

**Luke 24: 4-27; “The Remedy for Unbelief”, A Easter Sunday Sermon
delivered on March 31st, 2013, by Pastor Paul Rendall,
in the Morning Worship Service.**

This reproof which was given to these two men who Jesus had walked with on the road to Emmaus, could have been applied to any of His disciples on that morning when He rose from the dead. “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!” Not just the two on the road, but many of them were “slow of heart to believe” that He was really raised from the dead. We can only conclude that their faith had fallen very low since they had seen Him crucified and buried in a tomb. They really did not expect that He would rise from the dead at all. This morning I would like us to take a walk with our Lord, in our minds and hearts, just as these two walked with Him literally and physically. I want you to walk with Him for a few minutes as we meditate upon this passage, so that you can see how He overcame all the unbelief and sorrow which had filled these disciple’s hearts. I would like to show you that the Lord’s remedy for them then, is the same remedy which He has for you now. The remedy for all of your unbelief and all of your sorrow of heart is to be found in your coming to remember, each and every day, that Christ really is risen from the dead. This fact is the basis of all of your spiritual joy and contentment. 1st of all – If you would find a remedy for your unbelief and sorrow of heart, you must like them, remember His words that He has spoken. (verses 3-8) 2nd – If you would find a remedy for your unbelief and sorrow of heart you must learn to receive the testimony of others of Christ’s brethren, to His resurrection and power. (verses 9 -12) And 3rd – If you would find a remedy for your thoughts of unbelief and sadness you must realize that the risen Christ listens to your every conversation . (verses 13-27)

1st of all – If you would find a remedy for your thoughts of unbelief and sorrow of heart, you must remember the words that Christ has spoken.

Verse 3 tells us that when “they went in (to the tomb) and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus,” that they were greatly perplexed.” You can understand this can’t you? They had seen Jesus die on the cross; they had seen Him buried, and they had noted the tomb and the position of His body after Joseph of Arimethea had brought it there. Joseph was a rich man and he had asked Pilate for permission to take Jesus’ body and put it in his own new tomb. Then they saw Joseph take Jesus down from the cross and wrap him in linen, and afterwards they followed him to the tomb to see how he would lay it in a certain position. And Nicodemus, one of the Sanhedrim, had been there helping him with this. He had come bringing spices; a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes. They had taken Jesus’ body and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of that day was. They had seen Joseph and Nicodemus roll a great stone in front of the tomb. They thought that Nicodemus’ idea of spices for Jesus’ body was a good

one, and so they determined that on the third day, they too would come back to the grave and anoint Jesus' body with their own spices which they would prepare. When they got home, they prepared them, and then they rested on the Sabbath day. But then they also heard that Roman guards had been stationed in front of the tomb. They knew that the tomb had been made secure with an official seal because the chief priests and the Pharisees had gone to Pilate and had said, "Sir, we remember while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.'" "Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.'" "And the last deception will be worse than the first." So they knew that Pilate had the guards stationed there. And they knew that he had them seal the stone.

So you can imagine the surprise of the women when they came very early in the morning on the first day of the week, and they got there when the sun had risen, it says in Mark, and they said among themselves, "Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?" "But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been already been rolled away! And Matthew's gospel says that the stone had been rolled away following a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord had descended from heaven, and rolled back the stone from the door, and was sitting on it! "His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow." And this angel told them not to be afraid, for he knew that they were seeking Jesus who was crucified." He told them, "He is not here; for He is risen, as He said." And he invited them in to the tomb with these words: "Come, see the place where the Lord lay." There must have been other angels with him that morning, for our text says in verse 3, "Then the women went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus." "And as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold two men stood by them in shining garments." These "men" were, of course, angels. The women became afraid, and they bowed their faces to the earth, and the angels said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead?" "He is not here, but is risen!" "Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.'" And it says, "They remembered His words."

Now, it is amazing that these dear women did not remember Jesus' words sooner than this. They actually had to be reminded of the words which Jesus had spoken to them on a number of occasions; that He would not only be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, but that on the third day, He would rise again. How important it is for you to remember the words of the Lord Jesus. For He is no ordinary man; He is the Son of God. His words, and the words of all of the Scriptures are the means whereby your heart is strengthened. These women were not the only ones who needed to be reminded of the words of the Lord Jesus. You and I need to be reminded of His words too, lest we fall into perplexity, fear,

doubt, or discouragement. The remedy for all of these things, Jesus wants us to know, is faith in what He has said. For instance; we need to remember the words of the Lord Jesus in Hebrews 13, verses 5 and 6. “Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have.” “For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” “So we may boldly say: “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear.” “What can man do to me?” Because Jesus is raised from the dead, He has caused you to be born again to a living hope, by His resurrection from the dead, it says in 1 Peter 1: 3. And in John 14: 18, He tells us how He will become our Helper. He says, “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.” How does He come to us and become our helper? Verse 15 of John 14 says, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.”

Now, these women who came to the tomb were true believers already. They already had the work of the Holy Spirit and His blessed work of grace taking place in their hearts. They were regenerate. They had been born again. But still they had to face the perplexity of what had happened to the body of the Lord Jesus; and they had to face the fear of meeting the angels. They did not understand what these things meant for them and their personal faith. It meant that Jesus was showing them that all of the strength of their faith needed to rest upon the fact and reality of what He had done for them in dying for them on the cross. But more especially at that hour, it needed to rest upon His resurrection; His living for them to be their spiritual helper in everything. And this strengthening of their hearts was begun by their remembering the words of the Lord Jesus which the angels had spoken to them. “The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.” Well, of course! What He had said had come to pass, and if they had remembered His words, they would not have acted in such an unbelieving way as they had. They would not have prepared spices for His body; they would not have been perplexed at the stone being rolled away and the body of the Lord Jesus not being in the tomb. They would have come, expecting to find that Jesus was risen from the dead.

Even so, because of Christ’s resurrection, we as Christians need to always be hopeful and expectant concerning what the Lord Jesus will do, to prove His love and care over us in particular. We need not simply think that He is someone else’s helper, but not mine. For that is not true at all if you have believed in Jesus Christ for salvation. You must remember His words. He is your helper. He will never leave you nor forsake you. He does give you grace each and every day of your life now, as a Christian. But you may need to occasionally hear the rebuke of the angels to these women: “Why do you seek the living among the dead?” “He is not here, but He is risen!” Dear Christian; if Jesus is not in the tomb, if He is really risen indeed, then you need to believably apply that truth by faith to all the

various troubling and difficult situations of your life that you will face, day by day. Some of you may be praying to Jesus, not really expecting Him to help you; not really believing that there is spiritual substance in His grace, not really believing that He is with you now and always. Therefore, your doubts and your fears, and your perplexities, and your discouragements grow and increase, instead of their being banished. And this is because your faith is not fixed upon the Risen Christ. Let it not be so for you. Jesus is risen. It is not a dead Christ who you pray to. It is not a helpless Christ who you entrust your greatest burdens and cares to. He is alive, and He cares for you more than you could possibly know.

2ndly – If you would find a remedy for your unbelief and sorrow of heart you must learn to receive the testimony of others of Christ’s brethren, to His resurrection and power. (verses 9-12)

“Then they (that is the women) returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest.” “It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them, who told these things to the apostles.” “And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them.” “But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened.” Here, a real problem was revealed as residing in the hearts of true believers who should have known better; and these believers were the apostles. The women had heard the words of the angels and they believed the good news that Christ was raised from the dead. But when they hurried back to tell the apostles, they did not believe them. The text is very clear. The apostles thought that these were idle tales. They thought their words were nonsense it says in the margin. Robertson says, “Their words were, “as idle talk” (*ἡὸς λῆρος*). An old word for nonsense, used only here in the New Testament.” “Medical writers used it for the wild talk of those in delirium or hysteria.” What an awful situation; even the apostles, who should have known better, didn’t believe these women. We must ask ourselves – Why did they not believe? I think it was because they reasoned this way. If Christ were really raised from the dead, He would have appeared to us first. He would not have appeared to these women first. And in this I believe that they made a serious mistake. It is a mistake which is made based upon their pride; their pride of their thinking that neither the knowledge of Christ’s resurrection, nor their experience of seeing the resurrected Christ, was something to be received from those whom they thought were spiritually inferior to themselves.

I think that the Lord Jesus deliberately revealed Himself, first, to these women, to specifically show His apostles that He had vouchsafed this great revelation of His resurrection to those who He knew really needed Him the most at that time; those to whom He was not giving great responsibilities in the building of the Church, but still they would be those who would become His witnesses, even so, because they loved Him. And secondly, He did it to test the faith of His apostles. The apostle’s faith needed testing at this point. Jesus would humble

them through this testing. He would test them as to whether they would receive the experience of other ordinary Christians as something which they could learn from. They initially failed the test. They did not believe the testimony of the women; indeed, almost all of them thought it not important enough to consider further investigating of it. Let me apply this truth to ourselves now. How do you see the experience of other Christians when they speak to you about Christ's resurrection and His power to save and His power to help them by His speaking to their heart in relation to the truth of God's word. I am not talking about Charismatic knowledge or revelation. I am speaking about what other believers may experience of Christ's revealing of Himself to them in relation to the truth of the Bible. This is something which may have great value to you spiritually. It is something which God may want to show you, or speak to you, through this humble means. I believe that we who are men, who consider ourselves mature in the faith need to take seriously the fact that God does indeed manifest Himself to women, and even to new and young believers. We should be able and willing to receive spiritual observations from them; those observations that accord with the truth of the Bible. Their experience of Christ is just as valid as ours; just as precious to them as it is to us. We certainly do not have to permit them to preach or teach publicly in the church, as that would violate the clear teaching of the Word of God. But let us be willing to share spiritual things with each other, and not think that the observations of women or young believers are less important members of the body of Christ whose words and observations have no significance. No, they may have great significance indeed. We both serve a risen Savior. We can all benefit from what the risen Christ shows us in relation to His Word. "That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." "And these things we write to you that your joy may be full." You see the blood of Christ cleanses all Christians from their sins, even apostles.

And so we do find one of the apostles here who did receive the witness of these women to Christ's resurrection. It was Peter. Peter didn't just sit there, for he knew that he had been guilty of denying His Master. He needed to know if this witness was true; for if it was true, he knew that there was real hope for him. He arose and ran to the tomb and stooped down and looked in. And he saw the linen cloths lying by themselves; and he departed marveling to himself at what had happened. In other words – what had happened was that Jesus had been raised from the dead, and Peter was able to conclude this, from the evidence that he saw at the tomb. He had not yet personally seen the resurrected Christ, but he believed the evidence. "Faith is the evidence of things hoped for, the conviction of things unseen." (Hebrews 11: 6) "Blessed is he who has not seen, and yet believes." (John 20: 29) Peter saw the evidence of a completed redemption; the finished work of Christ. The wages of sin is death, but Christ was not a sinner Himself. This Peter clearly knew. So Jesus willing suffered, willingly died, and now

triumphantly overcame death. The tomb was empty. Death could not hold Him. And Peter marveled, not only that Jesus was alive, but that there might be real hope for him. Dear Christian; do you see that no matter what sins and shortcomings you have, no matter what failures there have been to do and keep God's commandments, that Jesus died for all of them? And do you see that if He has given you the twin graces of repentance and faith, that He will not fail to continue to supply you with grace to bring you to all the further repentance that you need, and will strengthen your faith in every situation of difficulty and distress that you face? He will do continue to do this blessed work in you all the way to glory; all the way to death and beyond.

This is the remedy for unbelief and sorrow of heart; to receive the testimony of how other Christians found hope and strength and joy and peace in believing. If others have found the Risen Living Christ; then so may I. If others have found joy and peace in believing in Him, then I can too. You only need run by faith, in your mind's eye, to the tomb and see that it is empty, as dear Peter did. The other apostles had to be reprov'd for their unbelief by Jesus Himself later on. No, Peter's denial of Christ was not the end for him; it was only the beginning of the Lord Jesus' showing him just how amazingly great was His power to save. It shows us His power to bring us to the place where we see our own weakness, and yet by faith we continue to behold His mighty strength. This gives us our continual joy which no man can take away. Have you learned this lesson dear Christian? Have you found this risen Christ, O sinner? Your heart can change. Christ can take away all of your sins, and will do so as you look to Him in faith.

Now 3rd - If you would find a remedy for your thoughts of unbelief and sadness you must realize that the Lord Jesus listens to your every conversation. (verses 13-27)

I will speak more about this in this afternoon's message, but I want to make a beginning here. Verse 13 – “Now behold two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem.” “And they talked together of all these things which had happened.” “So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them.” “But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.” “And He said to them, ‘What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as walk and are sad?’” You will notice here that our Lord Jesus had a particular concern for these dear brethren. It was that they were sad. And He would converse with them about it. They did not know that it was Him. They thought that he was just another man; a stranger who happened to be walking on the same road with them. Their eyes, it says, were restrained, from recognizing Him for who He really was. Notice that they had been talking with each other about the most important of things as they walked. They were talking about Jesus. Jesus was intent on ministering to their greatest need, which was their sadness and their unbelief over thinking that His death was the end of all their hopes; over believing that all was lost in relation

to redemption of Israel. These men were not only sad, they were also disappointed. They were disappointed because the One whom they thought was their Messiah had been crucified and buried, and yet He had not shown Himself alive to them or to the apostles. Verse 21 says, “But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel.” “Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened.” So, since Jesus did not show up to reveal Himself quickly to them on the morning of the third day, as He had said that He would, they wrongfully concluded that He had not been raised from the dead at all. And they decided to return home to Emmaus. Dear Christian, please remember that God’s timing is perfect. Do not let your own expectations of what you believe the Lord ought to do in relation to you, or your church, or your country, lead you into the sin of unbelief. Do not let your disappointment in relation to these things cause you to think that the Lord is doing nothing, just because you cannot immediately see a change. Do not think that the Lord Jesus is slack concerning His promises, that He will not come and make His presence known to you in relation to the greatest concerns of your life. For He knows how to build your faith, and it is not by His meeting your time-table.

No doubt these men did have a legitimate concern; really the highest of motives in their having this concern that they had. They were hoping, as they said in verse 21, “that it was Jesus who was going to redeem Israel.” Well Jesus had redeemed Israel, and yet they did not know it. Perhaps you have had trouble with coming to full assurance of your salvation. You may be truly converted to Christ and yet you do not sense His presence, His blessing, and the working of His Spirit in your life. You have read in the Scriptures about the witness of the Spirit, and you have thought, that for you to be able to conclude that He has redeemed you, that it will take a profound manifestation of the Lord’s Spirit speaking to your heart to convince you that He is for you, and that He is with you, and that you truly belong to Him. Be patient with Him. It may not be that kind of experience, coming in the time and in the way that you want it to come, that will give you the assurance that you are looking for. It will be enough for you to actively trust in Him at all times. “Faith is the assurance of things hoped for....” “Trust in Him at all times, at all times, O peoples; pour out your heart before Him.” “God is a refuge for us.” (Psalm 62, verse 8) He will, in His own good time, come to your soul and say unto your soul, “I am your salvation”. Psalm 35, verse 3. That will be the right time.

These brethren also had heard the women tell of His resurrection when they came back from the tomb. They said that they had also seen a vision of angels who had said He was alive.” They even mention Peter and John’s visit to the tomb; that they had seen the grave clothes, but that they had not yet seen Jesus. So Jesus had his hands full with their sadness, their disappointment, and their unbelief. But He knew what to do. He knew that if they had been strong in faith at that time, they would have stayed in Jerusalem and waited for Him to appear. Instead, they were

too quick to jump to their own conclusions. They wrongfully thought that if He would not make Himself known to the Apostles, Peter and John, first off, on the third day, then why was there any reason for them to stick around? Jesus knew how to minister to this sadness of heart. It was to converse with them. He would pretend as though He did not really know what had been going on in Jerusalem in those previous days, and then they would have to reveal their hearts to Him. This they did, and then He says this to them: "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!" "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" He reproves them for their slowness of heart, their reluctance to believe in all that the prophets had spoken. The prophets had spoken of Christ's glory and His kingdom, but they had also spoken of His sufferings coming before His glory. "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things?" That is the death on the cross? And should He not also have then entered into His glory, beginning with His resurrection? Jesus had to explain to them a good many things about the nature of His sufferings, His glory, and His kingdom from Moses and all the Prophets. He had to show them the nature of His redemption. It was not to come and deliver the nation of Israel from being under Roman domination. It was to deliver His people from their sins by suffering on their behalf. We learn from verse 32 that this preaching and teaching them these things caused their hearts to burn within them to know more. And they were going to know much more in just a few more minutes of His speaking with them. He was going to reveal Himself to them as raised from the dead.

Our concluding lesson is this: O how much you and I need to see that the remedy for our all of our sadness, all of our disappointment, and all of our unbelief comes in our be able to believe in Christ's being raised from the dead, even though we do not see Him now. I have a plaque on my wall in the dining room of our home that says this: "Christ is the head of this house, the unseen guest at every meal, the silent listener to every conversation." By this I remind myself that it is indeed true that by His Spirit, He still draws near to listen to the conversations which I have with other believers about how sad or disappointed or discouraged I am. The reason that I am that way is because I wrongly think that He is not going to do what I am looking for Him to do in my heart and my life, in relation to the things which He has promised in the Scriptures. But that is simply raw unbelief. Remember, dear Christian, that Jesus is even today still well able to minister to every one of your heart's needs. He still listens carefully to all of the conversations that you and I have with other Christians, and He would have you to remember that all power and all authority in heaven and earth have been given to Him. Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, and do not despair. He will never fail you nor forsake you. He is with you, as your Helper in everything.