



February 19, 2012
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*The One with all the questions:
What Are You Discussing?
Luke 24: 13-35*

Today as we continue our series on the ONE with all the questions we're going to look at one of my favorite stories from God's Word. Jesus shows up to walk with some of His followers, but they do not recognize Him. He wasn't in a disguise; he hadn't changed his hair color; he was just ... resurrected from the dead. It's a story that many of you know well, but hidden in this story is a super important truth about the way that Christians engage with others in ministry and in spiritual conversations. And for those of you who are not Christians, there is a super important truth about Jesus that is front and center in this Bible passage. So, no matter you are with Jesus today, there's something for all of us. Please turn to Luke 24:13-35. Let's open our hearts to what God's Word will teach us today.

Luke 24:13-35

13 Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles[a] from Jerusalem. 14 They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. 15 As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; 16 but they were kept from recognizing him.

17 He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?" They stood still, their faces downcast. 18 One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you only a visitor to Jerusalem and do not know the things that have happened there in these days?"

19 "What things?" he asked.

"About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. 20 The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; 21 but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. 22 In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning 23 but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. 24 Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see."

25 He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Did not the Christ[b] have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

28 As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther. 29 But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them.

30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. 32 They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

33 They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together 34 and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." 35 Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

It was Sunday morning. Jesus died on Friday. His followers have been devastated. All their hopes for the future of Israel were riding on his shoulders. More and more were beginning to believe that he was really the One who would redeem Israel – who would deliver them from the oppression of the Roman Empire (and any other empire, for that matter). But their hopes were crushed when he was killed in the worst Roman way; he was crucified. But early that Sunday morning, after a horrible couple of days, the weirdness began. A group of the women had already been to the tomb that morning and found it empty. As they looked around for Jesus' body they were visited by two angels who told them that Jesus was alive; He had risen from the dead. They rushed back to tell the other disciples, who were, at best, skeptical of the report.

Now, according to our text (verse 13), on that same day, two of Jesus' followers started out to a village called Emmaus. We find out later in the story that one of them was named Cleopas; he wasn't one of the Twelve, but must have been with them over the weekend. The second one goes unnamed, but some have made an educated guess that it was Cleopas' wife. And, of course, as they walked, they talked about all that had happened on that weekend that would change the course of history.

In the midst of that intense conversation, a stranger began walking with them. There may have been several folks walking along the road that day, leaving Jerusalem after the Passover celebration. We know, of course, that this stranger was Jesus; but for some reason they didn't recognize him. Jesus must have heard what they were talking about; he knew their hearts were swirling with all that had occurred over the last few days. And here He was, the Risen Savior, the very One they were talking about, walking with them and listening to their conversation, and waiting for just the right moment of their conversation to jump out in front of them and say, "Here I am! I am alive! I have risen from the dead! I have all the answers to your questions! I am the truth!" As the reader of the story we are anticipating that great moment. We are waiting for Jesus to surprise them. ... But instead Jesus just asks them a question (verse 17). "What are you discussing together as you walk along?" What!? The question simply stuns the couple. I love this little detail that Luke adds in, "They stood still, their faces downcast."

"What rock have you been under?" ... is essentially the question that they ask Jesus. "Don't you know the things that have been happening in Jerusalem?" Jesus plays dumb, (verse 19) "What things?"

This is an interesting move from Jesus. Of course he knew the things that had been happening – they happened to him. It was he who prayed to His Heavenly Father, "Not my will, but your will be done" (Luke 22:42). It was one of his disciples that kissed him on the

cheek for the ultimate betrayal. It was his body flogged and beaten to try to satisfy the crowds. It was his flesh that had been torn on the cross. It was his last gasped breath that dashed the hopes of his disciples. It was he who had risen from the dead. But again, instead of revealing himself, he asks a simple question, "What things?"

In so many ways this passage epitomizes what we've been trying to communicate in the last several sermons. Jesus doesn't lead with all the answers. He doesn't give an explanation of the Gospel. Rather he comes along side of these disciples; he walks with them; he asks them what they're talking about, and he draws it out of them.

But so many of us are quick to show our stuff. We want everyone to know how smart we are. We want to lead with our great explanation of the toughest questions in life. We want to give answers. We want to win the argument. We want to prove them wrong. We want others to shut up and listen, because we have something important to say. Yet Jesus – the one who really knew all the answers, the one who endured the cross for our sins – simply asks a question, "What are you discussing together?" And he listens. We need to follow His example. We need to ask questions that let other people do the work that only they can do when they are considering who Jesus is and what Jesus is about.

If you want to be a better boss, if you want to be a better spouse or parent, if you want to be a better friend, if you want to be a better leader, then learn to ask better questions. And if you want to be more effective at sharing the truth and love and healing and forgiveness of Jesus with others, follow Jesus' lead by asking good questions. And, oh yeah ... you have to listen to the response.

Last month I was meeting with some folks, and I was asked a bit of a hard question. So I started trying to give the best answer I could, but as I began, the very person who raised the question got up and moved to the other side of the room and starting working on something. Do you know what I thought? Well, I'm not going to tell you what I thought at first. But after a few moments, I came to this very insightful conclusion, "I don't think that person is very interested in my answer."

If you want to engage in spiritual conversation with someone – if you want to earn someone's trust, you should ask them, "What are you talking about? What are you thinking about? What's on your mind? Then, stick around and LISTEN!

Jesus listened to their answer. He walked with them and heard them out. And when they were done, Jesus asked them another question (verse 25-26) ... The Message translates the question this way, "Why can't you simply believe all that the prophets said? Don't you see that these things had to happen, that the Messiah had to suffer and only then enter into his glory?" Now, I think this may have been more of a rhetorical question to help get the two disciples thinking in the right vein, because Jesus doesn't stop to listen this time. Instead, Jesus begins to show them the truth about the Messiah.

So, what source does Jesus use to show them the truth? He goes to the Holy Scripture. Look at verse 27. 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. He went through the entire Old Testament and explained how it pointed to a Messiah who would have to suffer for the sake of redemption.

I wonder, what is your source of authority when you talk to people about Jesus? Is it your opinion? Is it your experience? Is it an argument you heard someone else make during a debate? Is it your theology? Jesus, God the Son, while walking with these two disciples, chose not to speak simply out of his own experience – and if anyone had an experience to speak out of, it was he. Instead, He pointed them to the Holy Scriptures. Are you catching my point? The best sharing I've ever done about Jesus' love and forgiveness and hope has always included pointing people to the Bible. There is something about getting people in the Bible and getting them to read it for themselves – getting them to do the work they need to do to come to Jesus. The Bible is a source of authority that is bigger than me. And we believe that when people hear the stories of the Bible and read the Bible it speaks for itself.

For Jesus to do that as they walked the road to Emmaus he had to know what the Holy Scripture said. He couldn't look at the Old Testament scrolls on his cell phone. He had to know the Story. Do you know it? Do you know what the Bible says? Do you know the stories of Jesus? Can you point people to what the Scripture says because of the way that you have worked to know it? Have you learned to tell the story of the Bible? You'll never be able to do that unless you are spending time in the Scriptures yourself – unless you are meditating on God's Word yourself. And we'll never fully be the community of worship, or discipleship, or mission to others if you are not regularly reflecting on Scripture. Are you doing that? When you do, it will help you be ready to point others (your kids, your friends, your neighbors, your co-workers) to the great story of Scripture ... just like Jesus did on the road to Emmaus that day.

He must have done it in a winsome way. Because when they finally got to Emmaus, Jesus made like he needed to keep going but they insisted that he stay with them. Then, look again at what happened (verse 30-31) 30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. Does that sound familiar to you? Just a few days earlier Jesus and the apostles gathered for a meal together when Jesus told them "this is my body given for you" (Luke 22: 19). Of course, Cleopas would not have been there; it was only the Twelve who reclined at table with Jesus for that meal. But still, maybe Cleopas and the other had heard about it. We're not sure, but as Jesus gave thanks for the bread, broke it and gave it to them, their eyes were opened to the whole truth. They realized it was Jesus with them. He HAD risen from the dead! He wasn't in the tomb in any longer. He really was the long-awaited Messiah – the Son of God – the Savior!

For reasons unknown to us, as soon as they recognized him, "he disappeared from their sight." They turned to each and shared, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" Then they got up and took off back to Jerusalem to share with the others what they had experienced.

The fact is that even now, for many of us, our hearts are burning – there is something stirring in you as we look at the Scriptures together. And beloved, it is so important to pay attention to that. That is the Holy Spirit stirring in you. That is God at work in your soul. What is God stirring in you today? For some of you it might be that there is someone in your neighborhood or family or workplace or school that needs you to come along side of them in their daily lives and simply ask them "what are you discussing?" They need you to point them to what the Bible says about Jesus. They need a partner on their journey of

discovery ... not someone with all the right answers, but someone who knows how to play dumb and ask good questions and listen.

But for some of you, God is working on you in the same way that He was working on those two disciples that walked with Jesus that day. They weren't sure about the report from the women about the empty tomb. They saw Jesus die on the cross (watching him die was like a punch in the gut) – clearly he wasn't the Messiah. But as they walked with him on the road, thinking together about what their Bible said, something began to stir in them. And as they sat with Jesus to share a meal their eyes were opened to the truth. Jesus is alive. Jesus is the Messiah. God is with us. Jesus' death on the cross wasn't the death of our hope; it was the catalyst of our hope to be made new, to be redeemed.

What is God stirring in your heart today? Whatever it is, may your eyes be opened to the truth so that you may get up and go participate in what God is doing in the world.

SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read the passage out loud.

Reflect & Apply Individually: Each person take 5-7 minutes to circle words or phrases that jumped out at them; jot down your reflections; check the notes in your Study Bible for insight or help. Grapple with what the Spirit is saying to you, your group, the church: write down some applications.

Reflect & Apply Together: Share your thoughts. Don't teach! Listen and reflect on God's word together; grapple with what God is calling us to do and be through this passage.

Pray together: tell the Lord one thing you are thankful for and lay one concern before the Lord.

Dig deeper

1. After reading through the passage again (Luke 24: 13-35), what are the things that really stick out to you about this story?
2. How does Jesus model for us a healthy way to engage with others in spiritual conversations?
3. What does Jesus teach them about the Old Testament? Do you think that's important for us? Why?
4. The disciples realized after Jesus disappeared that their hearts were alive as they walked with Jesus and talked about Scripture. Can you describe a time when you felt the Lord setting your heart afire?
5. How do you think this passage applies to you? How do you think it applies to our church?