

To Focus on the Scriptures

Luke 24:23-53, Pastor Jason Brodehl

Introduction

Over the last few weeks, we have been preaching through a series of sermons which focus on the passions of Jesus. First, Pastor Michael preached from Luke 22:35-53 of Jesus' passion to do the Father's will regardless of the cost. Then, Pastor Tim guided us through Luke 23:26-56, where we saw Jesus' passion to suffer for the sins of His people as a fulfillment of the Father's plan, purpose, and prophecies. As we celebrated the resurrection last Sunday, Pastor Mark led us through John, chapter 20 to see that the resurrected Christ displays Jesus' passion to constantly assure, comfort, and encourage fearful hearts in a dead and dark world where sin and fear rule. Today, we will continue to learn about the passions of Jesus as we put a spotlight on certain events that took place after the resurrection in Luke 24: verses 13-53.

Spiritual Blindness (v.13-19a)

In Their Sight (v.13-16)

¹³ That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴ and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

If we had begun reading from the beginning of chapter 24, we would have picked up on the passages related to the resurrection, which would relate to the sermon we heard last week. Verse 13 begins with "That very day," so we now know it was the day of the resurrection. We see that they are going away from Jerusalem, toward a town called Emmaus. We know that they were "eyewitnesses" of the events concerning Jesus that took place over the last few days in Jerusalem because that was the topic of their discussion. Then they are joined by a third traveler, whom they should have known, but their eyes were kept from recognizing Him. This third traveler engages these two.

In Their Understanding (v.17-19a)

¹⁷ And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸ Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" ¹⁹ And he said to them, "What things?"

Why does Jesus join these men and begin with a question? Isn't it like God to ask us questions to truly reveal our hearts and understanding? Could it be that while these two were "eyewitnesses" to the events in Jerusalem, that really could not testify to what truly occurred?

Evidence of this can be seen in their appearance. They stood still and looked sad. The Lamb of God has been slain and taken away the sins of the world that whoever should believe on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Jesus has risen! The tomb is empty! He is ALIVE and in their very presence. But, they look sad.

Then, when they are amazed that Jesus “doesn’t know” what has happened, Jesus continues to question them in order to assess their spiritual blindness.

Scriptural Blindness (v. 19b-25)

In the Meaning of Redemption (v.19b-21a)

And they said to him, “Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,²⁰ and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him.²¹ But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.

They begin with Jesus of Nazareth. Matthew 2:23 states this was to fulfill that He should be called a Nazarene. This is not an actual quote from the Old Testament, but people from Nazareth were often despised. They continue that He was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people. They saw him as a man who spoke on behalf of God but they didn’t see him as God. But how could he be when their own chief priests and rulers had him delivered up to be executed by crucifixion? But they don’t stop there with their telling of the things that have happened. What they really had hoped for was that Jesus would be the one who would redeem the nation of Israel. For years, the people of Israel had been looking for someone to rescue them from their enemies and re-establish them as their own nation once again. Now, that enemy was the Roman rule. Their eyes were focused downward and not upward. Their hopes were dashed when Jesus was crucified. How disappointing and confusing, their hopes dashed by their own people. They didn’t understand the savior had to suffer for the sins of his people. They didn’t understand Jesus as redeemer, only as prophet. He was here to redeem souls and not a nation. Not only were they blind to the meaning of redemption, they were also spiritually blind to the meaning of the resurrection. Let’s pick back up in verse 21b.

In Meaning of the Resurrection (21b-23)

Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened.²² Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning,²³ and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive.²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.”

Now things get even more confusing. Cleopas says that three days have passed since the crucifixion. Today some of the women have now shocked them by their report that there was no body in the tomb and a vision of angels saying He was alive. Others went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, empty. If they had spiritual sight, then a report of Jesus resurrection would not have been confusing to them. They would not have been looking sad. They were spiritually blind to the true meaning of redemption, His resurrection, and His prophetic fulfillment. Verse 25,

In Prophetic Fulfillment (v.25-26)

²⁵ And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.”²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?”

Jesus responds with a rebuke. The use of the letter “O” here denotes great emotion. This isn’t some soft rebuke as if they were just ignorant children but rather the opposite. While they may have known their Old Testament and what the prophets had spoken, they failed to believe them.

In His Suffering

After his rebuke, He once again asks a question but this time it's a rhetorical one. Jesus quoted Isaiah 53 earlier in Luke 22 when he was in the garden preparing for his crucifixion. Suffering was necessary because suffering was fulfillment. Sin was the problem and not society. All throughout Israel's history there had been a sacrificial system for sin. We could even say this system has been in place for all human history beginning in the garden. The Israelites have this system in place for years yet they appear to have been more worried about people and nations than sin and separation from God. God's plan was to set apart a people for Himself who He would save and secure them for a heavenly and eternal place. Not build a nation of warriors. It was sin as a ruler over us that needed to be defeated and not the Roman ruler. If they knew the scriptures, they would have known of the prophesied suffering servant of Isaiah 53. They would have known only the perfect lamb of God could have truly saved them and that lamb had to be slain to redeem His people.

In His Glorification

The mention of glory begins to broaden the scope of His fulfillment of scripture. His plan was not about a local and national Israel, it was about a heavenly spiritual Israel. Glory moves the focus of fulfillment to Jesus' position and authority. Not only is he alive, but now he rules, he reigns, and he will return. There is a past, present, and future theme here. These two travelers were looking for merely a body, and yet a majestic and regal visitor stood right before their very eyes, the heavenly messiah and savior. Jesus' kingdom was not of this earth. His kingdom is heavenly, and eternal and one day will be established on a new earth. The two travelers' eyes were focused downward on this earth and they were looking for a valiant redeemer who would secure a city, a nation, for themselves. Jesus was focused on sin and securing salvation of souls for eternity. His eyes were set above, in the heavenly realms, their eyes set on the here and now, the earthly realms. God's plan is so much bigger than an earthly redeemer, his plan all along was a heavenly one. He will now begin to interpret the scriptures and give them spiritual sight.

Scriptural Interpretation (v.27)

²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

Not only was their understanding limited to the earthly realm, they also were missing the complete fulfillment of the scriptures. His fulfillment is eternal. He was here in the beginning and He will establish the end. And just so they understand His completeness, he begins his interpretation of the scripture at the beginning. He starts with Moses and continues through ALL the Prophets and interpreted to them ALL the scriptures concerning Himself. In other words, He went through the scriptures entirely from front to back, explaining all of them in light of Himself. Can you imagine what it was like to be walking along and hearing the God of the scriptures, quoting scripture after scripture, verse after verse and applying all of them to his life, death, and resurrection. The author of the scriptures interpreting them all for you. Now that would be a heavenly trip! They are now seeing the scripture for the first time in their entirety. Their souls are being refreshed and minds renewed. And they want more. Yet, they are still missing the one element to fully comprehend it all, scriptural realization and it will begin with a meal.

Scriptural Realization (v.28-43)

In the Sharing of a Meal (v.28-31)

²⁸ So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, ²⁹ but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰ When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. ³¹ And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight.

The journey with Jesus is coming to an end as they draw near to the village. Jesus acts as if He were going further, but due to the time of day, the men encourage Him to stay with them and He accepts. When they sat down to eat the meal together, Jesus took the bread, blessed it, and gave it to them. Finally, their eyes were opened and they recognize Jesus. The One whose body was broken for them, has broken bread with them and fed them with the Word of God. He is alive and now they "see". These "eyewitnesses" now truly understand everything they have seen. They, too, can testify that Jesus lives and what that means for all those who believe. Then, He vanished from their sight. As one author put it, "With the revelation that Jesus lives, His visible presence is no longer necessary." How could one contain themselves once their eyes are opened? And this is what we see next.

In the Reporting of their Story (v.32-33a)

³² They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" ³³ And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, ³⁴ saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" ³⁵ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Their response? First, the feeling. Their hearts burned within them as He spoke to them. Isn't there is a burning in the hearts of us when we sit under the preaching and the teaching of the Word? When the scriptures are explained, our minds begin to comprehend, and we "see" Jesus? There is peace, comfort, hope, and exhilaration when the teaching resonates with our hearts.

Second, the action. Note what has changed in this situation. These two had urged Jesus to stay with them because it was getting late. Now, they can't contain themselves. They rose right away to return to Jerusalem, 7 miles away. They are displaying a passion to share about the risen Christ and testify to what the scriptures say about Him. They find the eleven back in Jerusalem gathered with other people. The excitement continues to mount rapidly. They hear their own testimony confirmed that the Lord has risen and appeared to yet another eyewitness, Simon. Then, Cleopas and his friend share what had happened to them along the road, and that Jesus was made known to them. Can't you sense this fast and furious building of excitement as the trajectory of the story moves from death to life, from sadness to hope and joy.

Sight Confirmed (v.36-40)

³⁶ As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you!" ³⁷ But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. ³⁸ And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹ See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." ⁴⁰ And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.

Once again there is discussion going on about "these things" or the events that have recently happened. The eleven (11) and the others with them are discussing the risen Lord, His appearance to several of them, and how

Moses and all the prophets spoke about Jesus. Now, as Jesus enters into this scene, He is recognized this time, yet with fear, even though He says, "Peace to you." They thought they saw a spirit. Once again, He begins with a question: Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Yet, Jesus knows their hearts, He knows their fears, and He knows their doubts. He says, "Touch me! I am not a spirit! I am real! Just as many of us may have doubts to the authenticity of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, take comfort, you are not the only ones to have such doubts. Once again, He shares a meal with them.

In the Sharing a Meal (v.41-43)

⁴¹ *And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?"*

⁴² *They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³ and he took it and ate before them.*

"While they disbelieved for joy and were marveling" is an odd phrase isn't it. It was incredibly difficult for them to believe what they were seeing. Was this really happening? The word "marveling" seems to try to capture their sense of awe. I believe this will be our reaction at the end of days as 2 Thessalonians 1:10 says "When He (Jesus) comes on that day to be glorified in His saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed." And during this marveling, Jesus does something very normal. He asks for something to eat. He wants them to know that He is flesh and bones, the same Jesus who hung on the tree, and not a spirit who does not eat real food. And once again, He is going to interpret the scriptures for them.

Scriptural Interpretation (v.44-47)

⁴⁴ *Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, ⁴⁶ and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, ⁴⁷ and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.*

Everything Jesus had spoken to them before the crucifixion was pointing them to the scriptures and how He was the fulfillment of them. However, they were not wise in their knowledge and understanding of the scriptures. If they had been, they would not have been disappointed that His life ended in suffering and death. They would not have been confused about the tomb being empty. They would have been quick to believe and understand the report of an empty tomb. They would not be fearful that the person standing in front of them might be a spirit. Jesus pours out his grace upon them to give them eyes to see and minds that understand. Then, He begins to go through the scriptures again. He wanted them to see Him as the one who was to redeem the true Israel. He fulfilled all that the scriptures declared. In Jesus, all the promises of God find their yes in Him. He connects the old with the new, and shows them His ultimate plan of salvation. Not only will the gospel be proclaimed to one nation, but it will now be proclaimed to ALL nations, beginning in Jerusalem. This good news of Jesus is so much bigger than they understood it to be. And now they have spiritual sight.

Spiritual Sight – Take 2 (v.48-53)

⁴⁸ *You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high." ⁵⁰ And he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. ⁵¹ While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven.*

⁵² *And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy,* ⁵³ *and were continually in the temple blessing God.*

These witnesses have been shown the risen Christ. They have had their minds opened to understand that all the scriptures were pointing to Jesus. Soon, they will be recipients of “power from on high” and they will be sharing the passion of Jesus to show others who He is through the scriptures. Once again, Jesus departs from them by being carried up to heaven, and there is no sadness. They worship Him because of who He is. They return to Jerusalem with great joy and continually bless God in the temple because of the hope that they have.

This text began with two walking away in sadness and disappointment, from the city where it all began, believing all hope was lost for redemption. Now they are all returning to the very same city with joy, worshipping and believing in the redeemer and waiting with excitement for a new beginning.

This is the passion of Jesus Christ. He had a passion to do the Father’s will, to suffer for His people, and to give hope to the lost and fearful. He had a passion to live His life in accordance with the scriptures, so that He would be the fulfillment of them and to teach His people the truth about Himself through them. All of these pieces fit together: His life, death, and resurrection are now complete and we look to the scriptures to find hope and assurance. This is the passion of Jesus Christ. But His passions don’t stop there. There’s more to the story as we will find out next week.

Reflect and Respond

The whole point of this text is that Jesus is God and He was the Messiah who was prophesied in the scriptures. He was to come and suffer for our sins and rise again on the third day so that the forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed to all the nations. Let’s be clear here, all the scriptures speak of Jesus. This entire book, is about Jesus. There was no plan B. this was the plan all along. Do you believe this? Do you believe Jesus is the Son of God and that He came to save his people from their sins and that this entire book declares His glory? Or are you one who believes He was just a prophet, mighty in word and deed?

If you are sitting here this morning, wondering where you stand, wondering what you believe, please do not leave here without speaking to someone. Ask questions, get answers and have your eyes opened to the truth, Jesus is the Son of God and he is alive today sitting in the heavenly realms. There is no need for a visual of the resurrected Christ, all you need to see and believe is His Word. As 2 Peter tells us,

¹⁹ *And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts,* ²⁰ *knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation.* ²¹ *For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

If you do believe all that scriptures say about Jesus, then I ask you, “Do you love the things that Jesus loves?” Are you passionate about the things Jesus is passionate about?

Do you have a passion to do the Father’s will no matter the cost? Do you know the Father’s will?

Do you have a passion to suffer for His people? Are one who will only do what fits perfectly in your schedule? Or are you willing to sacrifice for the kingdom, no matter how big or small the task is?

Do you have a passion to live in hope for a future kingdom, to live to encourage others on this journey to the eternal kingdom?

And do you have a passion to live your life according to the scriptures? To know the scriptures? And not only to know them, but to obey them and apply them to your heart, mind, and life? Knowledge is good, but it only puffs up if it is not followed up with obedience. You may not know much, and that's okay, just obey what you do know and eventually you'll understand what you don't know.

Finally, we will only know and understand what God illumines us to, so pray for illumination and understanding, and He will answer you. Let's pray.