

Luke 24:13-35

Those With Eyes to See, Let Them See

I suffer from an incurable condition which came immediately after our wedding. I cannot see what is in front of me. From what I can tell, this is a universal experience for married men. If our wives ask us to grab something from the refrigerator, we'll see everything, but what we've been asked to grab. This, of course, isn't just an epidemic among husbands. It is a universal problem when it comes to spiritual things. Somehow, the truth of Christ and his saving gospel can stand right in front of us, and yet, somehow, we still miss it.

This post-resurrection experience begins with **Blind Eyes** (vs. 13-27). Verse 16 is key to the entire passage. Normally, the Gospels tell the story of how the blind came to see, but now we meet disciples who once could see but were now blind. While wrestling with the rumors of Jesus's resurrection, a third party joins two disciples. The humor of the story is obvious. While talking about Jesus, they do not realize he is walking beside them. They must have been married men!

This detail strikes me. How could they have been so blind? To be fair, Cleopas and his colleague are not the only ones who saw Jesus but didn't recognize him (see John 20:15, 21:4). The reason is a simple one: they were not looking for him. They were, indeed, blind to his presence and power.

Not much has changed. Modern man is equally blind. One of the main explanations against the gospel is the claim that RESURRECTION IS IMPOSSIBLE. Modern man believes in a closed system. As a result, we disregard all miracles as impossible, illogical, and unscientific, thus shutting off the divine. Even Christians can be guilty of this presupposition. We are not the first to think like this. The ancients understood that the dead do not return. As a result, history is littered with explanations of what happened. Perhaps, some would argue, Jesus never died either surviving the cross or someone else was mistakenly executed. Though creative, it is highly improbable. Others claim the first eyewitnesses visited the wrong tomb or the body was stolen. All these efforts fail to explain what truly happened.

Another reason why people reject the gospel is DESPAIR. Notice the disciples were both grieving (vs. 17) and disappointed (vs. 21). To them, Jesus was a man who was a mighty prophet, but his death took all of that away. They were gripped with strong emotions and frustration. Nothing rocks our faith more than sorrow and tragedy.

Another cause for rejecting the gospel is MISINTERPRETATION. When it comes to spiritual truth, we often imagine the God of fantasy above revelation. We all believe in a loving God who overlooks our sin but skip all the other stuff. In short, we fashion God in our own image. The ancient Jews had no category for a Suffering Messiah. It is for this reason, Jesus walks these disciples through Scripture showing how it all pointed toward the cross and the resurrection. We all wish Luke recorded exactly what Jesus taught, but, in reality, we already know. Every page of Scripture points to the suffering and triumphant Savior. For example, Jesus is the true and better Adam who triumphed in the Garden of Temptation. He is the true and better Abel who died at the hands of sinners, yet cries, not for our condemnation, but for our acquittal. He is the true and better Noah who does not escape the wrath of the Father but suffers it on behalf of the guilty. He is the true and better Abraham who is the head of an eternal Kingdom, the true and better Isaac who was sacrificed in obedience to his Father, the true and better Joseph who was betrayed by his brothers but now sits at the right hand of the King and forgives those who betrayed him. Jesus is the true and better Moses who rescues, not with plagues, but by becoming a curse and now mediates a new covenant. He is the true and better Joshua who fights on our behalf, not with a sword or an army, but with a cross

and an empty tomb by which he welcomes us to a better land of promise. Jesus is the true and better David who defeats our greatest enemies, not with a stone, but with his blood, the true and better Jonah who enters the heart of the earth, not for his own disobedience but for ours only to be raised on the third day. Jesus is the true and better Esther who did not merely risk death, but willingly suffered it to save the lost.

Likewise, Jesus is the true and better Rock where we hide to stand in God's presence. He is a true and better Sin Offering who pays for our transgressions once and for all on the cross. He is the true and better Peace Offering who reconciles us to God. The true and better Prophet who not only speaks the very word of God but is the very manifestation of the Word. The true and better Priest who examines our skin, our homes, and our hearts in order to present us holy before the Lord. The true and better King who rules in righteousness while defeating man's greatest enemies. The true and better Rock of Moses who was struck with the rod of God's justice. The true and better Lamb whose sacrifice grants eternal forgiveness. The true and better Temple who dwelt among men and the true and better Bread who not only feeds us for a time but satisfies us forever.

It is incredible how many people fail to see this because they miss the Jesus of Scripture. For so many, it's not that we are blind, but that we have closed our eyes. God can and does intervene.

The passage concludes with **Burning Hearts** (vs. 28-35). The good news is that these disciples, lost in confusion and sorrow, did not stay blind for long. The risen Lord opened their eyes. After walking some distance, Jesus and the two disciples arrive at an unnamed village. Jesus indicated he was going to continue, but the disciples insisted he stay with them. This would have been common practice in the ancient world where hospitality was the social norm.

It is at the breaking of the bread that the disciples finally see. We are not told how they were able to recognize Jesus. Maybe they finally saw the mark of the nails. Maybe it was the way he blessed the meal or the way he spoke to the Father. Regardless, their eyes are suddenly opened only for Jesus to vanish. This seems to be something Jesus did after his resurrection (see John 20:19).

Interestingly, we are not told they were shocked, frightened, or confused. Perhaps that was their initial reaction. Luke zeroes in on something else; their hearts burned within them. This does not describe anxiety or fear, but excitement and awe. Christ *is* risen. The claims of the women are true. The testimony of Peter and John are true. He is risen! And now it all makes sense. God's Kingdom had come. Sin had been cleansed. Satan had been crushed. Death had been conquered. Christ now rules and reigns. Never let the gospel become so normal that it fails to open your eyes and burn your hearts.

It is at this moment these disciples marveled at God's grace and become evangelists. Christ's resurrection meant that salvation was secured for all who come to Christ. No wonder they are quick to announce their experience with the other disciples. There is no secret to evangelism. What matters is the story we tell and the people we love. Yes, relationships are essential to effective evangelism, but we must not forget that Christianity is not a religion rooted in law, but in a story about God invading humanity to save sinners like you and me.

Our story is simple: Christ is risen, and he has opened my eyes.

Although it is probably apocryphal, the story goes that one night in the late 1950's, Elvis Presley visited a steakhouse he had frequented before he came to fame. On this night, they were hosting an Elvis impersonator contest. The famous singer decided to enter even singing his hit song, "Love Me Tender." Elvis Aaron Pressley finished third.

It is amazing how easy it is to miss what is right in front of our eyes, often choosing the lesser. May we not do the same regarding the death conquering Savior.