

## Week 39

### **The Stranger on the Road to Emmaus**

We have been working our way through the gospel of John and are now midway through the 20<sup>th</sup> chapter. Last time we discussed the various events and eyewitnesses to the resurrection from the dead of Jesus. Our hope is built on this fact; Jesus was dead and buried and now He is alive. Jesus has overcome death, He is victorious.

John chose events from the life of Jesus, with a purpose to help us to the belief that Jesus is the Christ and believing we have eternal life. John stated this purpose in the John 20: 30-31. Of course, John's eyewitness account of the living Jesus is part of that purpose.

The last verses of our last study John 20:20, included Jesus revealing Himself alive, first to Mary Magdalene in the cemetery, outside the tomb. She was there seeking Him, although she thought He was dead. Just as He has promised, when we seek Him with a sincere heart, we will find Him. On that same day He appeared to His disciples in the room where they had gathered, or were hiding. All of these things happened on the same day, Easter, according to John.

There is another appearance which occurred that day, which John did not record, but which we will talk about today so that we can understand a little bit more about this resurrected Savior.

Let's turn to Luke's gospel which is different from Matthew and Mark in that Luke had a different perspective. He was Greek they were Jewish men. He was a physician and so apparently much better educated than the other gospel writers who were fishermen, tax collectors, etc. Luke was a man of order and detail. He told us his purpose in writing his gospel in Luke 1:1-4, he wrote his gospel as a letter to a man named Theophilus, he said it was detailed and in consecutive order or we might say in chronological order and he also said he interviewed eyewitnesses and "servants or ministers of the word".

Has God ever called you to a ministry which seemed too difficult, too time consuming? What if Luke had thought this? After all, he was a busy doctor, how could he fit this into his schedule? How we have been blessed by his obedience. We would not have what we call the "Christmas story" if not for Luke. You can bless others and yourself as well if you will obey God and do what He calls you to do.

I am going to call this study THE STRANGER ON THE EMMAOUS ROAD and I am indebted to John Cross for his book on this subject, some of which I am adapting to this study.

Luke 24:13-18

Luke said that what he recorded here occurred on the same day as Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and discovered that Jesus was gone, then He appeared at her side, very much alive. Of course, we call this day Easter.

We have the record of 2 of Jesus followers, one is named Cleopas, as they walked to Emmaus, about 7 miles from Jerusalem. Evidently they had just set out when Jesus joined them because Cleopas talked about the events "here" in Jerusalem, so they could not have gotten far. As they were walking and talking what events of the past few days were they discussing?

Jesus, their teacher, Master, Messiah, had been taken prisoner, put through a mock trial, falsely accused, tortured unmercifully and then to their horror crucified. They probably saw crucified

people from time to time as this was a typical Roman punishment, but never in their wildest imagination could they have thought of Jesus, being treated this way, even though He had told them over and over it would happen. He had spent all His life doing good, healing, teaching and helping people. However, He had not been intimidated by the false religion of the Jewish leaders. They had taken the law of God and added over 600 rules of minutia, which made life miserable to those who tried to follow them. Jesus frequently pointed out their hypocrisy; they imposed rules on the people, which they did not keep themselves. For that Jesus was murdered. However, these men's friends, Mary Magdalene, John and Peter and others had reported Jesus tomb was empty this morning and Mary said she had actually seen Jesus alive.

They were discussing all these things when a Stranger joined them on the walk and He wanted them to explain all they had seen and heard. The bible says they were prevented from recognizing Him.

Luke 24:19-21

Luke tells us that they explained it all to Him but they added that they were really disappointed because they thought He was the Messiah and that He was going to redeem Israel, according to verse 21.

By redeeming Israel they thought the Messiah would get rid of Rome and restore the grandeur of the glories of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem. They thought there would be an earthly king and they would be free of Roman rule. This is what their religious leaders told them the Messiah would do, but this is not what their scriptures said would happen.

Luke 24:22-24

Here was where the story got confusing; some of their friends had gone to the tomb this very morning and discovered Jesus was gone. One of them said she had seen Him alive, they were overwhelmed.

Cleopas and his friend then told the Stranger that they had also gone to the tomb and checked and it was empty. They added that they did not see Jesus alive for themselves

Then the Stranger said these words;

Luke 24:25-26

Are you foolish and slow of heart to believe all Moses and the prophets have spoken?

Luke 24:27

Beginning with Moses and the prophets, where did He begin? Genesis 1:1 after all Moses recorded the first 5 books of the bible as he took dictation from God. Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth". What does this have to do with Jesus? It is His story.

The verse I began with, Jeremiah exalting God because of the beauty and magnificence of the created world because Jeremiah knew God created all he could see, a magnificent creation, and he worshiped God for His greatness

Compared to what we know now Jeremiah's knowledge was very limited. Jeremiah did not know that light travels at the speed of 186,000 miles/second, at that speed you could circle the earth 7 times a second, you could be at the moon in 2 seconds, Mars in 4 minutes, remember you are traveling at the speed of light; 8.7 million miles per minute. At that speed it would take

100000 years to cross our galaxy and friends there are 100 billion galaxies, do you understand the immensity of the universe? Jeremiah knew nothing about this.

Where did all this come from? Moses wrote what God told him, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, He spoke and it was done". He made all this vastness out of nothing.

PS 33:6 By the word of the LORD the heavens were made and by the breath of His mouth all the hosts

PS 33:9 He spoke and it was done. He commanded and it stood fast.

In our day science has described the creation in great detail and knowing of its complexity and vastness decided that it all just happened, and in fact if you believe in a Creator you are considered foolish and uneducated. The fact that God created all we see is not taught in school, in fact in many places it is illegal to say it.

Of course this is addressed in the bible in Romans 1 where we are told that men can see what God has created but they don't want to believe and so they suppress the truth and then they are without excuse at the judgment seat of God.

By the way if you are wondering how Moses could have written all the, remember what the bible told us about him. He was born to a Jewish family; because Pharaoh ordered all Jewish male infants to be killed his mother devised a plan to put him in a basket in the Nile River right where Pharaoh's daughter was bathing. She saw him and took him as her son. Miraculously his mother was hired to nurse him and so he spent his first years, until he was weaned, in a Jewish home and no doubt taught his what they knew of God and also to speak Hebrew. The bible says he was then taken to the palace and raised, educated in all the ways of the Egyptians. This is equal to going to the finest schools in America. He was very well educated, no doubt fluent in several languages; it would have been no problem for him to write what God told him. I am sure you can see God all sovereignly arranged this.

Back to creation;

However in full confidence that God's Word is truth, He did create as He has said I will proceed to share with you what Jesus told these men, you see, Jesus believes in creation so that is what He explained to these men.

When God created the earth He established certain physical laws, which keep order, and by which we can make sense of nature; the stars stay where He put them, we can find the North Star, we can always follow it to find our way at night.

The sun stays where He put it perfectly aligned with the earth to warm it as needed. And we know how gravity works, it never changes.

God also established moral law, the 10 commandments, He wrote those laws into our conscience and we know right from wrong, even if many argue they don't. Its just an excuse to escape accountability, which is impossible, ultimately we will all give an account for ourselves and that is why Jesus came.

Of course right away we know that we break God's laws all the time and when we do we incur a debt to Him, just as when we borrow money from a bank we are indebted. So our sin creates

a debt on the moral ledger. Romans say the wages or the price of this is death-eternal separation from God.

We also learn from Romans 3:23 that all have sinned, that includes you and me and everybody. John said, "If we say we have no sin, we lie". So anyone who says, "I don't sin", better check with God on that.

So you and I have incurred a sin debt and death is the way we pay it back, frankly, not many are eager to pay this debt.

We have something we don't want, sin, which causes guilt, shame and separation from God and eventually the second death. We need something we don't have, perfection, goodness to make us acceptable to God.

How do we get rid of the sin and get the righteousness we need to please God?

The bible says God is just, so He has to force us to pay our debt to Him-death. But He is loving and has no desire to destroy us. How can He be just and loving?

His answer is this; He allows our physical bodies to die but He provides an escape for our soul from eternal separation from Him, called the second death.

If your pride-which is the first sin committed in the garden- will not interfere you can come to God for His remedy, atonement. The sin debt can only be paid by death or blood so we need a substitute or a covering-blood covers sin.

Genesis tells of the animals God killed to provide skins, as covering for Adam and Eve after they sinned, Jesus is the covering for our sin. Genesis also tells of the Ark, which Noah built as a place of safety for those who believed in God, the Ark is a covering, a Christ type. We will be safe inside Jesus when the wrath of God is poured out in judgment on this world. By the way, Jesus referred to the flood, and the whale of Jonah's fame in case you are skeptical that that is a factual account. Isaac is a type of Christ, illustrating the Father killing his son as a sin offering but then Isaac, like us, was spared from death because God provided the sacrifice, just as He did in Jesus.

The wilderness tabernacle is a description of Christ; this is where the sacrifices for sin were made, the Holy of Holies is a place to meet God within the shelter of the tabernacle. The Ark of the Covenant containing the Law covered with the Mercy Seat, which had blood sprinkled on it is another illustration of the work of Christ, mercy covers judgment. The High Priest entering the Holy of Holies bearing the sins of the people, Jesus is our High Priest. Are you beginning to get the idea? God never stopped telling His people how to be free from sin and how He was going to accomplish this.

All this Jesus was explaining to these Jewish men who knew the first 5 books of the bible-they had, no doubt memorized it as children as Jewish males were required to do. Can you see why Jesus said to them O foolish men and slow to believe?

When God saw the animal sacrificed, that is dead, He was satisfied the law was fulfilled. The debt was covered, the debt was not paid, but it illustrated what had to happen to pay the debt.

Why did Jesus have to die?

We, you and I, should have died, but Jesus took our place and died. He is our substitute. When He died, His death completely paid the sin debt for everyone who ever lived. His payment is the only effective way of paying that debt. His payment is only effective if you believe it will cover your debt.

Romans 5:6-9

For while we were still helpless, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. One will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.

This death of Christ in our place, as our substitute is only effective if we believe in this remedy for our sin and put all our hope and faith in Him. Ephesians 2:8 "For by grace have you been saved, through faith, it is not of yourself, it is a gift of God".

Recently Dr. James MacDonald preached a series on Hell, the first I have ever heard. He said there are two kinds of people in Hell, those who said to God; no thank you for the free gift, I will find my path there with good deeds and religious rituals and then those persons who think they are saved because they have said a certain prayer, but there is no evidence in their life, no interest in the bible, no obedience to Jesus' teachings. There is only one way; recognize your need, accept the free gift of salvation from God and give control of your life over to Jesus. Jesus must be Savior and LORD. Jesus said, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life but he who does not obey will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him. Mental agreement with Jesus is not commitment and salvation. This is not my opinion; it is what the bible says.

The bible says over and over; today, if you hear His voice, respond.

Jesus talked to them about what Moses and the prophets wrote because according to Romans 15:4 "whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope".

Jesus explained how all the Old Testament related to Him, was fulfilled in Him. What about the prophets? Consider Jeremiah and Isaiah. Isaiah told us a Jesus would be virgin born. Those prophets wrote also about the greatness of God the creator but they also gave individual prophecies about Jesus, His birth, His life and His death. Consider Micah 5:2 the prophecy of the place of Jesus birth and many more.

Let me finish with the remaining verses of this passage; 28-35.

Jesus has risen from the death, He is victorious over death and we can share that victory.

Someone once said; born once, die twice; born twice, die once.

There is no reason for you to be eternally separated from God when He has provided all you need to be sure of your salvation and spend eternity in heaven with Him. Today is the day of salvation, today; if you hear His voice respond, ask Him to be your Savior and your Lord. He is able, He will do it.