

ENLIGHTENMENT ON THE EMMAUS ROAD

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INTRODUCTION:

- A. Have you ever had life throw you a curve ball which totally changed how you viewed things? Have you ever had hopes, dreams, or expectations that suddenly got crushed? We all have haven't we!
- B. Now put yourself in the shoes of the apostles and disciples at the time of His death – This was the case Cleopas and an unnamed person who traveled with him. As we look at their thoughts and their experience with the risen Lord on the road to Emmaus there are great lessons for us...

LESSONS FROM THE EXPERIENCE ON THE EMMAUS ROAD

A. The Lord is not just interested in the prominent, but also the insignificant:

1. In this resurrection account we are introduced to two people and then they disappear from the pages of God's word! These are two men who are basically unknown! **(Luke 24:13, 18)**
 - a. Who were they? Their names? Males or females? What do we really know about them?
 - b. These questions show us we know very little about these two... All we know is right here!
 - c. We know the name of one was Cleopas, but the name of the other person isn't even given!
 - d. These two people are introduced to us & disappear from us on the same page of scripture!
2. As we study this account we can take what is specifically stated and take what is implied by the little information given and start to form at least a little bit of a character sketch:
 - a. These two likely lived in Emmaus a city 7 miles outside Jerusalem **(vs. 13, 29)** – They had been in Jerusalem & had lost hope when Jesus was crucified. Disappointed and discouraged, it only seems reasonable that going to Emmaus meant going home.
 - b. They were disciples of Jesus **(vs. 19-21)** – They great hope in Jesus being the one to redeem Israel. They saw the miracles and believed. They heard the teaching and followed. From their words & their disposition they had to be very zealous followers
 - c. They were part of the inner group of disciples & apostles **(vs. 22-23, 33)** – They knew Mary Magdelene, Mary mother of James, & Salome personally & were part of their group
 - d. They're walking instead of riding so I'd think they aren't extremely wealthy people **(vs. 13)**
3. Jesus took the time to walk seven miles with them and made them somebody's forever more!
 - a. Jesus only has a limited time left before His ascension and needed to reaffirm His apostles and their faith and explain so many things to them... and yet He walks with these two
 - b. How much time do you suppose it took to walk all this way? We don't know... But we know it was late when they got to Emmaus and Jesus stayed for supper with them
 - c. There much to do, but for now these two have His total attention & one isn't even named!
4. What an encouragement this is to know no matter who we are God knows us and cares about us!
 - a. Other people may not know who we are, other people may not care who we are, and other people may not care what happens in our lives → But the Lord certainly does!
 - b. This is pointed out by the Hebrew writer **(Heb 11:35-38)** → Name one person in the Bible who was sawn in two? We may not know, but God remembers & recognizes them!
 - c. Meditate on God's greatness... When men start to achieve greatness they easily forget the "little people" but God, in His infinite greatness, always remembers them!

B. A strong hunger and thirst for spiritual things is rewarded by the Lord:

1. These two individuals are travelling home and doing their best to make sense of all of the events that had recently transpired in Jerusalem... especially in regards to their Messiah: **(Luke 24:14-17)**
 - a. Cleopas and the other traveler had placed great hope and confidence in Jesus being the redeemer of Israel. With the death of Jesus they were left despondent & confused!
 - b. So now they are walking engaged in a deep heart-felt discussion about all the events
 - c. Luke uses three terms to describe this – They were talking (general term for conversation), reasoning (suggests strong debate), and conversation (tossing around of ideas)
 - d. They were throwing their conversation back and forth like a football trying to figure out why their expectations of the Messiah came to such a tragic end and what to think about Jesus' body turning up missing → They're confused, but seeking answer!
2. The Lord rewards their interest and desire to understand with personal teaching **(Luke 24:25-27)**
 - a. Many people have tried to summarize God's plan of salvation (like Ken Craig has done), but wouldn't it have been wonderful to have heard the gospel from Jesus Himself!
 - b. They knew the scriptures but their own ideas had gotten in the way... Had they been looking at a spiritual redeemer they would have been walking towards Jerusalem not away from it... They would've seen His death as bringing hope, not destroying it.
 - c. As Jesus explains the gospel message to them He says, "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things" – He calls to their minds the scriptures and is asking them, "What did you expect? What were passages like Psalm 22 & Isaiah 53 all about?"
 - d. They had now walked about seven miles with Jesus, who was at this time a stranger to them, and they invite him to dinner where they learn even more **(vs. 28-29)**
3. Jesus had provided a great reward for their spiritual interest thus far by explaining more clearly the Messiah to them, but the greatest reward came as He opened their eyes **(Luke 24:30-31)**
 - a. Spiritually speaking Jesus opened their eyes → He slowly brought their understanding and faith to a more complete place. This may be why Jesus stayed "concealed" from them for so long. It wasn't a physical or emotional thing but He truly built their faith!
 - b. Physically He opened their eyes → They could tell it was Jesus & then He vanished away
 - c. "Eyes were opened" & "they recognized him" literally means, "Their eyes were completely opened" & "they came to fully comprehend him" – This is more than a physical thing
 - d. At the end they described their feelings as a "burning within us" → They listened with great interest & a desire to understand and ate every minute of it up! **(vs. 32)**
4. There was another occasion where a man was travelling down a road leaving Jerusalem and was still hungry and thirsty for something more **(Acts 8:26-31)**
 - a. He started his trip in Jerusalem & was traveling back home to Egypt, 100's of miles away
 - b. Why was he in Jerusalem? He was there to worship... He'd already worshipped, already studied the scriptures, & had many other things he could've been thinking about
 - c. Here he had traveled hundreds of miles, was now on his way home, and was reading the book of Isaiah as he went, and was striving to figure out what it was talking about
 - d. Was he sincerely interested in what God said? Did he earnestly want to figure it out?
 - e. God saw his hunger and sent Philip to teach him... and due to his great desire he sees the gospel message and wants to be baptized immediately! Oh for people like that!
5. Here's where spiritual inventory must be done: Where does our spiritual interest & hunger rank?
 - a. Do we desire spiritual things to the point we hunger and thirst after them? Do we desire things of Jesus like a newborn baby desires to be fed? **(Matt 5:6; I Peter 2:2)**

- b. There's so many Christians who're unsatisfied spiritually & it's due to not being passionate about spiritual things! What if we showed as much interest as we do in _____?
- c. What did God do for these two? What about the Ethiopian Eunuch? What about Saul of Tarsus? What about those in Samaria? When people want more, God gives it!
- c. For those who truly want more, who are striving to grow, who hunger for spiritual things, the Lord will reward! Look at the pattern, God always make sure seekers are filled!

C. When you find yourself disappointed or discouraged with life, fix your eyes on your resurrected Jesus!

1. When Jesus died on the cross just a few days before this, the hope and confidence of Cleopas and his travelling mate died with Him! **(Luke 24:17-18)**
 - a. Their expectations were shattered, everything happened so fast, & now they're in a state of shock & fear. Maybe they're going home to return to their normal lives pre-Jesus?
 - b. Swindoll writes: "Prior to His arrest Jesus traveled up and down the strip of land once ruled by David and Solomon, inviting people of Israel to become a part of His kingdom, promising abundant life. His followers fully expected that He would become their king and that Israel would again be prosperous and free. He was their Messiah. But on one fateful Friday afternoon, as the sun fell behind the horizon, the Son of God hung cold and lifeless on a Roman cross just outside the city walls. As the sun rose on Sunday morning and the Passover feast came to an end, two of Jesus' followers, disillusioned and resolving to leave their foolish dreams in Jerusalem, left for home. The dejected pair began the seven-mile walk to Emmaus even as rumors of resurrection circulated among the ranks of Jesus' disciples."
2. You can hear the despondency in their voice as they explain to Jesus why they're sad **(vs. 19-24)**
 - a. Hear their words: He WAS a prophet... WAS mighty in deeds... WAS mighty in words... He WAS loved... WAS hated... WAS crucified → To them, Jesus belonged to yesterday!
 - b. Their words reflect their faith – "We HAD hoped..." → How discouraging it must have been to watch all of this take place, especially when their expectations were so misplaced
 - c. They had heard rumors of the resurrection, but they certainly didn't believe it. As far as they were concerned no one had seen Jesus. Death was a certain dead end street!
3. When they were travelling down the Emmaus road they were travelling away from Jerusalem, now with their eyes having seen Jesus, they're travelling toward Jerusalem! **(Luke 24:33)**
 - a. Going back to Jerusalem meant hope had been restored. It meant they finally got the mission of Jesus. It meant continuing on as His disciples in spite of all that happened!
 - b. It meant a renewal of faith – Returning to Jerusalem means returning to a place of hostility & danger. They crucified Jesus, what would they do to His followers? Took courage!
 - c. What made the difference? They had seen Jesus as the Son of God risen from the dead!
4. When you find yourself discouraged or disappointed, focus your eyes on your resurrected Lord!
 - a. We are to fix our eyes on Jesus, not only because He has died for our sins, but also because He is seated at the right hand of God → Jesus is our resurrected Lord! **(Heb 12:1-2)**
 - b. Swindoll: "When life is no longer "fantastic," our expectations crumble & dreams fade, it's easy to slide into a funk. Circumstances become our taskmaster. People, especially those who took part in causing our pain, stand taller than God. Our vision becomes earthbound, horizontal. Our prayers seem to bounce off the ceiling, and God seems far removed from our pain. Let's face it; that's a natural response we're all guilty of choosing when our carefully constructed futures collapse under their own weight."
 - c. Focusing on our resurrected Jesus is focusing on the King of Kings and Lord of Lords! It's fixing our eyes on the One who is in control. Death, being the ultimate in dead in streets, is no longer a dead in street! There's no situation beyond His strength!
 - d. Our earthly expectations, dreams, & hopes make take a hit from time to time, but if our eyes are focused on Jesus we have expectations, dreams, & hopes that won't budge!