



“Jesus Opens Eyes”

Luke 24:28-35

April 19th, 2021

We will be in Luke Chapter 24. Please join me there. This morning in the portion of Scripture that is ahead of us, we will see how the Lord opens the eyes of His people. The fact of the matter is only the Lord opens the eyes of His people.

You don't open your own eyes to the glory of who God is. God opens your eyes to the glory of who He is. You don't open your own eyes to the scope and the majesty of the messianic person and work of Jesus, God opens your eyes to the glory and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is God who opens blind eyes that we might know the gracious salvation that is bestowed in Christ Jesus. We are going to see an awesome and wonderful portrait this morning as we dig into the Gospel of Luke together.

We pick up the story of the very first Easter Sunday, the day of resurrection. Dr. Luke, the author of this Gospel, followed the story of two lesser known disciples of Jesus. One was named Cleopas and the other went unnamed. As we saw last week, these two men were discouraged. These two men were deflated. They were downhearted. They did not believe that Jesus Christ was risen from the grave. We would understand that they saw Jesus crucified. They saw Jesus killed. They saw Jesus die. With the crucifixion of Jesus, their hope that He was the Messiah was nailed dead with Him.

They were discouraged, totally demoralized, and they were walking seven miles away from the resurrection of Jesus Christ. They were going back to Emmaus. As far as they were concerned, they were going home because it was over. Praise God, their story did not end with that. What we saw last week is that Jesus pursued them. Jesus went after them. Risen from the grave, Jesus tracked them down. Meeting them in their discouraged condition, Jesus gave them a personal tutorial.

Jesus Himself went through the pages of the Old Testament—Genesis to Malachi—showing them a full theology of the Messiah from the pages of Scripture, and He demonstrated to them biblically that the Messiah presented in the Hebrew Scriptures, the one and only Messiah, was first to suffer for the sins of His people. Jesus would be the very Sacrificial Lamb that would atone for their sins.

Jesus would be the Passover Lamb that would allow God to passover them. He was the One who would suffer first and then in God's good time, His dominion would arrive visibly and powerfully on the face of the planet earth. Jesus set it straight just with what the Old Testament taught about the Messiah, and their hearts got lit up as He taught them.

Those of you who were with us last week or are familiar with the story: did they know that they were dealing with Jesus on that walk? There is an important detail that I did not expand upon last week because, alas, I was saving it for this week.

There is the point in Verses 15 and 16, where it said, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But they did not recognize him. Is that what it says? No, it says something a little bit different.

¹⁵While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. ¹⁶But their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

That is interesting language, is it not? That language indicates intent and purpose. Something was keeping them from immediately recognizing that this was their Jesus, their Messiah, walking with them on that road.

It was the very hand of God preventing them at that moment to see that it was Jesus walking with them the whole time. Even with His elect, we find that God will sometimes veil truths until the perfect moment comes for Him to reveal it to them.

In my walk and study of Scripture there are things that I have discovered in the Bible and ask myself if that has been there the whole time! Why is it just dawning on me now? Sometimes God waits to reveal things in an explosive way in our hearts until His perfect timing.

I am the father of three boys as most of you know. In all the years of them growing up, there was an experience that I had repeatedly. I would come home from work and one of my boys would greet me at the front door, saying, Dad, close your eyes. My boys would have something awesome to show me, whether it was a sheet fort in their bedroom or some kind of shack in the backyard. Close your eyes, they would say. They would tell me to keep them closed as they took my hand to guide me to their surprise. Then they would tell me to open my eyes! It had to be in their timing.

Sometimes the Lord works that way in our lives, and here we see in this text that it was the will of God not to reveal Christ to those two discouraged disciples through an immediate resurrection appearance, but first through a pure understanding of what the Scripture taught about their Messiah—with that as a foundation.

Then came the remarkable moment where their eyes were opened and they saw Jesus right before their very eyes. They had been seeing Him along, but then they knew it was Him. They recognized Him.

So we see the story laid out before us. Jesus had finished His survey of the Scripture. The disciple's hearts were aglow. Their minds were amazed. It would seem that at the end of the journey with Him as they approached the village, they still did not know who Jesus was.

We see how the story unfolded starting in Verse 28:

²⁸So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, ²⁹but 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. ³⁰When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. ³¹And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight.

³²They 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?” ³³And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, ³⁴saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” ³⁵Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

This is a tremendous moment in the story, and it would seem that in the portion of Scripture that we just read that the pain and the perplexity of Good Friday was finally being transformed into the joy and the wonder of Easter Sunday.

Those men and women were coming to believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave. Their eyes were opened to the fact that He was alive and that their eyes had seen Him. It is a wonderful moment in this story. Let us understand that Jesus was the One who opened their eyes.

They did not open their own eyes. In the same way that Jesus opened the understanding of Scripture to them, now Jesus opened their eyes to the fact that it was Him all along. It was a powerful moment. As we read these stories, remember that little song, Open my eyes, Lord, and help me see Jesus. Help me see Jesus! As I dig into the Living Word, help me to really see the Living Savior.

This morning as we walk through the movements of this story, we will see how this all went down. I pray that the Spirit of God will give us eyes to see the Savior; hearts to trust and believe in Him and that we might walk in the joy of His resurrection.

We see several movements in this story, one flowing into the next. I hope they speak into our lives as well. How were their eyes opened?

It started with the Practice of Hospitality
It happened with the Breaking of Bread
It flowed out of the Teaching of Scripture
It culminated with the Sharing of Testimony

Let's move through this wonderful, wonderful portion of the Bible together, knowing that Jesus lives and Jesus lives among us. We want Him to touch our hearts with the power of His Words. How did it start?

1. It Started with the Practice of Hospitality (24:28-29)

It is amazing to think about how this moment went down. As they realized they were closely approaching home, the disciples wanted their path to stretch out longer so they could have more time with Jesus. Jesus was walking with the disciples. Their hearts were glowing with the Word of God. It came to the end of the road and Jesus thanked them for listening and He bid His farewell as He intended to continue on with His travel.

By the way, it is not merely Him pretending. On that Day of Resurrection, He made a number of appearances. He made several appearances prior to this and there were still more appearances that were ahead. We see later in the text that He had an appointment with Simon Peter that was coming, and He was going to appear to all of them in the room. We will save that for next week. So there was still more that Jesus had on His agenda.

So the disciples came to the end of the road and Jesus was acting like He would be on His way. The disciples said no! He had to come inside. It was getting dark out and He should not be traveling on the roads when it was dark.

The text states that the disciples were seeking to prevail upon Jesus. The only other time this language was used in Luke's writing was when Lydia of Philippi was saying to Paul, No, you are staying. So these disciples were saying, You have to come in. Please come in. They were inviting Him in. We have Cinnabon! We have Portola! Well, in that case!

There is a picture here that is very, very important for each one of us to see. That is this: you are responsible to make a decision about Jesus Christ. You are responsible to receive Him. This is all throughout the pages of Scripture.

Jesus, He was walking with the two disciples and He would have just kept going. They invited Him in. If they had not invited Him in, He would not have come in. Likewise, you must call upon Christ as Savior and if you do not call upon Christ as Savior, Christ is not your Savior.

You remain in your sin. Your sin is still attached to you. It is on you. It is when you call upon Christ with a heart that recognizes sin and that Jesus is the answer, it is at that moment that your sin is washed away.

You must call upon the Lord for salvation and when you do, what you find as you study the ways of the Lord, is that it was Christ who was pursuing you all along; that it was Christ taking the initiative all along. These two disciples were going back home, because they thought it was done and over.

However, Jesus the Good Shepherd said they were His elect, and He tracked them down. He went after them. He loved them. He taught them. He caused His Word to burn in them. Then there came that moment of decision for them. Likewise, a person must call upon the Name of the Lord to be saved.

Have you called upon the Name of the Lord to be saved? If you are going to see Jesus, you are going to see Him first as Savior, the Sacrificial Lamb, Lord of all, who came to save. Jesus said, I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Jesus is the gate into the sheepfold. Jesus is the way. Trust in Him. Trust in Him! When you trust in Him, you give glory to God for the great work of salvation that He has performed in your life. All of this is put on display for us here.

Also look at what is in this text and let us value the practice of hospitality. Door open. Tables attended. Wonderful things happen over shared meals throughout the pages of Scripture. If you want to see Christ, look to Scripture. That's where He is revealed.

But do you want to see more of Christ? Gather with people who know Christ and ask, How did you come to know Christ. What Scriptures provoked your heart? Tell me your story. Then you will see the work of God's grace on people right before you. It is all about sharing meals and sharing stories. That is what hospitality is about. It is sharing truths of Scripture and the stories that flow out of it. Life on life.

Gather with people who don't know Christ and tell them your story. Share with them some Scriptures that the Lord may use to provoke them to faith, and you may see the hand of Christ moving on a heart right before your eyes, either that day or a day after that.

Hospitality is a wonderful, wonderful thing. Wonderful things happen when people gather together informally with Jesus at the center of it. After the year that we have had, I wonder if there are a whole lot of people who are starved for actual human interaction.

Who will you text? A common meal, a common loaf, a common basket of chips, a common dish of salsa, a common crock pot! Then we can come together, looking at the One who is the Lord with our eyes on Him, and wonderful things will happen.

We started with the practice of hospitality and then we continue and see very interesting things happening in this story. How did the disciples eyes open?

2. It Happened with the Breaking of Bread (24:30-31)

As we continue into the little house with them, a couple of unusual things happened. Typically at meal time, the Jewish custom was that the head of the home, the host, would ask for God's blessing upon the food.

Then from there, typically, the people gathered would actually remain for the meal, eating the food that was in front of them. In this case, it would seem that neither of those things happened. Verse 30:

³⁰When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. ³¹And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight.

What in the world just happened, and where did He go? That is a very intriguing question and is the one that grabs our attention, especially the disappearing act. However, that is not the wonder in this portion of Scripture that is emphasized. Disappearing is a wonder that is there and it is a wonder to be considered, but the emphasis lies elsewhere.

The emphasis lies upon the fact that there is a connection between the bread and the recognition. Jesus was there. He broke bread. It was placed in their hands and as the bread was placed in their hands, their eyes were opened. It's Jesus!

This is what is emphasized at the end of the passage in Verse 35:

³⁵Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

And Jesus advanced all of this. I have read repeatedly this week that what happened is that Cleopas recognized the unique authority of the one they were traveling with, and he deferred to Him—He must invite Him to declare the blessing upon the food. That is how it might be recognized. That is maybe how it went.

However, that is not what it says. What it says is that Jesus took the initiative. It says that He took the bread. And He broke the bread after having blessed it. He put it in their hands. When it was in their hands, they recognized it was Him.

They were not there at the Last Supper with the twelve, but they were perhaps there when Jesus fed the five thousand and did something very similar. He took a loaf of barley in His hands. Lifted it up to the Lord and gave thanks. Broke it and maybe they recognized the same tone in His voice. It clicked in at that moment, and it is a beautiful, beautiful thing.

We know biblically that faith comes by hearing and hearing by hearing the Word of Christ. Faith comes by hearing and hearing the Word of Christ, as it says in Romans 10:17:

¹⁷So faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of Christ.

It is in the context of evangelism where Paul talked about beautiful feet. How many of you think that feet are beautiful? Some people don't want to see feet, but there are some feet that are beautiful. What feet are beautiful? Isaiah 52:7:

⁷How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news...

Romans 10 is talking in this context about how when we believe in our hearts and declare with our mouths that Jesus is Lord, faith comes by hearing the Word of Christ. We hear the Gospel message and by the Spirit its truth penetrates.

Then we understand ourselves as those created by God in perfection, but fallen in sin and continuing in rebellion, and that Jesus is the answer. He is the One who paid the price for our sin and our rebellion.

All this registers within us by a work of God's grace and we have faith. Faith comes by hearing and the great message of Romans is that we are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. Faith comes by hearing and beautifully in the pages of Scripture, we see that that same faith is supported and enriched by seeing.

There are certain things that Christ has ordered that we see repeatedly throughout the Christian life. Some people call them ordinances and some people call them sacraments. Baptists tend to call them ordinances. That is what I have always called them, because they are ordered of the Lord Jesus. Others call them sacraments because they are sacred and holy and they are wonderful. Maybe we can call them sacred ordinances, but I am just fine with both titles.

There are two of them. One is baptism. The word baptize means immerse. To plunge. To dip. When a person is saved early in their Christian life, they are going to be taken down into the water and they come up. This is a beautiful picture of death to the old life of sin, the cleansing of sin by the grace of God. Then raised up into newness of life.

Baptism is a visual and wonderful moment that happens once in the life of a believer. It is something that is repeated for the church as we see the evidence of God's grace upon a person's life. So faith that is created by the spoken Word is sustained and maintained by the grace of baptism in the church as we see people being baptized.

Then there is also the Lord's Supper. Communion, by which we have the bread which is broken in the same way that Christ's body took our sin and was broken. And the blood that was shed that our sin might be washed away.

The church of God is to come back to these visible portraits of God's grace repeatedly, that we might be brought back into the theme that we are saved by the gracious work of the Messiah for us. So, brothers and sisters, we love baptism and we love the Lord's Supper as these are times for us to commune with the One who has saved us.

This is an emblem of that. It like a precursor of the great importance of the church breaking the bread of communion together. What happened in our text today was not actually a communion service. There was the bread but there was not the cup. The cup is also an important part of communion.

The funny thing is that the disciples never even consumed the bread. That is important because there are some groups, Roman Catholics for example, who will say that unless you take the bread and the cup by a duly appointed authority, then you don't have Christ in you.

This is their view of the Eucharist. I read about it in the Roman Catholic Catechism. They use this portion of Scripture as a text to support that belief. However, as far as I am seeing here, there was no cup, and they never even took in the bread.

But what we do see here is a reminder that we are saved by faith by the hearing of God's Word. That's where salvation comes. We have this beautiful and wonderful reminder that faith is enriched and strengthened as we repeatedly come back to the Lord's Supper. We see this very special moment and it triggers us to things that would become a very important part of the life of the local church.

We continue and get back into the room with the disciples. Here we had these two disciples. They had the bread in their hands. Jesus then vanished. He was gone. The interesting thing about it is that they did not start talking about what just happened in front of them, they began talking about what was going on all along inside of them.

The entire event is full of wonder and I would imagine that the disciples just chalked up His disappearance as an example and a manifestation of the supernatural power of the omnipotent God to do what He wants to do at any time in the world that He created. It was called a miracle!

Some think that that might have been a property of the glorified resurrection body. While it is tangible, it has certain properties that allow it to do things that these mortal bodies can't do. But I just say that this was a miracle of God.

As for me, I have no struggle whatsoever with this kind of thing at all. I believe that this is a created universe. I do not believe that the universe was something brought into existence uncaused out of nothing. There is a Creator. There is a God who created everything. His design is everywhere.

And if there is a God who has the power to create universes, then He also has the power and the authority to interrupt the flow of the natural laws that He Himself has instilled in that created order. I have no problem with miracles. Neither does the Bible, and here we see this wonderful moment.

We continue. How did they see Jesus?

3. It Flowed Out of the Teaching of Scripture (24:32)

As amazed as the disciples were, surely what they started talking about was what went on inside of them. They were talking to one another saying, This whole thing is awesome and amazing. What was going on inside of you while He was talking? While we were walking down the road, and while He was teaching us Scripture, was there something inside of you saying that was a good point? Why didn't I see that before?!

Maybe they were even more animated than I am right now! Look at what they just beheld. They were asking, What was going on inside of you while He was talking? Were you on fire? Were you getting lit up? Were you just amazed at the depth and the living quality of what He was talking to us about? Yes! That was awesome.

Do you know that when Jesus taught in synagogues, people came out saying, What just happened in there, as the power of Heaven punctured through to fill a room with the knowledge of God here on earth. That happened when Jesus taught in synagogues and that is what was happening here.

You didn't have to be in an indoor worship service to have that experience of the Word of God. They had it on the road to Emmaus. Their hearts were fired up. How did they recognize Christ? All of this was flowing out from the teaching of Scripture. That is where they went next.

In Luke 24:32, they said:

³²...“Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?”

Brothers and sisters, it is so easy for us to become apathetic about things that are truly, truly awesome. Reading this, I am having some renewal in my own disciplines before the Lord, the gracious disciplines that He has led me into.

Somewhere between 6:15 and 6:30 AM each morning with coffee and my Bible open, I am opening up with the prayer of Psalm 119:18. Lord,

**¹⁸Open my eyes, that I may behold
wonderous things out of the law.**

The wonderous things, the wonderful things! Let my heart burn. When I am listening to somebody preach while I'm doing dishes or something like that, I pray, Lord, let my heart burn in such a way that what is internal can't be held within, but released into the world around me. There is burning of heart.

Does anybody here need to ask God to break their apathy toward the Living Word of God? The Bible. The Scriptures through which Jesus speaks to His people. Thank God, let my heart live to the wonder of Your Word. Lord, let Your Spirit move in me.

I wonder if we need to confess that apart from the work of the Spirit, we can become like those Laodiceans who became lukewarm and tepid. Jesus on the outside knocking and wanting to come in. You got to receive Him in and He speaks through His Word, and we need to be a people of the Book because the Book is alive and the Book creates people that are alive.

Something so wonderful about what happened here: in His exposition of the Old Testament, in His provision of an accurate and full theology of messianic glory, not only was He informing their minds, but He was also healing their hearts as well—their hearts that were so heavy and depressed and discouraged were having new life and fire being breathed into them.

I pray that the Spirit of God would do things that no person could do; that no teacher could do at any level throughout the church's ministry, but what the Spirit can do and what He longs to do is to fill our hearts with zeal for the things of the Lord. Glad hearted zeal because that is a great way to live.

It flowed the from the teaching of Scripture. Then finally:

4. It Culminated With the Sharing of Testimony (24:33-35)

What amazes me is that these two men thirty minutes earlier, they had advised their guest, You really need to be sensible here. The day is long spent. We are tired. We had a long journey. It can be really dangerous out there at night, You really need to settle in for the night.

All of that logic went out the window. They were like, Jesus is alive and we have been given clarity on the meaning of who the Messiah is all throughout the Old Testament. We have to go. In that very hour they went right back out that door. Off they went to and find their brothers and sisters back in Jerusalem.

³³And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together

They wanted to go in and you can just imagine that these men were so filled with excitement. They could not wait to tell their tale. They burst through the door. All of their friends saw them and said, Cleopas, other dude. Instead of those two bombarding them, they get bombarded.

He is alive! He is alive! We saw Him. He had appeared to Peter. He had appeared to Mary Magdalene. He had appeared to the women that went to the tomb. He is alive! Somewhere in the background they said that many of the sisters in Christ were saying, We were telling you the whole time! You don't listen. You don't listen!

Who were the first skeptics? The men! The disciples. Sisters were like, Dudes listen! The ladies probably withheld any kind of tendency like that. Right? Wrong. Whatever. Either way, it was an atmosphere of joy. The stories were being told.

Finally Cleopas and his friend got their turn. We have seen Him too. He tracked us down. He came and got us. I would imagine that they tried to explain the things they learned from Him that day.

The point here is that when your heart is lit up, it needs and outlet. You share with people. Telling about the salvation that Christ has brought to us and the deepened knowledge that Christ has brought to us is something that we give expression to. It is filled by the Holy Spirit in and out of the body in Christ, with those who know Jesus and with those who don't know Jesus.

When our hearts are alive with Scripture, we are going to have a story to tell and the Lord is going to be prompting us to share those stories and teachings and the Gospel to others. We view the Sunday pulpit as something of a central place of teaching. Teaching is foundational all throughout church history.

But, guess what, it is just the starting point of the ministry of God. It could be argued that it is not even the starting point. The starting point is you reading the Bible. The preacher reading the Bible on his own. The body of Christ reading the Bible personally with the Lord.

It flows out as we understand what is written as we go through teaching, but it just keeps on going. When I say amen, it is not the end of this discussion. The disciples were talking about the things of the Lord on the walk to Emmaus, are you going to talk about the things that challenged, the things that encouraged you from Scripture, or are you just going to walk out the door, saying, that was that?

If the Spirit has His ways, He is going to be prompting us. Let's talk about what we are learning in Scripture. Let's talk about the Living Word of God. Let's encourage each other as we are getting to know Christ better, and as He is having His hands upon us, forming us into His image. Let's talk about the ways that we can encourage one another in the things that we have learned.

They were all gathered in that room. Another cliff hanger! Guess who is going to show up next week? Guess what kind of food is on the table. There is fish and there is flatbread, brothers and sisters. There is a whole lot more for us to learn in this text.

Will you join me as we close in a word of prayer?