

Luke 24B

- Tonight we reach the culmination of Luke's Gospel and of course, Jesus' ministry during His first coming to earth
 - Jesus' teaching would have no meaning for us today, had it not be mirrored by His sinless life
 - Jesus' sinless life would have held no significance for us had it not be met by an unjustified death
 - Jesus' death would have held no power had it not be followed by his glorious resurrection and ascension
 - And so tonight, as we end the book of Luke, we study His departure from the earth
 - A departure that lasts only for a time as we await His return
- Last week we witnessed the empty tomb
 - And like the apostles, we wonder where is the body? Where is the Lord?
 - Meanwhile, we know he has set out for the Galilee

[Luke 24:13](#) ¶ And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem.

[Luke 24:14](#) And they were talking with each other about all these things which had taken place.

[Luke 24:15](#) While they were talking and discussing, Jesus Himself approached and *began* traveling with them.

[Luke 24:16](#) But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him.

- Among the Synoptic gospels, this is by far the most detailed account of Jesus' appearance outside Jerusalem
 - John's gospel gives more detail of His appearance in Jerusalem
 - And John tells of a third appearance in the Galilee
- The story begins with two men walking a road as they leave Jerusalem headed toward Emmaus

- We can only assume they had journeyed to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover and now were headed home
 - And we're told they are talking about the things that had taken place in Jerusalem that week
 - Obviously, Jesus' ministry had made a big impact on the city
 - He had become the talk of the town
 - And not just His death, of course,
 - The real news were the wild rumors of His missing body and of Jesus being alive again
 - Impossible things, really
 - National Enquirer kinds of things
- And as they walk, Jesus approaches
 - And He joins them in their walk
 - This wasn't the least bit unusual
 - Traveling in Judea was done largely on foot and along well kept Roman roads
 - But thieves were common, and the only safe way to travel was in groups
 - So it would have been natural for a solitary figure like Jesus to come along side another traveling party and join them
 - Since Jesus walk the same direction, they can only assume that Jesus has been in Jerusalem as well and is now returning home
- And the scriptures tell us that these men were prevented from knowing and recognizing who Jesus was
 - Isn't that fascinating
 - The phrase in Greek literally means something took away their eye's ability to be aware of what they saw

- I think this is similar to the invisible force that prevents husbands from recognizing their wife's new hairstyle
- We know they weren't blind, but the point is they could know who Jesus really was
 - They saw the man Jesus, they spoke with Him
 - Yet they couldn't recognize Him for Who He truly was
- What caused this strange kind blindness?
 - Or perhaps we should ask who caused this blindness?
 - We know the answer...it was God Himself, through the Holy Spirit
 - God would not allow these men to know who Jesus was in that moment, for He had better things planned

[Luke 24:17](#) And He said to them, "What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?" And they stood still, looking sad.

- Before we continue in the dialog, I want to pause here just for the comic effect I see in the text
 - Imagine these men walking down the road, perhaps three abreast
 - Personally, I imagine Jesus in the middle by this point with each man on either side
 - And at first, Jesus doesn't say much
 - He just listens
 - And these men are talking excitedly back and forth about all that they saw in Jerusalem
 - And finally, Jesus speaks up and His first comments are to ask what they were talking about
 - Jesus basically acted as though He had not heard about the Prophet who taught in the Temple, and who was tried and who was crucified
 - And when Jesus speaks these words, the men literally stopped in place

- And I imagine Jesus continued walking forward a few more steps until He too stopped and looked back
- And when He did he saw these two men with frozen expressions, looking at Him with a gloomy face
 - They were stunned to find someone leaving Jerusalem who didn't know about the extraordinary events of the past week
 - And they were sad to think that any Jew could have missed the significance of a prophet having visited God's people
- Look at what they said in response

[Luke 24:18](#) One *of them*, named Cleopas, answered and said to Him, "Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?"

[Luke 24:19](#) And He said to them, "What things?" And they said to Him, "The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people,

[Luke 24:20](#) and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to the sentence of death, and crucified Him.

[Luke 24:21](#) "But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened.

[Luke 24:22](#) "But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning,

[Luke 24:23](#) and did not find His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive.

[Luke 24:24](#) "Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said; but Him they did not see."

- Cleopas begins by asking a mocking question of Jesus
 - Are you the only one who doesn't know these things?
 - It's a lot like saying what rock did you crawl out from under?
 - How could it be possible that someone be in Jerusalem and not know the story
 - The dialog here makes absolutely clear how all encompassing Jesus' death had been

- In response to the question, Jesus continues to bait them into telling Him what they believe happened
 - What Jesus is doing here is very specific
 - He's not just having fun at these guys' expense
 - He's working toward a point, a point which Luke is intent to capture
 - So Jesus asks them to give the details
 - They begin by saying these were the events of Jesus of Nazareth, the mighty prophet who impressed the peoples
 - Their description is true, at least in the sense that Jesus was a prophet during His time on earth
 - And He did perform mighty deeds, and He did teach with mighty words
 - The problem with their response, of course, is that it didn't go far enough
 - Jesus was not merely a prophet, but He was also the Messiah
 - God in the flesh
 - And these men's statements make clear that though they gave Jesus respect and admiration
 - And they even were willing to acknowledge that Jesus came with God's power
 - But they still fell short in their understanding of who Jesus truly was
 - And it's particularly interesting that they are currently being prevented from recognizing Jesus even in their midst
 - They haven't connected the dots yet
- Then they go on to tell how the chief priests were responsible for Jesus' death
 - We're only a few days following Jesus death, and already the common man's understanding of what happened in Jerusalem includes an awareness that the Jewish leaders were responsible for Jesus' death

- The early Church carries this same understanding
 - Stephen, the first martyr, specifically blames the religious leaders for killing the Messiah
- But the men say why they were so sad
 - They say that they had hoped Jesus would redeem Israel
 - That's an interesting word for them to use, redeem
 - They didn't say rescue or free Israel
 - They expected redemption

[Psa. 130:6](#) My soul *waits* for the Lord
 More than the watchmen for the morning;
Indeed, more than the watchmen for the morning.

[Psa. 130:7](#) O Israel, hope in the LORD;
 For with the LORD there is lovingkindness,
 And with Him is abundant redemption.

[Psa. 130:8](#) And He will redeem Israel
 From all his iniquities.

- They were saying that they hoped that Jesus might be the Messiah
 - So they were looking for a Messiah as the scriptures promised
 - They saw Jesus and hoped He was the Messiah
 - And now they are sad because He died
 - In a silly comparison, you might say they were sad in the same way that Chicago Cubs fan often are
 - Every year they get their hopes up that this might be there year
 - And yet in the end, things fall apart, leaving them saddened and disappointed
 - But what's interesting is that they probably still had hope for a Messiah
 - Like the Cubs fans, they probably said there's always next year

- The Messiah will come one day, but it's such a shame that Jesus wasn't that one
- These men are so close to knowing the truth but yet still so far
 - They are on the verge of missing their Messiah
 - And here He stands in their midst
 - And yet they are being prevented from seeing Him for who He is
- Then say besides all this, it's been three days since He died
 - Even more telling, they seem to know that three days was significance and they suggest that there was some reason to look forward to the third day
 - And yet nothing seems to have happened
 - Except that when the women found the tomb open, they claim to have heard from angels who said He was alive
 - And went to check on what the women reported, they found the empty tomb,
 - They found the stone rolled away
 - They found the body wrappings
 - Everything just as they reported
 - But since they hadn't seen a body, they weren't willing to trust the testimony of a woman
- First, it's obvious from their testimony that they were disciples of Jesus and had been spending time among the apostles
 - They keep using references like some of us or some of those who were with us
- Secondly, these men are obviously not prone to thinking logically about what they've heard
 - If they had been, then they wouldn't have been so reluctant to accept the women's testimony

- After all, they had remembered something from Jesus' teaching that led them to believe that the third day might be important
- And then they find that everything the women said was been found to be true
 - Stone, tomb, missing body
- The only part of their story that required faith was that a body had been resurrected and brought back to life
 - If these women were trustworthy with respect to the rest of their story, then why not believe the all of it?
 - If they were liars, then why give them any credit at all?
- And if they were willing to accept Jesus when He raised others like Lazarus from the dead, then why be doubtful of His own raising
- And to this, Jesus finally responds:

[Luke 24:25](#) And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!

[Luke 24:26](#) "Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?"

[Luke 24:27](#) Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

- How foolish indeed
 - But not just because they failed to accept the testimony of the women
 - Jesus focuses on an even more important failing for these men
 - Jesus says these men were slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken
 - Look at what Jesus charges them with

- Failure to believe their scriptures – the prophets
- And in verse 27, we see that the term prophets includes Moses, so essentially Jesus means the entire OT
- Jesus says they are foolish men because they have been slow to believe in all that the OT has spoken concerning the coming Messiah
 - In particular, they have decided that Jesus couldn't be the Messiah after all because Jesus had been put to death
 - And obviously the real Messiah couldn't end that way
 - This means they were ready to reject Him and move on
 - To which Jesus responds they are fools
- Do you remember a few chapters back in Luke 16 we saw Jesus teach the story of Lazarus and the rich man
 - In that story we learned how God's one chosen tool to bring men to understand the truth of His Son is the Word of God
 - And in Jesus day, the Word of God was the Jewish Bible, the OT
 - When the rich man asks for a miracle, a raising of the dead to convince his brothers to avoid hell
 - Abraham answers that even a raising of the dead will not accomplish the purpose the man intended
 - It will not succeed in convincing the hearts of men to repent and believe
 - That power is uniquely reserved for the Word of God, because when God saves by the power of His Word, then He will rightly receive all the glory for that work
 - If it is seen to be by another means, then the sinful pride of men will quickly seek a way to claim credit for that work
 - But God will not share His glory with men, and by vesting the power to know the Lord in His holy word, God has ensured that He will rightly receive all the glory

- And in earlier chapters when we saw Jesus blast the Jewish leaders,
 - He accused them of blinding Israel to the truth of who Jesus was
 - And He said the way that they blinded the people was by twisting the meaning of the law and the OT scriptures so that when the Messiah arrived, the people couldn't recognize Him
 - The OT had been given to the Jews so that they might know who the Messiah was,
 - But they missed Him in part because they hadn't been prepared properly by their leaders to understand what scripture taught about his arrival
- So likewise again, Jesus says to these men by saying that they were fools because they relying on what they saw rather than on what they should have known from God's word
 - And until they saw His body, they wouldn't believe that Jesus could be the Messiah
 - But Jesus says they were slow to believe God's Word
- Now what does Jesus do in response to their foolishness?
 - What would you do?
 - We know that God is the one holding back their vision from recognizing Him in their midst
 - If you were Jesus wouldn't you seek to remove that impediment in this moment and reveal Himself?
 - Isn't this the perfect moment, after all?
 - Why not just drop the scales from their eyes and announce Himself and then they might see the truth?
 - Isn't that what we might do here?
 - And if that is how we are thinking, then we would be wrong
 - Because if Jesus were to do that here, then He would be repeating the error of the rich man when he asked Abraham to allow Lazarus to make an appearance to His brothers

- We would be looking for a physical manifestation to take the place of the Word of God
- Remember, they have already seen the death of Jesus
 - And there is now a missing body with the report that He has been raised
 - And if Jesus appeared now, it would certainly be an impressive moment
 - And it might have caused them to wonder in amazement
 - And perhaps God would have been gracious even to work in that moment to ensure it resulted in their faith
 - But it would be wrong, because it would have been placing emphasis on what they saw rather than what they might believe in faith

[Heb. 11:1](#) ¶ Now faith is the assurance of *things hoped* for, the conviction of things not seen.

[Rom. 8:24](#) For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he *already* sees?

- Our faith in Jesus is rooted in our trust and faith in God's Word
 - And any basis for faith apart from a trust in God's word is no faith at all
- Just look at Jesus deals with these men
 - Beginning with Moses, and all the prophets, Jesus explained the things concerning Himself in the scriptures
 - Jesus gave an exposition of the Word of God that only God could give
 - What could that conversation have been like?
 - What would it have been like to listen as God explains His word and reveals how the text speaks about Jesus on every page

- Well, let me tell you, you can have that experience
 - Jesus promised that to those who become His disciples, God will give the Holy Spirit to each
 - And God will come to reside inside each believer
 - And the Holy Spirit will teach us all things, Jesus said
 - So when we open the very same scriptures that these men had heard
 - We have God available and ready to speak to our hearts about all that He would desire us to know about His Son and His commands for our life
 - But like these men, we must walk with Him and spend time with Him and listen to Him
 - And since we don't have a physical manifestation of Jesus before us today, we are required to carry out this same devotion through the written Word
 - Devoting ourselves daily to searching the scriptures to know how the Lord would speak to us
- One of the reasons this ministry has made a point to teach God's word verse by verse, and to do so consistently is our conviction that nothing else can take the place of scripture in persuading an unbeliever of the truth of the Gospel or for preparing the Saints for the work of ministry

[Luke 24:28](#) ¶ And they approached the village where they were going, and He acted as though He were going farther.

[Luke 24:29](#) But they urged Him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is *getting* toward evening, and the day is now nearly over." So He went in to stay with them.

[Luke 24:30](#) When He had reclined *at the table* with them, He took the bread and blessed *it*, and breaking *it*, He *began* giving *it* to them.

[Luke 24:31](#) Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight.

[Luke 24:32](#) They said to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?"

[Luke 24:33](#) And they got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found gathered together the eleven and those who were with them,

[Luke 24:34](#) saying, "The Lord has really risen and has appeared to Simon."

[Luke 24:35](#) They *began* to relate their experiences on the road and how He was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread.

- So they continue until they reach a stopping point for the day
 - And Jesus leaves the impression He would continue on
 - How odd
 - Where's He going?
 - Why keep walking?
 - Once again He's baiting the men, it seems
 - It's almost as though He's waiting for an invitation to stop
 - And when they urge Him to stay, He agrees
 - And at the table He reclines and begins to take bread, bless it and break it, and hand it out
 - And at this moment they recognize Jesus
 - Now what caused the recognition?
 - Some might think that it was merely the breaking of the bread in a way that reminded them of the Last Supper
 - Except that these men weren't at the Last Supper
 - Besides, the text says how they came to recognize Jesus
 - Their eyes were opened because God choose this moment to reveal Himself to them
- What has happened here?
 - Well, two men who had seen and known Jesus were prevented from knowing who He was until they had heard the truth of Jesus according to the Scriptures
 - And once they had heard these things, it had an immediate effect on their heart
 - They came to a new understanding, but not only that

- They came to a new spiritual place
- Look at verse 32
 - When were their hearts burning?
 - After they saw Jesus and recognized him at the table?
 - No on the road when they were taught the word of God
 - So when did the belief enter their hearts?
 - Surely on the road?
 - So what brought about their faith?
 - The Word of God
 - Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God
 - The seed is the word of God, and where it lands it will bring new life

[1Th. 2:13](#) ¶ For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the **word** of God which you heard from us, you accepted *it* not *as* the **word** of men, but *for* what it really is, the **word** of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.

- And then Jesus vanishes
 - Which tells us that Jesus in his resurrected will do supernatural things
- And then these men run back to confirm that Jesus has risen
 - And they are so excited they run back that very hour, which means at night when it would have been dangerous to travel
 - And they testify to the 11 of all that happened
 - I wonder if the 11 are believing yet?
 - Well, read on

[Luke 24:36](#) ¶ While they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst and **said* to them, "Peace be to you."

[Luke 24:37](#) But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit.

[Luke 24:38](#) And He said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?”

[Luke 24:39](#) “See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.”

[Luke 24:40](#) And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.

[Luke 24:41](#) While they still could not believe *it* because of their joy and amazement, He said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?”

[Luke 24:42](#) They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish;

[Luke 24:43](#) and He took it and ate *it* before them.

- Jesus appears to the 11 even as they are hearing the story from Cleopas
 - Now observe their reaction
 - Did they run to embrace Jesus based on the testimony of the two men?
 - No
 - So Jesus says why are you so troubled?
 - And look, Jesus cites that they have doubts in their hearts
 - Now He shows them His feet and hands and the holes from the crucifixion
 - And He emphasizes that He is a flesh and bone man – not a spirit
 - This testimony in Luke’s gospel is a direct contradiction to the gnostics in the early church who claimed that Jesus was never a true fleshly man
 - But back to the disciples, look at verse 41
 - They still aren’t believing in Him
 - Finally, in a scene that’s downright comical if you imagine it in all its details
 - Jesus says someone give me some food
 - At which promptly takes a bites and begins to eat the broiled fish
 - And do you seen Jesus with a big grin on his face as he crews? I do.

- Do we need any more proof of the story of Lazarus and the rich man than this scene?
 - Here are the 11 disciples inspecting Jesus' own resurrected body
 - And yet they can't bring themselves to believe that He was truly who He said He was
 - Can I say it again...nothing can bring about faith in the heart of a man except the word of God preached
 - And in one final confirmation of that truth, look at how Luke's gospel ends

[Luke 24:44](#) ¶ Now He said to them, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

[Luke 24:45](#) Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,

[Luke 24:46](#) and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day,

[Luke 24:47](#) and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

[Luke 24:48](#) "You are witnesses of these things.

[Luke 24:49](#) "And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

[Luke 24:50](#) ¶ And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them.

[Luke 24:51](#) While He was blessing them, He parted from them and was carried up into heaven.

[Luke 24:52](#) And they, after worshiping Him, returned to Jerusalem with great joy,

[Luke 24:53](#) and were continually in the temple praising God.

- Once again, Jesus begins with His words and the words of the OT scriptures
 - And He explains how all was fulfilled in His life and death
 - And with that explanation from the word of God, in verse 45 we're told Jesus opened their minds
 - And they believed in the risen Lord
 - Whatever belief they shared in Jesus prior to the resurrection, only now did they finally understand it all

- I believe the scripture suggests that perhaps only Peter really understood who Jesus was from before His death
 - First we have Peter acknowledging Jesus in that famous confession from Matt 16:18
 - Add to that the fact that Jesus appeared to Peter alone before he appeared the other disciples (verse 34) which is also mentioned in the other gospels
- In any case, we now see their understanding made complete on the basis of an understanding of God's word
- Finally, Jesus gives His final instructions to the disciples
 - Jesus commands them to remain in the city until they receive power from on high
 - The time when the Holy Spirit arrived to open the Church age and empower these men for their ministry – a promise we share
 - He then led them outside the city to the place where Jesus returned to the Father
 - Leaving the disciples to return to a joyful worship of God in the temple