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LUKE 24:1-53

There are so many blessings of just being a Christian!

Just to know our **sins are forgiven...**

Just to know **we can trust Jesus...**

Just to know **God hears and answers prayer...**

Just to know **God desires and inhabits our praises...**

Just to know that **we have abundant life now and eternal life
to look forward to...**

and that's just to name a few...

But none of these blessings would be possible without the resurrection of our Lord Jesus!

We serve a risen Savior!

We serve a living Redeemer!

We serve a resurrected Lord!

So, with that in mind, let's look at

Verses 1-3...

These women had heard the teachings of Jesus. They had followed His earthly ministry...surely they knew that He had said that He would rise from the dead after three days!

But, I believe these women were like the rest of us tend to be on occasion...they didn't **remember**...they didn't **understand**...they didn't **believe**...that *Jesus said what He meant and He meant what He said!*

Can't we identify with these women? How often do we have a promise in God's Word, yet, for whatever reason, **we don't fully understand, or we don't quite believe or we just forget what He said...**

And this happens so often when we lose a loved one. We get so caught up with the profound grief and heartbreak that we forget we'll see them again, don't we?

And when you think about it, it's really very sad to live as though we never have heard the truth of God's Word. What defeated lives we live when we don't allow the Holy Spirit to seal these truths to our heart.

Verses 4-8...

These women came to the grave, fully expecting to anoint a dead body...not to find an empty tomb or the risen Savior. They came, bringing spices with which to do this, and instead, they encountered two angels and they were terrified!

Verse 8... *"and they remembered His words..."*

Verses 9-11...

Then the women went and told the disciples...but they didn't believe the women, did they? These men weren't any different from the women and they had **lived with** Jesus and had been **taught daily by** Jesus.

But, grief and shock do strange things to folks...

(Besides, the men may have thought these women were just hysterical, just overcome with emotion!)

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Verse 12...

We can always count on Peter, can't we? Peter ran and looked into the tomb. The **Gospel of John** tells us Peter was accompanied by John.

And what mixed feelings Peter must have had. On one hand, Peter longed to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead...

But on the other hand, Peter knew if this were really true, he would soon have to face the One he had denied only three nights before.

I want us to think for a moment about who **came** to the tomb that Easter morning and who **did not**, but **should have...**

Every Jew from everywhere should have crowded into that cemetery to see what these women saw that morning.

Every Jew should have been excited that the Lamb of God had made the once and for all sacrifice!

The roads to Jerusalem should have been packed with folks – both Jew and Gentile alike.

Caiaphas and the entire Sanhedrin should have been there...

The world should have been there to witness the empty tomb... Instead, the world stayed away and who came?

Two angels from heaven...
Some grieving women...
And two grieving disciples...

I heard it said this past week that instead of folks saying "Jesus, come down from the Cross" there should have been someone there saying, "Jesus, come out of the tomb."

But, let's remember that this was all part of God's sovereign and perfect plan. Jesus didn't have to have the approval and the applause of the world in order to triumph over death, sin, hell and the grave! Jesus needed only the approval of His heavenly Father!

And that's all **we** should want or need... All God wants is for us to seek **His** will, **His** approval and **His** applause!

The next passage of this chapter tells us in great detail of an incident that I'd like to spend the rest of our time looking at.

Verses 13-27...

Jesus met up with two of His followers on the road to Emmaus. Look with me down at

Verse 28-32...

I want us to see today how we too can have a heart that burns with the same truth that burned within the hearts of these two men. I'm convinced that the great need in the **church** today and in **your** heart today and in **my** heart today is not simply to know truth, but **to know truth that burns within our hearts!**

G. Campbell said, "*The worst form of blasphemy is lukewarmness.*"

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The Lord Jesus had some sharp words to say about a lukewarm church...remember? In **Revelation 3**, Jesus said to the lukewarm church of Laodicea, "Because you are neither hot nor cold, I want to spew you out of My mouth..."

Have you ever tried to drink lukewarm water? It's not very good, is it? My first inclination is to spit it out!

Do you know what lukewarmness says in a church or in a Christian? It says,
"God I believe in You, but You just don't excite me very much."

And lukewarmness will lead us to do what Peter did...it will lead us to deny the Lord Jesus Christ. Denial of Jesus can come in many ways...not just in words like "I never knew Him..." as Peter did, but **in simply failing to stand up for Him and His truth!**

In Russia today, **churches are open**, and **folks are free to worship**. Some of us have been there and we have worshiped in those churches. Some of the most thrilling songs I've ever heard were hymns sung in Baptist churches in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

But, before the cold war ended and communism fell, we heard stories of brave Russian believers who met to worship and study the Bible **at the risk of their very lives**.

One story is told of a group of believer who had formed a house church.

Somehow there had been smuggled into their possession one copy of the gospel of Luke. The gospel had been literally torn apart and given to various members of this house church so they could read portions of it before they met for worship on the Lord's Day.

They had to come in that Lord's Day, by twos and threes at different times of the day to worship together so as not to arouse the attention of the KGB.

Well, after they finally all got together in this house church and just as they had begun to quietly sing a hymn the door burst open and **two Soviet soldiers armed with automatic weapons pushed their way in**.

They shouted, **"Everybody line up against the wall. Anyone who will renounce faith in Jesus Christ leave now!"**

Quickly two or three slipped away in embarrassed silence. And then two or three more, and another and another and finally a lone straggler left quickly.

"Keep your hands up," they said as the last one left. Some of the mothers of smaller children looked down into the faces of their children and gave them a reassuring nod but no one else moved.

The door slammed shut. And with a smile one of the soldiers said, **"Keep your hands up, but in praise to our Lord Jesus Christ, brothers and sisters!**

We were called upon to arrest a house church just like this several weeks ago, and rather than arresting them, we were converted.

We're one of you...but we have learned that no one can be trusted unless he's willing to die for his faith."

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Have you ever wondered what you would do if you were faced with this? Have you ever thought about it?

I mean, if someone came into this room this morning armed with automatic weapons and ordered those of us who were not totally committed to Christ to leave...what would you do? Would you leave or would you stay? How can anyone know? It's so easy for us to sit in our comfortable churches here in the Bible Belt and say, "Oh, I'm sure I'd stand for Christ!"

But, have there been times when you've failed to stand for Him in **far less dangerous circumstances** than the one we've just talked about? Have there been times when you've failed to speak up or failed to witness or failed just to tell someone what Jesus means to you...for fear of being **teased** or **ridiculed** or **mocked** or just **simply looked at strangely**?

Listen, we don't live under communism. And I know that more and more Christians are being ridiculed...but at least now, we are free to worship and attend church and study our Bibles. We don't have to cut up the Bible and pass it around as these folks did...

And if we don't always stand for Christ in **so-called Christian America**, what will we do if and when our nation no longer tolerates Christians?

Jeremiah 12:5:

"If you have run with **footmen** and they have tired you out, then how can you compete with **horses**?"

Let me give you a paraphrase of that... "If it's tough for you to stand true to Christ when it's an **easy** thing to do, how could you **possibly** stand true to Him when it's a **very hard** thing to do?"

Well, one of the things that will help us to stand firm for the Lord Jesus Christ is a **knowledge** and an **understanding** and a **belief** in the Word of God. **And it is this knowledge and understanding and belief in the Word of God that will make our hearts burn within us!!!**

Let's look at how the Lord Jesus Christ caused these two men to be encouraged and to have hearts that burned within them!

First of all I want us to think about where these two men were going. They had left Jerusalem and they were headed back to Emmaus. They probably lived in Emmaus and now that it was all over they were just going back home! **I mean, they surely didn't expect to find the risen Savior in Emmaus, did they?**

But, **verse 15** says Jesus sought them out and began traveling with them...

Jesus didn't seek them out to **condone** their sadness...

Jesus didn't seek them out to **condemn** their sadness...

Jesus sought them out to **comfort** them in their sadness...and to **instruct** them in their sadness...

Elisabeth Eliot:

"When we find ourselves most hopeless, the road most taxing, we may also find that it is then that the Risen Christ catches up to us on the way...better than our dreams, beyond than all our hopes. For it is He – not His gifts, not His power, not what He can do for us, but He Himself – who comes and makes

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Himself known to us.”

Now, this should bless our hearts! When did Jesus first seek you? He came “to seek and to save that which was lost...”

So, if Jesus sought us when we were lost, how much more will Jesus seek us when we are saved, but are in the middle of doubt and confusion and sadness.

I’ve heard it said that the love of God is like a rubber band and when we go astray it stretches and draws us back. So, the Savior sought them and He caught up with them and He began walking with them. And then Jesus taught them!

Verse 27...

What a great moment! Christ teaches these men the Scriptures! This word “**explained**” here is the word that means “**the study or the principles of Biblical interpretation.**”

In other words, He took the Scriptures and He **interpreted** the Scriptures...He **expounded** the Scriptures so that they could see truth! Now, how would you like to have the Lord Jesus Christ as your Bible teacher?

For seven and a half miles...at least a couple of hours...Jesus was walking along and He taught them the things concerning Himself in **all** the Scriptures.

Let me ask you...

When you’re **doubting** and **disappointed** and **discouraged** and **sadness has overwhelmed you**...what to you do? **Do you ever just open the Scriptures and look for Jesus?**

Remember, at this point these men still didn’t know who Jesus was.

And it wasn’t because these fellows were stupid! **Verse 16** tells us “*their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him.*”

Jesus still hadn’t revealed Himself to them in His flesh. The book of **Mark 16:13** tells us that Jesus came to two of His followers in “**another form**” or “**a different form**” Were these the two followers we see here in **Luke**? **I believe they were...**

I believe it was God’s will that they know Jesus, **not after the flesh but after the spirit.** Soon, Jesus would be gone...He would ascend into Heaven and God wanted the relationship that they had had with Jesus in His physical, literal presence to be broken and a new relationship established.

Let me ask you...would you rather live now, or back then when we could walk and talk with Jesus? Jesus Himself said, “**It is better for you that I go away.**”

You see, as hard as it is for us to understand...it is far better for us to know Jesus in the Spirit than to know Him in the flesh. And I believe God was weaning these men away from a purely physical relationship with Jesus. God wanted to bring them to a deeper, more spiritual relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ than they had ever had before.

And He did this by focusing their attention, not on the physical presence of Jesus, but upon the presence of Jesus that was revealed in His holy Word.

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It was better for us that the Lord Jesus went away because we're have a Teacher who doesn't dwell in human flesh and isn't limited by time and space. We have the dear Holy Spirit!

And we also have the completed canon of Scripture!

I wish we could know exactly what Jesus said to them. I believe He took them back to the basics. I believe He gave them a quick study of "Prophecy 101"...

We need to remember that the Word of God is about Jesus! Every book contains that scarlet thread that points to Jesus! He is there

In **type**...

In **prophecy**,

In **figure**,

In **picture**,

In **illustration**,

In **analogy**...

He is even there in **theophany**...in pre-incarnate appearances!

If you don't see Jesus in God's Word, you better read it again, because He's there...even on the pages of the Old Testament. And if you want a "burning heart," you need to get into God's Word and look for the truth of Jesus...

His commandments,

His character,

His concern for your soul!

Let's just think for a moment about what Jesus might have shown these men. He began with Moses. Who wrote **Genesis**?

Maybe Jesus took them all the way back to **Genesis 3:15** where God told the devil that one day One would come who would bruise him on the head.

Maybe He reminded them that God made a covenant with a man named **Abraham** and within that covenant God told Abraham that through his seed all the people of the world would be blessed.

Maybe Jesus reminded these men that this promise got narrowed down and narrowed down again and again...through **Isaac** and then through **Jacob** and then through **Judah** and finally through the line of **David**.

Then maybe Jesus reminded these fellows that **Isaiah** told us that Jesus would be born of a virgin and **Micah** told us that He would be born in a certain town named Bethlehem and then **Daniel** told us of a certain time.

And, when you put all this together...there's only one Person who was ever born who fulfills all these prophecies...and His name is Jesus!

Now, bear in mind, there are over 400 prophecies concerning Jesus contained in Scripture...all of which came true. But, Peter Stoner in **Science Speaks** says the mathematical possibility of just **8 things** prophesied about Jesus being fulfilled is 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000. (1 in 1 followed by 17 zeroes)

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Now, I'm not mathematically minded at all, but I do know that these are slim odds...slim chances! But, praise God, we're not dealing with "chance". **We're dealing with the infallible, inerrant, inspired Word of God!**

I can't even **fathom** 1 with 17 zeroes after it! I don't even know what you call it, but let me give you the example that Peter Stoner gave.

If it were possible to put this many silver dollars in one place, they would cover the **entire state of Texas** and they would be stacked **two feet deep**.

Just imagine! Silver dollars two feet deep covering the entire state of Texas!

Now, imagine there being one marked silver dollar and you put a man down in the middle of Texas and he would be able to pick up that **one silver dollar out of all those others!**

That's the mathematical possibility of **just 8** of the over 400 prophecies concerning Jesus being fulfilled.

Prophecies concerning Jesus were so marvelously fulfilled. Jesus is the only person ever born whose birth **place** and birth **time** and **circumstances** were so accurately prophesied **hundreds of years in advance**.

Can you imagine having to paint a picture of a man you've never seen? Can you imagine having the portrait painted by 25+ artists and the portrait turns out absolutely perfectly?

I believe we can learn from this passage of Scripture that God reveals His Son to us in His holy Word and He used over 25 different people to do this!

Verses 28-33...

They already knew He was risen...but now,

Verse 34... "The Lord has **really** risen...(NAS) He has risen **indeed**...(KJV)

If we were to take a Bible test this morning and one of the questions on the test was "Is the Lord risen this morning?" What would we all say? "Yes, He is risen."

But, most of us need to know "He is risen **indeed!**" Most of us need to **remember** every day and be **amazed** every day and be **comforted** and **encouraged** and **empowered** every day that we serve the Risen Savior!

Verse 33 tells us these two fellows went right back to Jerusalem because they had met Jesus and their hearts were set afire!

By the way, **verse 44** of this chapter tells us that when Jesus met up with the eleven disciples, He gave **them** a Bible lesson, too! Let's look at it...

Verses 36-49...

Read verse 44 again...

Let me say to you that this made a lasting impression on these men. Jesus reminded them of something they already knew...just as I'm reminding you of something you already know! Jesus is everywhere in the Word of God!

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Do you want to stand firm in the face of opposition?
Do you want to stand firm in the face of embarrassment?
Do you want to stand firm in the face of threats on your life?

Know the Word! Believe the Word! Believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is in every Book of the Bible!

It's been said that human knowledge is believed when it is understood! Spiritual knowledge is understood when it is believed!

In the book of **Acts** we see one of the disciples proclaim the Gospel of the Lord Jesus boldly and accurately and fearlessly! And in at least two of his sermons, he reminded the Jews that Jesus had been prophesied by **all** the prophets!

Who was this disciple? This was Peter, the one who had denied the Lord Jesus Christ three times with words!

But, Peter turned around and went public! He was no longer a private believer...He was no longer an undercover Christian! In fact, legend tells us that when it came time for Peter's martyrdom he felt himself unworthy to die as Christ died and asked that he be crucified upside down!

What in the world would cause a person to change 180 degrees so dramatically? What would bring Peter out of private fear into public courage? I believe it was the power of the Word of God accompanied by the power of the dear Holy Spirit.

I believe there are those of us in this room who have been to so many Bible studies and Bible drills and taken so many Bible memorization courses that we couldn't even count them all!

But, sometimes we lack the courage to stand firm, because we've not allowed the precious Word of God to **burn within our hearts**.

How I long to say each time I **read** God's Word or **hear** God's Word **taught** and **preached**, "How my heart burned within me!" I believe if we have a burning heart, we will have all we need to do whatever God calls us to do...and I believe we'll stand firm in the face of anything!