

Do You Have Heart?**Luke 24:13-35**

I was 11 when our family moved up to Barakel where Dad took on the responsibility as mechanic. There were new places to explore and people to meet. The seemingly endless acres of woods were a real joy to a boy's heart ready for adventure. It was an exciting time. Living up in the north woods was much different than living in a Lake Orion subdivision and while we explored the neighbor by day on our bikes, and played tag with our friends after supper, the call of the wild was waiting.

A regular sight driving around Camp was seeing deer. Their graceful gate dancing over fallen trees as they ran through the woods was thrilling for a young boy who up until that time had only seen the occasional squirrel. Once in a while in the evenings Dad would pile us in the car and we would drive around some of the country roads to look for deer. On one occasion Grandpa and Grandma drove up to visit and thought it would be fun to go look for deer. We saw 2 or 3 here, 4 or 5 there. It was a game to be the first to spot them in the woods. It was now almost dark and we turned a corner to head home. I saw it first and hollered pointing to an open field where it looked like dozens of deer were spread out feeding. We were all amazed at how many there appeared to be. Dad swung the car over to let the head lights fall on the grazing animals. And there they were, dozens and dozens of hay bales.

As it was in that illustration, so it is in our passage this morning. We can miss the obvious. Please turn in your Bibles to **Luke 24:13-35**.

This morning I want to take a familiar passage and talk about what we see from the heart. Just two points today.

A troubled heart

A triumphant heart

I. A TROUBLED HEART – vs. 13-27

Our passage is recorded in detail only by Luke. Mark records in passing that some people saw Jesus after the resurrection including a couple of people walking in the country. Yet it is no less important in the overall story that affirms the credibility of Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

We begin in verse v. 13 and note that this event took place later in the day of His resurrection. It's Sunday, the first day of the week and Luke gives us an approximate time frame of this unexpected meeting between Jesus and two of His followers. They had left Jerusalem perhaps because both the Passover celebration and the Sabbath had ended and they were returning to their home in Emmaus about 7 miles away. From verse 18 we only know the name of one of these travelers. His name is Cleopas. The other remains anonymous.

Let's notice first that they had closed eyes.

A. They Had Closed Eyes – vs. 13-24

Two disciples were walking along discussing everything that had happened that day. It wasn't just random talk; the word used here in the Greek is our English word for homiletics. According to the dictionary, homiletics is the branch of theology that deals with writing and preaching sermons. So as they walked and talked sometime in the late afternoon about the events of the day, they were preaching to one another. At some point in their discussion another traveler came alongside them and fell into conversation with them.

We learn from the text that it was Jesus. **Had He been following them since they left Jerusalem or did He just appear? Had they been so engrossed in discussion that they failed to notice someone catching up to them from behind? Was it now dusk making it more difficult to see in the dim light?**

In verse 16 our text gives us something that is

important to note. **“They were kept from recognizing Him.”**

How many of you have attended a class reunion?
I don't know about you but they can be dreadful. You are expected to remember names and the time in 10th grade when Bill Bradley put crickets in Jill Jones' locker and the theme song of your graduating class. **At my 20th class reunion one of my classmates came up behind me and covered my eyes with her hands and asked me the “guess who” game. Now after 20 years of not seeing someone things change. I guessed wrong to my embarrassment.**

Some scholars suggest that this was a divine intervention, that God in some way had caused the inability for them to recognize Jesus. I think there is a more reasonable explanation that is found in Scripture.

Mark 16:12 “He appeared in another form...”

It is my belief that this “other form” referred to is His resurrection body, a body that was not yet glorified as it was when He was seen by Peter, James, and John on the Mount of Transfiguration. At His crucifixion, His body was beaten to the point of almost being unrecognizable. Now, here He stood in His resurrected body. The only remaining visible scars left from the crucifixion were the places on his hands and feet where they had been pierced by the nails that held Him on the cross.

At times we sing that wonderful Hymn “My Savior First of All”.

**When my life work is ended and I cross the swelling tide,
When the bright and glorious morning I shall see;
I shall know my Redeemer when I reach the other side,
And His smile will be the first to welcome me**

**I shall know Him, I shall know Him,
And redeemed by His side I shall stand;**

**I shall know Him, I shall know Him
By the prints of the nails in His hand.**

For some reason, the identity of Jesus had been hidden from them. They didn't even observe the scars. Scripture speaks of the same kind of transformation that will happen to us when we are raised to new life when He returns for us.

I Corinthians 15 says that when the last trumpet sounds, faster than you can bat an eyelash, as fast as a bolt of lightning, we will be changed.

John states much the same when he writes that we don't know what we will be like at the coming of the Lord, but when we see Him we will be changed to be like Him, not just in character, but also in form – in some physical way changed and fit for heaven. **(I John 3:2-3)** And while there will be some form of physical change, we will still be recognizable. We see that from the transfiguration when Moses and Elijah spoke with Jesus and when the rich man recognized Lazarus.

The physical form of Jesus had changed in some way so that they could not recognize Him. And as they traveled together Jesus asked what they had been talking about. They were dumbfounded to think that someone traveling from Jerusalem hadn't heard about the events surrounding the crucifixion of Jesus.

Walking along beside them was the very one they are now going to describe to inform their new companion of something He already knew. Yet what they have to say is further testimony to closed eyes.

If they believed He was the Messiah, don't you think they would have come to the same conclusion as Peter did about Him, that He was the Christ, the son of the living God? He would have been more to them than just Jesus of Nazareth.

They didn't see Him as the son of God.

They didn't see Him as deity clothed in flesh.

They were right in describing Him as a prophet, but He was more than just a prophet.

They were right in describing Him as powerful in word and deed before God and all people. He is the very one who created the entire universe by just speaking. He is the one whose power cast out demons, made the deaf to hear, the lame to walk, the blind to see, the dumb to speak and the diseased to be well.

His teaching encouraged those who wanted to be made right with God and condemned those who would not believe. He spoke with authority and not like the other religious rulers. His words were spoken with kindness and grace, seasoned with salt as it were, though at times His words could penetrate the hardest of hearts like a hot knife cutting through butter to convict or challenge or condemn.

Yes, He was a prophet in every real sense of the word, performing miracles by His own power and presenting a message that was in harmony with the Old Testament.

He was the Messiah they had been looking for. He was the one they hoped would restore peace among the Jews and bring in His eternal kingdom, but His crucifixion three days earlier had dashed all their hope. It had left them filled with doubt and despair. They were moping along discouraged and defeated.

They did not believe what the Old Testament said about the Messiah that He would suffer.

They not only doubted the testimony of the Word, they doubted the testimony of the women who had reported seeing the tomb empty that morning or that they had seen Him alive.

******Maybe the real reason they didn't recognize Jesus was because they weren't looking for Him.***

They did not believe the prophets.

They did not believe the women.

They did not believe the empty tomb.

I have pondered over the past week a question for which I don't have an answer. **Why didn't they go to the tomb to see for themselves if what the women said was true? Were they doubters as much as Thomas?**

Maybe the real reason we miss seeing Jesus is that we aren't looking for Him either. We miss seeing Him in the most unexpected places.

How many times have you and I missed seeing Jesus in some way because we weren't looking for Him?

Do we see Him in an encouraging note from a friend?

Do we see Him in the benevolent act of a friend or neighbor?

Do we see Him walking beside us in our trials, present to give us the strength to continue, believing all the while that He will never leave or forsake us?

Do we see Him in the pages of His Word as we read and meditate on it?

Do we see Him in the beauty of His creation?

Do we see Him in the joy of worship or the simple prayer of a child?

Or are we all too often like these two disciples with downcast eyes, filled with despair and doubt, failing to see Jesus who was there all the time?

Did we miss seeing Jesus in our services because we came expecting something else?

How often are we like these two disciples walking around with closed eyes because we miss that Jesus is right there with us?

Their eyes were closed.

Notice also that their ears were closed.

B. They Had Closed Ears – vs. 25-26

With a gentle rebuke, Jesus referred to them as being slow of heart, unable to understand all that was written about the Messiah in the Old Testament.

Until just a couple years ago, my personal computer has always been an HP or Dell. For several reasons we decided to make the switch to a MAC. I was having some difficulty getting a program updated so I had called the help desk. Patiently he tried to walk me through getting it set up. He kept telling me to go to the Apple icon in the upper left corner. No matter how he tried to describe it, I just couldn't see it. We were on the phone for a long time and then the light went on and there it was all along, right where he said it was, but I was dull to understand.

They weren't slow of heart to believe for lack of information or even from a lack of desire.

Mark 16:14

At the end of the day, they didn't have a heart to believe. Everything they needed to know about the Messiah was in the Old Testament.

It wasn't couched in some secret code.

It wasn't written in a foreign language.

They couldn't understand because they weren't looking for Jesus in the Old Testament.

When we miss seeing Jesus because our spiritual eyes and ears are closed, we end up with a troubled heart, a heart that is easily in despair, a heart that easily doubts.

So what did Jesus do?

One thing He didn't do was throw up His hands and say it was useless to try and teach them anything. "I give up, you're just too thick headed."

Their eyes were closed.

Their ears were closed.

No wonder they had a troubled heart.

So what's the answer? How do we remove a troubled heart so that we can see Jesus?

Let's consider from this passage what it takes to see Jesus, and for us to see Jesus with eyes and ears of faith.

II. A TRIUMPHANT HEART – vs. 27-35

If we want to have a triumphant heart, a heart that sees Jesus, we must begin with an open book.

That's where Jesus took them to see Him.

He didn't whip out an ID card.

He didn't perform some miracles.

He didn't show them the scars.

He opened up the Book.

A. An Open Book – vs. 27

“And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself.”

Someone has rightly said “the Living Word is now going to explain the written Word.”

Scofield makes a great observation when he wrote “The Lord Jesus gave them the great key to the understanding of Scripture – that He Himself is its subject and that in Him the entire Book finds its unity.”

From Genesis 1 through Revelation 22 the central theme is all about Christ. All of Scripture is unified in presenting Christ. So if we want to understand Scripture, we must look for Jesus in its pages. That is what He explained to them as they walked and talked.

Beginning with the curse God placed on mankind for their disobedience, God spoke of a promised Redeemer. This is the first reference to Messiah.

Then we see the symbolism of the single door on the Ark. Christ is the only way in and through whom those who reject that way will be judged. He is the door.

Of course the Passover Lamb which was just observed and the Day of Atonement both speak about the sacrifice that Messiah would make one and for all for the sin of the world.

Then we see the suffering Messiah in Isaiah 53.

Jesus would spend time carefully recounting the Old Testament passages that related to the Messiah.

If we want to see Jesus we must open up Scripture. It must have a central place, a prominent place in our daily schedule.

My Dad was never encouraged to read much when he was growing up so he didn't. When Mom was in the hospital Dad asked what he was going to do all day. Mom encouraged him to get a book and read. So he started reading. Now for as long as I can remember I would see Dad reading his Bible. When he worked in Birmingham before moving to Camp he read his Bible during breaks or when he was hunting he had a little Testament he would carry and read, but over the last several years since Mom passed away, he has been reading a lot. He usually watches some news at supper time and then turns off the TV around 6:30 and spends the rest of the night reading his Bible or study books about the Bible. He would rather spend time immersed in Scripture.

Peter writes **“As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the Word, that you may grow by it.”**

(I Peter 2:2)

II Peter 1:3-8

If we want to see Jesus more clearly we need to spend time in His Word.

Get a reading plan. Start with 5 or 10 minutes, but start. If you want help, see me.

As you read pray that God's Spirit would teach you something about Christ from the passage.

Paul exhorts us from **Colossians 3:16** to let the Word of Christ richly dwell in us. Hear it, read it, study it, meditate on it, and memorize it. Hide God's Word in your heart. Let it guide your steps. There are so many responsibilities in the day, so many urgent things that can squeeze out our time in God's Word that in time the frequency of our spending time alone with God reading Scripture is

lost. I can't urge you enough to open this Book with regularity so you can have a triumphant life. With regularity you will see Jesus.

It was not coincidental that their journey with Jesus included an open Book. It wasn't enough to just read the Scripture, they needed Jesus to explain it to them.

How often do we read the Bible and then when we're done, just close it up and never let Jesus explain His Word to us? Is it any wonder then that we find reading the Bible boring or not interesting?

I don't play my guitar very much, but when I do I need to spend some time tuning the strings. I have a little box that is an electronic tuner. The needle tells me whether or not it's sharp or flat. When the needle is in the center it's in tune. By reading God's Word and having it explained regularly, it's like getting my life tuned to seeing Jesus more clearly.

**When we walk with the Lord
In the light of His Word,
What a glory He sheds on our way!**

When we have an open book, we develop an open door.

B. An Open Door – vs. 28-30

They came to their journey's end and Jesus acted like He was going on further, but they were so captivated by what He shared they wanted to hear more, they wanted Him to explain more clearer passages they had heard, but hadn't understood. So they invited Him in. ***If they had never opened the door and invited Jesus in they would have never recognized Him.***

When was the last time you invited Christ to teach you? We'll never see Jesus in the way He wants us to know Him, if we don't invite Him to be a part of every area of our lives. One of the reasons we're

changing service times is that we want you to linger longer with Christ. To be captured and captivated by His presence.

Uncle Johnnie loved God's Word. His house was just up the path from where Dad worked in the garage. Dad said there would be days Uncle Johnnie would come down to the garage because he was close by and he would be giddy with excitement and he'd say "Howard, I was just reading (and would give a passage), and guess what I learned. He loved spending time in God's Word.

Near the end of his life, when his eyesight was failing, someone asked him what he did since he was no longer able to read. He said that he just sat and thought about it.

A triumphant life has an open Book and an open door. It also has an open heart.

C. An Open Heart – vs. 31-32

When we allow the Lord to teach us from His Word, our hearts will burn with fire, there will be a sense of awe and wonder that can't be quenched. When the Scriptures were opened up to them so that they could understand it, they saw Jesus for who He was. Then their eyes were opened. They acknowledged a burning in their heart that was only possible through time with Christ.

I have heard people say that reading God's Word doesn't do a thing for them. They don't understand it and don't give it a second look. Paul has a response for such folks: **"The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned."** I Corinthians 2:14

That's talking about an unbeliever's inability to understand Scripture, but you can also be a Christian and not understand because you are

immature in the faith. There can be several reasons for that.

You can be new in the faith.

You can ignore what it says.

You can have some sin that is not confessed.

You can choose to remain a spiritual infant, not wanting to grow.

But you cannot live a triumphant life if you don't have an open book, an open door, or an open heart.

When was the last time you had a burning in your heart for God's Word?

Joy and zeal result with a deep hunger to know more about Scripture and about Christ.

What was the result of an open heart that now saw Christ for who He is? There was an open witness.

D. An Open Witness – vs. 33-35

The prophecies examined became alive.

The women's testimony was true.

The empty tomb was explained.

Instead of despair there was delight.

Instead of gloom there was gladness.

Their response was to immediately get up and go share the good news with the other disciples. They couldn't wait to share the good news about seeing Christ and became exuberant witnesses.

When we see the Lord we are overjoyed and excited to share the news with others.

Are you looking for Jesus? Open the Word; open the door; open your heart; be an open witness.

Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus,
To reach out and touch Him, and say that we love Him.

Open our ears, Lord, and help us to listen,
Open our eyes Lord, we want to see Jesus.

John 20:31 "But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name."