

The Resurrection brings CLARITY

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Well, coming off a great Easter celebration, my wife, Chelsea, and I had a busy week, and we decided that we were going to take a little bit of time to travel. And so we did. We just jumped around the world this week. We've got pictures of it.

We stopped in London first and took some pictures by the big clock. Then we went to Paris and took pictures by that big thing. Then we made it to China, and we found ourselves on the Great Wall as well. And we wore the same clothes everywhere we went.

If you're looking at this thinking something doesn't add up, you're right. We didn't do any of these things. That's all made with AI. Reality for us this past week was baseball practices and baseball tournaments. We didn't go to any of those places.

But that right there, all those pictures, is just telling you that's the world that we live in now, right? That is the world that we live in now. Every week I have people sending me pictures and videos of different things, saying, "Look at what this person did," or, "Look at what this person said," or, "I can't believe this." More and more, I'm having to say, "Hey, that's not real. Somebody made that with AI, and you weren't able to tell."

Listen, more and more people are having a tough time determining what's real and what's fake. Well, here's the good news for believers in a confusing world: We're going to see in Scripture today that Jesus brings clarity. Jesus brings understanding to what's going on around us.

If you've got your Bible, join me in Luke chapter 24. Luke 24. This week and in the next few weeks, we're going to be answering the question, "So what? Why does the resurrection matter?" On Easter, we learned that the resurrection gives us hope for today, hope for tomorrow, and hope for eternity.

This morning, as we dive into Luke 24, we're going to see that the resurrection brings clarity to us. The resurrection brings understanding for us. If you're taking notes, that's our title: The resurrection brings clarity.

Look with me now, starting in verse 13. The Bible says:

That very day...

— Luke 24:13

Pause there. That very day is Easter Sunday, right? It's the day that Jesus rose. So all of the events that we're going to read this morning happened the same morning that Jesus rose from the grave.

That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem.

— Luke 24:13

Now, the two who were going to Emmaus more than likely were in Jerusalem for the week of the Passover, that entire celebration. They'd been there several days. Now they're returning home.

Verse 14 says:

They were talking with each other about all these things that had happened.

— Luke 24:14

Pause there. "All these things that had happened." Remember what had happened during Holy Week? We talked about it in here from Palm Sunday forward. Jesus rides in on the donkey. There are the palm branches. There are the coats on the ground. He gets into the city. He flips over the tables in the temple. He goes toe-to-toe with the religious leaders. He's betrayed. He's tried. He's crucified. And now there are people saying, "Hey, listen. The tomb's empty. We think that Jesus might be alive."

This is a massive week in the history of the world. It's a massive week in Jerusalem, and that's what they're talking about.

While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?"

— Luke 24:15-17

It says they stood still. They stopped, and they looked 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?"

— Luke 24:18

What a question that is, right? Think about that. We don't know much about Cleopas, but he's forever going to be remembered as the man who asked Jesus if he knew about the crucifixion, right? He's asking Jesus if he heard that Jesus was crucified. He doesn't realize it yet, but I can imagine, if I'm him, I am replaying that conversation in my head in the days and weeks that are going to follow this.

But for now, Jesus just plays along. Look at what he says in verse 19:

And he said to them, "What things?"

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 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."

— Luke 24:19-21

You saw it there. These guys believed. There's an element of faith to them, right? Maybe they were in the

crowd on Palm Sunday. Maybe they were waving palm branches and shouting, "Hosanna!" They hoped that Jesus was the Savior God promised, meaning they knew enough about the Bible to know that God had promised a Savior. They knew enough to be looking for a Savior.

You see where their minds are, right? They're engaged. They're looking. They're thinking. They see what Jesus has done. They see how Jesus has taught, and they think, "Okay, I think this is it."

Verse 21 says:

"We had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. And besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed 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."

— Luke 24:21-24

So Jesus stumbles upon these guys and says, "What's happened?" This is their answer. They said Jesus was mighty in word and deed. He was delivered up to be crucified, and now people are saying that he's alive once again.

Think about what these guys are articulating out loud back to Jesus. They have all the pieces of the gospel right there. They just haven't pieced it together yet. These men knew the facts of the gospel, but they didn't yet recognize the face of the gospel.

Remember what they've said. It's clear that they knew the Word. They're looking for a Savior. They thought the Savior was Jesus, and then he was crucified. Because of the crucifixion, they're confused. They're disappointed. They're grieving now as they walk home and discuss these things. They're discussing it with no answers, right? They don't know how to make sense of it. They're confused.

In their confusion, Jesus is going to step in and bring them to a place of clarity.

And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ would suffer these things and enter into his glory?"

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

— Luke 24:25-27

I think this is one of the most incredible moments of the New Testament right here. I love what's going on. Jesus says, "Hey, you guys, you don't get it. Wasn't it necessary that the Christ would suffer before glory?"

It might have been a rhetorical question, but the answer is absolutely yes, because that's what God promised would happen. We looked in here several times leading up to Easter at Isaiah 53. We knew that the cross was part of God's plan for the Savior, and then Jesus just showed them the plan.

Look at verse 27. It says, "Beginning with Moses and the Prophets," he said, "This is what the Scripture teaches about the Messiah." These two guys are walking down the road in a state of confusion and in a state

of grief, and now they're getting the most amazing Bible study that I think anyone on this earth has ever had.

Jesus walks them through step by step, beginning with page one, and shows them how all of Scripture points to him. Can you imagine the light bulbs that have to be going off in their heads as Jesus teaches them the Scripture?

I've sat under some brilliant professors, brilliant professors teaching me the Word of God. But I cannot even begin to imagine how encouraging, how enlightening, and how clarifying it would be to have Jesus walk through an explanation of the Old Testament, saying, "This is how that points to me, and this is how that points to me, and this is how I fulfilled this prophecy," over and over and over. That's what Jesus does for these guys on the road.

Look at verse 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 the table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them.

— Luke 24:30

That was his pattern.

And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight.

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?"

And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"

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

— Luke 24:31-35

All of this happened on Easter, that very first Easter Sunday. What a day, right? We've got two tired, sad, disappointed, and confused men. They encountered the risen Jesus, and they were changed. Jesus that day took them from a place of confusion to a place of clarity, and he can do the exact same thing for us.

There are a lot of different ways that we could flesh this out, but for this morning, based on what we see in Luke 24, I just want to share with you and hopefully encourage you with three ways that the Lord can bring clarity to our lives.

Jesus Brings Clarity to Our Circumstances

I want you to remember the circumstances of these men. These guys were sad and disappointed. That's just where they were. Look at verse 17:

And they stood still, looking sad.

— Luke 24:17

What does Jesus do when he encounters their sadness? He meets them where they're at. He begins to walk with them where they're at. He listens to these guys, and these guys are honest with Jesus about their grief. They're honest with Jesus about their disappointment.

Look at verse 21:

But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.

— Luke 24:21

But because of the crucifixion, they're leaving the city not thinking he's the one. They're leaving the city. They've got to regroup emotionally. They've got to regroup mentally. They've got to reorient their minds. They've got to find their hope somewhere else. Their hope was in Jesus, and now it's not.

You could describe their current circumstances as grieving, disappointed, and confused. Their lives did not go as expected. On Palm Sunday, they had their minds thinking a certain way: "Okay, the week's going to go like this. He's riding the donkey into the city. We're shouting, 'Hosanna! He's the King! Save us!' Now Jesus is going to deliver us."

Then it didn't play out the way they thought it would. What does Jesus do? In verse 26, he says:

Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?

— Luke 24:26

He points them back to Scripture. He steps in and explains what's going on. He helped them navigate the present circumstances of their lives through the lens of the resurrection.

I want you to think about that. He helped them navigate the circumstances of their lives through the lens of the resurrection. He says Scripture said this would happen. Christ was going to suffer. Christ was going to step into glory. That's often the pattern we see in the Bible: suffering followed by glory. He explains it in a way where they can begin to understand.

This is an important note for us. Their circumstances are not dismissed, and they're not belittled. Their circumstances are reframed by the reality of the resurrection.

These two men are not the only ones who have had to navigate grief and disappointment. I'm not just talking about people we read about in the Bible. Every one of us in here has been right where these guys on the road to Emmaus are. We've all experienced grief. We've all experienced disappointment. We've all hoped that life would go a certain way, only to have it not work out the way that we maybe had hoped and prayed.

Maybe you're in here, and you've hoped and prayed that your marriage would be healed, that there would be reconciliation, and it just didn't go that way. Maybe you've hoped and prayed that your adult kid would return to the faith or maybe be reconciled with your family, and it just hasn't happened yet.

Maybe you've sat in the doctor's office, and you've hoped and prayed for great news, and the news that came was not good. Maybe you had plans for your business. You had plans for your career. You had plans for your life or for your family, and it just hasn't come about the way that you'd hoped.

Because of one of these or any number of other things in your life, you've found yourself disappointed in those present circumstances. Here's what I want you to hear this morning: Our present circumstances and any present disappointment that we might feel in our lives do not have the final word, because Jesus rose.

We need to look at every aspect of our lives through the reality of the fact that Jesus is alive. He can bring clarity to our disappointment, letting us know that as we walk through trials, we don't walk alone.

Listen, he's with you at the doctor's office. Because of the resurrection, we know that whether we are healed here or not, our future reality is in heaven. Sickness doesn't have the final word over us. Jesus has the final word over us.

If your relationships haven't been reconciled the way you hoped and prayed they would be, you need to remember that God can and will use every season in your life to strengthen your faith and to grow you closer and deeper in a love relationship with him. You can navigate that heartbreak through the light of Jesus.

When we walk through disappointment in the here and now, because Jesus is alive, we are looking forward to the eternity we have with him. In seasons where life did not work out like we hoped, we can be reminded - we just sang it - that even when we don't see it, God is working.

Think about those men on the road. Jesus is there walking with them before they even know it. He's there walking with them, ministering to them, before they even know what is happening. Because Jesus rose, not only was he with them, but he's promised to be with you as well.

When the circumstances of your life leave you confused - and they will - when the circumstances of your life leave you disappointed - and they will - let your heart and mind remember that Jesus is alive and Jesus is at work.

These men were sad and disappointed because they were part of the Palm Sunday crowd that had big expectations, but they still weren't thinking big enough about Jesus. They were expecting freedom from Rome. Jesus was offering something much greater: freedom from sin and death.

Jesus brings clarity to their circumstances by correcting their expectations to be in line with the promises of God.

Jesus Brings Clarity to the Promises of God

One of the coolest verses that you're going to read in the Bible is in 2 Corinthians 1:20. It says:

For all the promises of God find their Yes in him.

— 2 Corinthians 1:20

That's a massive statement. Everything that God has promised us finds its yes in Jesus, and Jesus wants to

make sure we understand it.

Look at what he does in verse 27. These guys are confused about what was going to happen. They knew enough of God's promises to be anticipating. They're looking for the Savior who would come. They just didn't put it all together, and so Jesus does it for them.

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

— Luke 24:27

Beginning with Moses, that's Genesis, the very beginning. He starts at the beginning and says, "Guys, this is about me. All of this is about me."

Here's what that means for us when we read our Bibles: We need to read them in light of the resurrection from the very beginning. We need to know and understand that Jesus lived a perfect life, he died a sinless death, and he rose again. This is one unified message pointing us to the hope in the gospel. That's how Jesus is teaching them.

Here are two things that we can learn from the way Jesus taught them the Scripture. First, Jesus is teaching that the whole Bible is about him. He teaches that the whole Bible is about him, which means it's not about us. It's not about you, and it's not about me. He starts at the beginning and says, "This is about me."

Second, Jesus teaches that the Bible, not our experiences, should form our faith. I'm going to say that again, and I want you to think about what I'm saying. Jesus is teaching these two guys that the Bible, the promises of God, and not their experiences should form their faith.

Here's what I mean. These guys are on the road. They experienced grief and disappointment, and the circumstances behind that grief and disappointment reshaped what they believed. Read what they said. They were hoping that Jesus was the one. Their hope was in Jesus. It didn't work out like they thought. He was crucified. Then they said, "Well, I guess maybe not."

Their beliefs changed. Why? Because life didn't play out the way they hoped and planned. Their beliefs changed because they encountered a difficult situation.

There are believers today who have done the same thing. They've let the painful experiences of this life - and we're all going to face them - rewrite what they believe about God. They've allowed a tragic loss in their lives, a diagnosis, a fractured relationship, or maybe just a hurt or pain in their lives to pull their minds and hearts away from the truth of Scripture.

I am sure that you have had a conversation at some point with someone who has walked through one of these deeply painful seasons, and they've begun to say things like, "How could a good God allow this to happen to me?" or, "I don't believe that God loves me anymore."

Jesus steps into a situation just like that and says, "Hey, listen. We need to go back to looking at what God has promised and what God has said, and it's right here in our Bibles."

Jesus takes them back to the promises of God. So I want to encourage you this morning: When you walk through those seasons - and you will - make sure that you continue to build your life on the promises of God, on the Word of God. That's where Jesus takes these guys.

They're in a state of confusion and grief. He takes them back to the promises of God. Look at what they said about that moment with him on the road, later at the dinner table, after they realized who it was. This is what they said, recalling that moment on the road:

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

— Luke 24:32

There was grief and confusion, and now, all of a sudden, their hearts are burning. Their hearts are alive once again while he opens the Scriptures to them. Jesus brings clarity to their lives through the Word of God, and now their hearts are burning. There's this flame that's lit in their hearts again. It was lost, and it was lit again through the Word of God.

J.I. Packer says it like this: "Before their hearts burned with love, their minds were brightened with the truth."

Knowing the promises of God matters. For me and you today, just like for them, knowing the promises of God and the Word of God matters. They moved from grief to joy through their understanding of the Word of God.

Read your Bibles through the lens of Jesus. Ask him to give you clarity. Ask him to give you understanding in a way that shapes your heart, your mind, and your life to know and love him more.

That kind of clarity is not going to happen through a drive-by glance at your Bible. You're going to have to get into it and really soak it up, study it, and learn it as you ask Jesus to bring clarity through his Word.

I want to give you a phrase. If you put this phrase into practice when reading your Bible, it's going to change how you look at the Word of God. It's an illustration, so write it down, and I'll explain it as we go: As you go to your Bible, hike through it. Don't drive through it. Hike through your Bible. Don't drive by your Bible.

Here's what I mean. A little over a year ago, our family was in Colorado. There was a waterfall not too far from where we were. It had a trail up to it off the highway. There were two ways that you could check this waterfall out. You could drive by and get a glimpse at 40 miles an hour from the road, or you could park and hike up to it.

That first approach would give you a quick glimpse at 40 miles an hour, and then traffic would move you on before you had a chance to soak it up. You'd see the big picture. You'd know it was there, and that's really about it.

The other approach, though, was going to take you through every little bit of it. You'd experience the smooth parts of the trail, the rocky parts of the trail, the muddy parts of the trail, and the steep parts of the trail. Hiking meant that you were going to soak it up and go slowly enough to see what was really there.

Hiking was going to put you at the base of the waterfall. You'd see its power. You'd see its beauty. You'd feel the mist as it kicked up off the rocks. You'd hear the overwhelming sound of thousands of gallons hitting the ground at once. Hiking, moving slowly through it, is what would allow you to truly see it for what it was.

Listen, read your Bible like that. Jesus took these guys on a journey through Scripture. He didn't skip over parts. He didn't drive by parts. He wanted to make sure these guys understood. What happened to them is going to happen to us if we take that approach to the Bible. Our hearts will burn within us just like theirs as Jesus helps us understand what we're reading.

For them, in times of grief and disappointment, Jesus brought clarity. He did it through the Bible, helping them understand the promises of God. God has given us so many promises, promises for you and for me. Every single one of them - the promise to make us his children, the promise of heaven and eternal life, the promise of peace, the promise of rest, the promise that he'll always be with us and never leave us or forsake us, and the promise that he will give us good gifts as our heavenly Father - finds its yes in Jesus.

He is the one who makes all those promises clear to us. He does so here in Scripture and today by helping these two men see who he really is.

Jesus Brings Clarity to God's Promise of a Savior

Look at verse 31:

And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him.

— Luke 24:31

They said:

The Lord has risen indeed.

— Luke 24:34

When they first started talking to Jesus, these guys knew the basics. They knew that God had promised a Savior. They were looking. They were hoping that the Savior would be Jesus. The crucifixion happened, and they thought, "Well, maybe we're wrong."

But then they encountered Jesus. He shows them how all of the Bible points to him. He sat with them for dinner. He opened their eyes to the truth. He brought clarity to who he is, the Savior God promised.

What a moment. Think about the time at the table. He breaks the bread. He blesses it, and they instantly recognize him. They say, "You're Jesus! You're alive! Everything that you said is true. All of the promises of God are true. It's here. We see it in you."

They recognize Jesus, and they could not contain themselves. That's the road to Emmaus moment. These guys move from disappointment to hope because the one they've waited for is finally here. It happened at the table.

When Jesus broke the bread, with the same hands that broke the bread at the Last Supper just days before, they realized who he was. Don't you just love how Jesus worked? He ensured they knew all they needed to know about the promises of God and how it all pointed to him. Then, through a meal, relationally, Jesus said, "Here I am."

Don't miss what happened to these guys. They did not come to this conclusion on their own. It says their eyes were opened. This wasn't their own wisdom or insight. Not at all. This was a work of God in their hearts that allowed them to see with clarity who Jesus was and what Jesus had done. It's a miracle as God worked in their lives.

I want to remind you this morning that if you've trusted in Jesus as your Savior, that same miracle has happened in you. He's revealed to you who he is and how you can have a relationship with God through him.

For some of you, it was a long time ago. Maybe you were a kid, and God revealed it to you. You understood clearly who Jesus is and what he's done.

For others of you, it was more recent. Maybe for some of you, it was last Sunday on Easter. You realized clearly for the first time who Jesus is, what he's done, and how you can have a relationship with God because of him.

Or maybe you're here this morning, and it's right here, right now, for the first time. You're seeing who Jesus is clearly. If that's the case, I'm telling you that God is working a miracle in your heart and your life right now. I encourage you: Don't leave here today before trusting in Jesus as your Savior.

Here's what I know: When you understand clearly that Jesus is the Savior you need, you're not going to just sit there and do nothing about it. Look at what these guys did. They understood, and their lives changed.

They had just walked seven miles away from Jerusalem. The day was over. They were disappointed. They were sad. The minute they understood, "Hey, wait a minute. Jesus really is the one, and he really is alive," what did they do? They jumped up and ran back to Jerusalem, seven miles in the dark, to make sure everyone knew who Jesus really was.

That's not a casual decision. That's just a response to the miracle of Jesus. People had to know who Jesus was, that he's the Son of God who died and rose to bring us into a relationship with our heavenly Father.

Without the resurrection, these two men stay disappointed. They stay sad. They stay confused. But because Jesus rose, because Jesus is alive, they now have clarity. You and I can have that same clarity. They saw their circumstances clearly. They saw the promises of God clearly. And they clearly saw that Jesus is the Savior promised by God.

The resurrection brings clarity for them and for you and for me.

Prayer and Invitation

Would you pray with me this morning? I just want to encourage you to bow your heads where you're at. Before we do anything else, thank Jesus for the resurrection. Thank God that he sent his one and only Son, Jesus, who died and who rose. Thank him for the resurrection.

We're all in a different spot in our walk with the Lord this morning, so as you thank him for the resurrection, I want you to pray through whatever God's speaking to you this morning.

Maybe you're here and you're like those men on the road to Emmaus. You're tired, and you're sad. You're disappointed. Maybe you've been a little frustrated. Those are your current circumstances. I want to encourage you to do what Jesus did for these men here. Reframe those circumstances through the light of the resurrection. Begin to look at those situations in your life through the reality that Jesus is alive and that he is at work in your life.

Maybe you're in a spot where you've allowed the circumstances of your life to sway your heart off of the truth or to sway your mind and your affections away from our Lord. If that's you this morning, I want to encourage you to go back to the Word, like Jesus took these men back to the Word, and build your heart and life on the promises of God.

Get in the Word. Dig into the Word. Hike through the Word, and let him light that fire in your heart again as you focus on his promises. Do not let your heart drift. Anchor it to the Word of the Lord.

Finally, if you're in here this morning and you've never trusted in Christ as your Savior, but you clearly see who Jesus is today, I want to encourage you, before we leave in just a minute, to come talk to one of our pastors and say that you're ready to trust Christ as your Savior. You're going to have that chance in just a minute.

We're going to sing one last song. As we do, we're going to have some pastors and prayer partners down here at the front. We're here to pray with you, to pray for you, and to pray over you.

Today, if you're one who's walking through that disappointing circumstance and you're facing a challenging season, then we'd love to pray over you. You can come. We'd be honored to pray over you.

Maybe you're here today, your heart has drifted, and you want prayer over that. Maybe you're here today and you know that you need to trust Christ as your Savior. You see it clearly.

Whatever God's doing in your life, we'd be honored to pray with you. When we stand in just a moment, that's your invitation to come and let us pray with you.

Father, we love you. We trust you. We thank you for the clarity we have in your Word. We thank you for the clarity that you, through Jesus, bring to our lives. God, I pray that we would walk in that each and every day. It's in your name we pray. Amen.