jesus expounded the Scripture teaching about Himself. So how did that make the disciples feel? Were they offended because Jesus told the truth about them, that they were not thinking correctly and were slow to believe truth? Did they walk away and say, “That was a nice sermon”? Were they happy they learned some things that they had never thought of before?

### **A Fitting Response (vv.28-32).**

In response to Jesus’ wonderful teaching, the two followers offered Him a sincere invitation. They requested that the “stranger” stay the night with them. *So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, but they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent” (vv.28-29a).*

Enough time had passed for the party to arrive at Emmaus, the end of the seven mile journey. We cannot say for certain on how much of the journey Jesus accompanied the two disciples, but it was long enough to do some pretty serious teaching. As it appeared they were approaching the end of their journey, the followers of Jesus strongly urged Him to stay the night. This was just common and good hospitality. But was there something more? Yes, we are about to discover what motivated the invitation.

The “stranger” revealed that He was actually their Leader. *So he went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them (vv.29b-30).* There is no evidence compelling us to conclude that this meal was a celebration of the Last Supper (Communion), and it certainly wasn’t the Passover meal. It appears to be an ordinary meal at which the host would offer a blessing of thanks to God for the food. But Jesus was not the host – at least not expected to be. Jesus used the opportunity to bless the bread, break it, and hand it out. The followers had seen this before on a few occasions. The Lord delights to bring to our memory past joys and times of fellowship with Him.

The evening ended with a wonderful conclusion. The disciples’ eyes were opened. *And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight (v.31).* The text does not say that they opened their eyes. The passive verb voice is used here as

was used to say “their eyes were being held” (v.15). Now the disciples eyes were opened completely. The physical eyes that we use for observing now saw clearly. The spiritual eyes that we use for perception perceived even more clearly. God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit revealed who this “stranger” really was.

And suddenly, as soon as His followers’ eyes were opened, Jesus disappeared. That seems to be a rather common post-resurrection occurrence.

But the most encouraging part of this meeting is that the disciples’ hearts burned within them while they were learning about Jesus. *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?” (v.32).* The Greek word gives more of an idea that their hearts were ignited. But even then it is not a good picture of spontaneous combustion. Rather their hearts were caused to be kindled and continue to burn. Notice the cause of the burning heart was God the Son completely opening the Scripture. The word for open here is the same as their eyes being opened.

When God the Holy Spirit completely opens the Scripture to us, our spiritual eyes are opened. We see the truth about God’s incredible plan to bring glory to Himself through the Son’s obedience and the Spirit’s convicting, teaching power. The details of the work that God does, that is, conviction of sin, gift of faith, forgiveness upon confession, sealing, sanctifying, giving grace, hearing our prayers, answering, and such, will cause our hearts to burn. It is a God-caused burning in the depths of our being, the seat of our intellect, will, and emotions. It is not an emotional wave but a deep and abiding sense that we can and must trust God because He is so gracious and loving.