

April 4th, 2021

The Resurrected Stranger

Luke 24:13-35

Passion week

These last seven days mark the most important days of the whole year: passion week—the week that Jesus made his way to Jerusalem to be the Lamb that would take away the sins of the world (**John 1:29**). To recap, last Sunday was Palm Sunday, marking Jesus entrance into Jerusalem as the King of kings (**John 12:12-19**). On Monday, Jesus wept over Jerusalem for the judgment that was coming upon them for rejecting Him (**Luke 19:41-44**). On Tuesday, Jesus taught His Olivet Discourse speaking of His final return and the end of the world (**Matthew 24**). On Wednesday, Judas agrees to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver (**Matthew 26:14-16**). On Thursday, Jesus celebrated the last supper with His disciples and comforted them before His departure (**John 13-17**). That evening He prays in the Garden of Gethsemane, is betrayed by Judas, arrested by the Sanhedrin, and abandoned by His disciples (**Mark 14:32-50**). On Friday, Jesus was illegally tried six times, was scourged, and was finally crucified until He breathed His last and died (**Matthew 26-27**). Yesterday, Saturday, His body lay cold and lifeless in a tomb of darkness.

The tomb

That brings us to **Luke 24**. The women who followed Jesus showed up at the tomb on Sunday morning, this morning, in order to anoint His dead body. No men accompanied them, no doubt due to a mixture of violent shame for abandoning Him and intense fear of their own arrest. When the women arrived, exhausted from three days of weeping, they discovered the stone was rolled away from the tomb, and Jesus' body was gone. They did not conclude that He rose from the dead, rather they were perplexed, dumbfounded, at a loss as to what happened. Precisely at that moment, two angels appeared to them. "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen" (**v.5-6**).

They then returned and told the apostles and the other who were with them. But as v.11 says “...these words seemed to them an idle tale [nonsense], and they did not believe them.” Peter then ran to the tomb *and* found it empty like they said, but neither he nor the others were convinced. There had to be some other explanation.

Three observations

Let’s make three brief observations. **First**, the reason why the disciples didn’t believe that Jesus rose from the dead was because none of them believed Jesus was supposed to die in the first place. The Messiah wasn’t supposed to die. He was supposed to conquer their enemies and free them from their bondage to Rome. When He died, their hopes died with Him. Therefore, the last thing they expected was for Him to rise from the dead. **Second**, the reason why they were not expecting His death was because they *neither* remembered Jesus’ words predicting His death(v.6), nor did they believe the Scriptures as a whole which prophesied His death (v.25). They had the same problem that we have today: the battle between faith and fear—what has God spoken versus what we can see with our eyes. **Thirdly**, this resurrection was not *merely* a great miracle. It is the greatest, most crucial event in all the world. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ determines the destiny of every human being. If it is not true, then our faith is in vain,¹ and we have no hope of life after death. But, because this is true, then we never have to fear again. **Revelation 1:17-18** “Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.”

The Big Idea...

It was necessary for Jesus to suffer, die, and rise from the dead *so that* we could be redeemed

¹ 1 Corinthians 15:13-14

☆The Encounter (v.13-24)

☆The Revelation (v.25-27)

☆The Burning (v.28-32)

I. The Encounter

The ironic journey

This delightful story is one of the most ironic stories in all of Scripture. Children can immediately see the humor in this. Here these “...living disciples talk about a dead Jesus, while a living Jesus speaks with [*seemingly* dead] disciples.”² Look at v.13-14 “That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking with each other about *all these things* that had happened.” This journey was approximately a 3-4 hour stroll, and while they walked, only one thing dominated their conversation: Jesus and the empty tomb. Two things seem to be clear: 1) These two disciples were believers, they had loved Jesus and followed Him. But 2) they didn’t believe that He had risen yet. They were believers who hadn’t yet come into the full belief of the gospel.

Jesus, strong and kind

v.15 “While they were talking and discussing together, *Jesus himself drew near* and went with them.”³ Amazing! In the midst of unbelief, Jesus is always tender with His little lambs, searching and seeking for those who have lost their

² James R. Edwards, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to Luke*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015), pg. 720

³ Incredible that Luke only names one of the disciples—Cleopas (v.18)—whom we can’t definitively connect with any other character in Scripture and the other disciple remains unnamed altogether. That’s precisely the point, Jesus appears to nobodies, just like you and me.

way. He counts our affliction⁴ as His own and helps us to bear every heavy load.

They could see but were made blind

Yet Jesus *helps them* in a most peculiar way. Yes He drew near, “*But*” —v.16 “...their eyes *were kept* from recognizing him.” It wasn’t that Jesus was unrecognizable, He had the same body. He had Thomas feel His pierced hands and side in **John 20:27**. Yes His human body was now immortal, but it was the same body, *yet* their eyes didn’t perceive this. God kept their eyes from seeing who this stranger was. Do you see how the sovereign power God has over all our senses? We cannot see what is right in front of us, unless God gives us permission from Heaven. Oh how arrogant we are when we act as if all our senses are perfectly reliable. Jesus was right in front of them, and they didn’t see. It would be a bit like going home to find children in your home and not recognizing they are yours. Dear congregation, all of our faculties: our sight and hearing; our minds and hearts; even our very wills can only operated rightly and truly if God graciously grants us the favor. It is a form of Deism to think that everything works according to natural and automatic processes. The God of the Bible is Lord over every atom, every molecule, every grain of sand, every beating heart. There is no such thing as chance, as luck, as an unforeseen—all things fall out according to His sovereign will. **Daniel 4:35** “...he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, “What have you done?” The question is not *how* their eyes were blinded: for God is the Lord over eyeballs. The question is: *why* their eyes were blinded?

They were made blind so they could see

So why *did* the Lord blind them? I believe Jesus blinded them was so that they could “see” that their hearts was the *main problem* not their eyes. These disciples were trusting more in what they could see with their eyes and reason

⁴ As Isaiah 63:9 says ‘In our affliction, He is afflicted.’

with their minds *than what* God had revealed in the Scriptures.⁵ Here is the ultimate question for all of us: Where do we place our hope? In what we *see* with our eyes? Or in what God has said in His Word? Beloved how will heart find hope when all around your soul gives way? When the waves of this world are crashing down all around you, will your eyes help you then? No, you need something stronger. You need a Heavenly Word, you need a Word that *God Himself* has spoken. You see, Jesus keeps them blind in order *to teach them what God has said*, and only later lets them see.⁶

They insult Jesus?!

Then He speaks—v.17 “What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?” And they stood still, *looking sad*. 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?” The NASB puts it “Are You *possibly the only one living* near Jerusalem who does not know about the things that happened here in these days?” This would be like someone asking in 2021: “what is this corona thing you are talking about?” So Cleopas—a disciple we really know nothing about essentially asks Jesus: “Are *you* the only one in the dark here?”⁷ Amazing. Jesus draws near to them, to be with them, to help them, and what they do? They insult Him! But *this King who defeated death* overlooked the offense. He simply responds in v.19 “What things?”

Their confession of faith

“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, and how our

⁵ Calvin points out here that Jesus drew near to them “...not to convince the apostles that he was risen, but to reprove their slowness.” John Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries, Vol. XVII*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: BakerBooks 2009), pg. 354

⁶ James R. Edwards points out another reason: “Similar to 9:45 and 18:34, Luke reminds readers that recognition of Jesus and confession of him as Christ and Lord are not matters of human insight but of divine enablement—of revelation.” Edwards, pg. 717

⁷ *Ibid*

chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But *we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.*” This is essentially their confession of faith:

“*We believe that Jesus was a prophet sent from God. We believe He performed miracles and spoke Heavenly oracles. But something horrible happened: the Church and State put Him to death by crucifixion. We hoped He would redeem us, but now that hope is gone.*”

Believers who don't believe

Here's *why* I call these disciples 'believers who didn't believe.' They held Jesus and His works in high esteem, *and* even hoped in Him personally to be the Redeemer. But they didn't believe He had to die to redeem. “The thought of a suffering Messiah was foreign to...first-century Judaism.”⁸ Throughout the gospels, essentially everyone hoped the Messiah would deliver them politically and nationally from the oppression of Rome. They considered their biggest enemy to be something *outside of them*. Therefore, when Jesus died, their hope of deliverance died with Him.⁹

His body is missing!

But they are still even more distraught because now their dead Messiah was missing. Halfway through v.21 “Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed

⁸ *Ibid*, pg. 721. “No canonical OT text, and no pre-Christian Jewish text that we know of, associates suffering with the Messiah. Even the Pseudepigrapha, which develops messianic conceptions well beyond those of the OT, makes no mention of a suffering Messiah. There, on the contrary, Messiah will be a holy conqueror who will consummate the era of salvation, vanquish all enemies by the word of his mouth, subject the nations to the yoke of Israel, and sit on the glorious throne to judge earthly kings and rulers. True, the Servant of the Lord texts in Isaiah (esp. 52:13-53:12) depict a suffering righteous one, but the Servant of the Lord is never identified as Messiah, and Judaism never understood Servant of the Lord texts to refer to Messiah.” *Ibid*, pg. 721

⁹ “Our hopes were nailed to his cross, and buried in his grave.” Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary in One Volume: Genesis to Revelation*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: Zondervan, 1961), pg. 1502

us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, 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. 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.*” These two disciples had thought what the women had said was but an idle tale or nonsense. Yes they were there when Peter returned from the empty tomb, but Peter didn’t see the Lord, so as far as they were concerned His body was stolen, or moved, but *not raised.*

The stupidity of the disciples

Matthew Henry absolutely nail it here:

“One cannot but be amazed at the *stupidity* of these disciples,—who had themselves *so often* professed that they believed Christ to be the Son of God, had been *so often* told that he must die and rise again and then enter into his glory, had seen him more than once raise [others] the dead,¹⁰—that they should be so [resistant]¹¹ to believe.”¹²

It is true that these disciple were stupid, meaning, they were exceedingly foolish. How could they *not* believe that Jesus rose? Jesus told them He would (**Luke 9:22**). He raised others from the dead (**Luke 7:14; Matthew 9:25**). How could not believe? That is foolish.

Our stupidity

But beloved don’t you see how their unbelief indicts us all the more? We have the whole NT. We have all the post-resurrection accounts at our finger tips. We have the book of Revelation that tells us how this is all going to end.

¹⁰ Here’s a catalog of Jesus’ miracles: <https://www.christianity.com/jesus/life-of-jesus/miracles/what-miracles-did-jesus-perform.html>

¹¹ original—“backward”

¹² Henry, pg. 1500

And yet how often do we functionally live like Christ has not risen from the dead? How often do we live like the resurrection is nothing but an *idle tale*? Dear congregation, I am not immune from this, I do it so often, I am so stupid just like these disciples. I have worries, I have fears. I'm so often living off of what I see rather than what God has said. It's sometimes so discouraging to be a Christian as long as I have and still fight the battle between faith and fear. I often live as a believer who doesn't believe in the most vital thing. And I know the same thing is true about you. You are just like these stupid disciples and this stupid pastor. You live *as if* what you see with your eyes are ultimate. How foolish. Beloved your Savior is not in the grave. His body has not been stolen. He is risen. He's walking right next to you, even if your eyes can't see Him. You have no reason to fear. Nothing can harm you ever again, neither in this life nor in the life to come. "Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades." (**Revelation 1:17-18**). That's our **first point**. Jesus encounters us *in our unbelief*, showing us how foolish to trust in what we can see, instead of what He has said.

II. The Revelation

Jesus, gentle and lowly

How does Jesus respond to these disciples? Look at **v.25** "And he said to them, 'O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!'" The tone is crucial here. I don't believe Jesus is being harsh, *but* gentle. Yes it's a rebuke—they were being foolish, they were in unbelief, they were sinning. *But* these were not Pharisees or Judaizers, these were His people. **Hebrews 5:2** says Jesus "...deal(s) gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself [was] beset with weakness."¹³ Loved ones, Jesus is exceedingly

¹³ I believe the context of Hebrews is talking about the merely human high priest, however it would all the more apply to Jesus who is our True High Priest.

gently to us even in our sin, and I would say especially in our sin. The Puritan Thomas Goodwin said:

“...your very sins move Him to pity more than to anger...yea, His pity is *increased* the more towards you, even as the heart of a father is to a child that hath some loathsome disease...His hatred shall [indeed] fall [but] only upon the sin, to free you of its ruin and destruction, *but* His bowels shall be the more drawn out to you; and this as much when you lie under sin as under affliction.”¹⁴

Think of all the things that Jesus could have rebuked His followers for following His resurrection. They all abandoned Him at His most desperate hour. Peter denied Him three times. *But* Jesus never mentions any of these things. His rebukes come only when they don't believe *in Him*. Jesus is glad when we believe (**John 11:15**). No sins trouble Jesus more than our unbelief.¹⁵ Why? Because our unbelief says to Jesus “...we don't trust your heart.” Beloved nothing can more burden the Savior more than when you don't believe that He loves you, and cares for you, and is always and ever for you, that He will never leave you nor forsake you.¹⁶ That is the thing that troubles Jesus the most. That's why He rebukes them, not for their other grievous sins, but because they didn't believe that He was *still* for them.

“All” vs “many”

So Jesus proceeds to corrects their foolish understanding about His own death. Notice the vital word at the end of **v.25** *all*. “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe *all* that the prophets have spoken!” You see they believed *many*

¹⁴ Thomas Goodwin, *The Heart of Christ*, (Carlisle, PA.: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2011), pg. xiv

¹⁵ Again Goodwin says “No sin of theirs troubled him [more] but their unbelief. Which shows how his heart stands, in that He desires nothing more than to have men believe *in Him*.” *Ibid*, pg. 32

¹⁶ Hebrews 13:5

things the prophets said about Christ. They believed Psalm 2—that the coming Christ would conquer the nations with a rod of iron. They believed 2 Samuel 7, that the Son of David—the Christ—would forever sit on the throne. They believed He would arise and scatter his enemies and those who hate Him would flee before Him (**Psalm 68:1**). In other words, they believed *many* things the prophets said about Christ's second coming, but not *all* things about His first coming. So when they saw Jesus scourged and beaten and crucified, they were undone, they were bewildered, they were at an utter loss. Why? Because they took out of the Scriptures only what suited them. Jesus points out that they did not believe "all" that the prophets had spoken. And this failure to believe "all" that the Scripture has spoken that will lead anyone of us into despair, or into self-righteousness, or into confusion. We must never cherry pick the Scriptures and pick out what we like and ignore the rest. We are to submit to everything the Scripture says, the parts we love, the parts we don't like, and the parts we don't understand. All of it is God's breathed-out Word. We can't do with it what we like.

The real enemy

He points out *the very things* they had omitted **v.26** "Was it not *necessary* that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" This was brand new revelation to them, though it shouldn't have been. The Christ had to suffer? Why? Why did Jesus have to die? Because Rome wasn't the *real* enemy. If Jesus conquered Rome and brought the glorious kingdom of Israel back, all they would have gained was a little peace and prosperity before they went to hell. What is the real enemy? What is that one thing that will devastate your soul? Politics? Poverty? Sickness? Suffering? Death? None of these. You and I are the problem. For "none is righteous, no, not one" (**Romans 3:10**) Our sin is the problem. "For the soul who sins shall die." (**Ezekiel 18:4**) The coming wrath of Almighty God is the problem. "For the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience" (**Ephesians 5:6**) The disciples thought that Jesus' death

was the problem.¹⁷ It was the SOLUTION. “Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.”¹⁸ If Christ didn’t *suffer these things*, then nobody could be saved. If Christ didn’t *enter into His glory*, meaning, rise from the dead, then nobody could be saved.

The best sermon we never heard

That’s precisely what this Stranger on the road went on to explain to them. Look at **v.27** “And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.” Moses wrote the first five books of the OT and the Prophets essentially wrote everything else. Jesus took over the conversation and for the next couple hours preached the best sermon we never heard. He showed how the entire Scripture is essentially telling one story—the death and resurrection of Himself—His suffering and glory.

The prophecies spoke of Him

I imagine that Jesus began in **Genesis 3:15** how the serpent was *prophesied* to bite His heel—that’s Jesus’ death. But that He would crush the serpent’s head—that’s His resurrection.

He probably showed how **Psalms 22:1** *prophesied* His crucifixion: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” But then **v.21-22** *prophesied* His resurrection: “You have rescued me...I will tell of your name to my brothers.”

No doubt He showed how **Isaiah 53** *prophesied* of these things. He was the lamb led to the slaughter (**v.7**), but after the anguish of His soul, He saw His redeemed people and was satisfied (**v.10-11**)

¹⁷“The disciples were wrong in distressing their minds about their Master’s death.” Calvin, pg. 359

¹⁸ Hebrews 9:22

The deliverances pointed to Him¹⁹

Certainly Jesus showed how every OT *deliverance* spoke of Him. He was the Rock that Moses struck in the wilderness that gave life-giving water to the children of Israel (**Numbers 20:11**²⁰). Jesus was the bronze serpent lifted up on the pole in **Numbers 21:9** “So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.”²¹ Christ was the serpent lifted upon the cross, He became the snake, the One who takes the curse of our sin if we but trust in Him.

The ceremonies illustrated Him²²

Certainly Jesus pointed to how all of Israel’s *ceremonies* pointed to Him. He was the true Passover Lamb that shed it’s blood to save Israel from the angel of death in **Exodus 12**.²³ Jesus was both goats on the Day of Atonement in **Leviticus 16**. He was the goat who was slain and shed His blood for the people. And He was the scapegoat who escaped death carrying the sin of the people far away from them in the wilderness.

The persons typified Him²⁴

I imagine that Jesus also showed how all the heroes of old were really imperfect portraits of Him. Jesus is the True and Better Joseph. Joseph was delivered from the pit of prison, and afterwards was highly exalted to the right

¹⁹ Noah’s Ark pointed to Him. “As the ark was under the deluge of down pouring rain, so the Lord Jesus suffered under the rolling billows of God’s terrible wrath.” As those in the ark was rescued from certain death, so all who are in Christ Jesus by faith will not taste death. Walter L. Wilson, *A Dictionary of Bible Types*, (Peabody, MA.,: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999), pg. 18

²⁰ cf. 1 Corinthians 10:4.

²¹ cf. John 3:14

²² Wilson shows how every sacrifice was a type of Christ, cf. Wilson, pg. 300. Of course this is exactly what the book of Hebrews says (cf. Hebrews 10:1-10).

²³ cf. John 1:29

²⁴ Jonah spent three days in the heart of the deep, but then was spit out on dry ground (Matthew 12:40). Christ slept in the grave three days, and then was raised alive forevermore.

hand of the King (**Genesis 41**). Jesus is the True and Better Samson. Samson's last act was destroying the Philistines thus saving Israel from her enemies, but it cost him his own life (**Judges 16**). Jesus is the True and Better Daniel. Daniel was thrown into the lion's den, which was blocked with a heavy stone, and sealed with the king's ring. But "God preserved Daniel...by closing the mouths of the lions...preventing them from harming him in the least."²⁵ Afterwards, he was exalted to a higher position of honor (**Daniel 6**). "Likewise the Lord Jesus, after being slain, was also cast into a grave...the opening...blocked by a heavy stone and sealed by His enemies."²⁶ But God raised Him up, loosing Him from the pangs of death²⁷ and has highly exalted Him giving Him a name above every name that is to be named not only in this age but in the age to come.²⁸

Facts + the *meaning* of the facts²⁹

The summary of this greatest sermon never heard is this: the disciples *were wrong* to be in distress over Jesus' death. His death was the greatest, best, most inconceivable news that has ever been uttered. Only to be surpassed by His resurrection. But it's vital that you see this one thing. Jesus was not *merely* reiterating historical facts to these disciples. Jesus was attaching *meaning* to these facts. And it is these two things—the facts *and* the meaning of these facts—that make up the gospel. Jesus was crucified, was buried, and He rose again. Those are the facts. "He loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*" is the *meaning* of those facts for everyone who would believe on Him. The gospel that saves is a gospel of personal pronouns. "Everything depends on knowing that Jesus died

²⁵ Theodorus Vandergroe, *The Christian's Only Comfort in Life and Death, An Exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism: Volume 1*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: Reformation Heritage Books, 2016), pg. 349

²⁶ *Ibid*

²⁷ Acts 2:24

²⁸ Ephesians 1:21; Philippians 2:

²⁹ J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans Publishing, 2009), pg. 25

for *me*, to be *my* Savior, and that His Father is *my* God and Father, personally committed to love, nurture, uphold and glorify *me*.³⁰

Not a hair on your head will perish

Dear friends, is that *the meaning* that you attach to the historical facts of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ? Is Jesus Christ *your* Savior? Have *you* believed on His Name?³¹ If so, don't you see that NOTHING in this whole world can every touch your soul or harm you? You may be put to death, but not a hair on your head will ever perish.³² That's our **second point**: the revelation of Jesus Christ is that He died for *me*, was buried for *me*, and was raised to life for *me*.

III. The Burning

Did not our hearts burn?

How does this voyage with this Stranger end? Beginning with v.28 "So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, 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. When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. *And their eyes were opened*,³³ and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "*Did not our hearts burn within us* while he

³⁰ J.I. Packer in his intro to Herman Witsius' *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man, Vol. 1*, (Grand Rapids, MI.: Reformation Heritage Books, 2010), pg. 29

³¹ Belonging to Jesus means that you have risen to life in His resurrection, because He is our Head and we His body. It is impossible that Christ be the living Head of a dead body. Likewise He is the Bridegroom and we His bride, it is impossible that He be united to a dead bride.

³² Luke 21:16-18

³³ To explore in the future: are their hearts burning (v.32) equivalent to their minds being opened (v.45)?

talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?” Consider three things as we conclude.

1. Jesus changes everything

First consider that one encounter with the Risen Christ changes everything. They sat down with a Stranger to eat, and when they rose they knew that had been with the Savior. Only a couple hours ago, they were lost, but now they’ve been found; they were blind, but now they see; all was death, but now life, life, everlasting life. Dear friends, Jesus changes everything. This encounter teaches us one clear truth: if you don’t have Jesus you have nothing, all is darkness and despair. But if you have Jesus, though you may be in a pit, or on your deathbed, or have lost everything—if you have Him, you have all things. Nothing is worthy to be compared to but a few moments spent with Him. A day in His courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.³⁴

2. Our hearts will burn if we see Him in Scripture

Second, consider *when* their hearts began to burn. **v.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?” Their hearts did not burn because of what they could see with their physical eyes. The physical Jesus was still hidden from them while their hearts burned. But they did see, with the eyes of the hearts, the mercy and power of Jesus, the dying love of Jesus and His victory over death *in the Scripture*, and it made their hearts burn. You don’t need to see the physical Jesus to have your heart burn. If you see Him in the Scriptures, your heart will burn. What a powerful antidote to discouragement today? Are you sad like these disciples were? Are the Romans oppressing you? Go to the Scriptures, search for the crucified and resurrected Christ, don’t give up until you find Him, and a fire will start in your heart that the gates of hell cannot stand against.

³⁴ Psalm 84:10

3. What is this burning?

Thirdly consider the *nature* of this burning. This experience can hardly be described, much less articulated. It is truly a spiritual experience. But consider the nature of a fire. A fire is a wonderful thing and pleasant thing to behold because it seems so very much alive. What does a fire do? It takes that which is cold and makes it hot—it creates an inner heat where before you felt cold and dull. It takes that which is dark and makes it light—it creates brightness so you can see what you couldn't see before. A power is unleashed that burns up everything that is dead and dry—our carnal fleshly parts—and leaves that which is pure. Fire is a refiner in Scripture burning up the dross, leaving the pure gold behind. This burning, this fire is nothing else but Spirit of God Himself.³⁵ **Luke 3:16** says that Jesus would "...baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." God the Spirit is what causes the burning. He is the burning.³⁶ He especially burns when He when the Scriptures are being opened to speak about the crucified and risen Savior of the world. Jesus told us the Spirit's very role is to "take what is mine and declare it to you" (**John 16:14**). The Spirit declares to us the truth about Jesus, everything we've said here this morning, and we He does, it comes with burning—there is heat, and light, and power that attend to it.

I am the resurrection

I wonder this morning, my dear unbelieving friend, have you felt that fire, have you felt the burning? Are cold and dull and in the dark this morning? Don't you see? Apart from Jesus, your heart will never truly burn, you will never possess the light to truly see things as they are; you will never possess the power to defeat your own sin apart. But Jesus Himself is everything you need. He speaks to you this morning: "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever

³⁵ It was the Spirit of the Living God who miraculously descended upon and consumed Abraham's sacrifice in fire (Gen. 15:17). It was a burning bush of fire that spoke to Moses in the wilderness (Exodus 3:2).

³⁶ Jesus said His very function is to "take what is mine and declare it to you" (**John 16:14**).

believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.”³⁷

Enter into death with joy

Dear loved ones, if you have believed upon the name of the Risen Christ, it means that you have been delivered from the judgment to come. It means that you have been delivered from the wrath of God. It means that you are a partaker of His righteousness. It means that you have been raised up to new life. It means that because Jesus rose from the dead, you have a sure and invincible pledge that you will also be raised from the dead on the last day. “Therefore [you] may now enter into death with complete peace, joy, and confidence.”³⁸ You can say with Job “For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God.”³⁹

³⁷ John 11:25-26

³⁸ Vandergroe, pg. 361

³⁹ Job 19:25-26