

## Message: Mind-Opening

By Senior Pastor Tom Harrison

Sermon Series: Helping Others Following Jesus

Luke 24-36-53

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Jesus' walk to Emmaus with these two followers is full of mystery, wonder and awe. Also read Luke's account of what happened in the early church (our daily readings from Acts). The New Testament repeatedly emphasized the word "Scripture(s)." Interestingly, the word "Scripture(s)" is never used in the Old Testament. We have a phrase, "Word and Table." It means that Jesus is made known by the Word of God (Scripture) and by Holy Communion. These are two primary means of grace through which Jesus opens our eyes and our minds to new realities. Worship can open our eyes, minds and hearts to consistent experiences of God's grace. Worship is best done as an automated rhythm of life (not haphazardly). Asbury's strategic initiative for 2019-2020 is: *"Helping Others Follow Jesus by strengthening worship attendance."* We want you to attend worship services because everything leverages off worship. This is where we meet others, make new friends, get involved in study and service, sing, pray together, give our money, learn what is going on, share our creeds, receive and extend forgiveness, and hear the Scriptures proclaimed. It is a place to listen, learn, grow, witness and give our attention to God. We find a place where the main agenda is to follow Jesus. We find God's grace here. Worship rearranges life. It needs to be our #1 priority. In the absence of making it so, this saying becomes true: *"We worship our work, we work at our play and we play at our worship."*

APPLICATION: Why do you think they did not know it was Jesus who was talking to them? Have you had an "eye-opening, mind-opening" (I want to say "mind-blowing") experience with Jesus, too? If so, that's wonderful. If not, that's probably normal. Following Jesus sometimes results in these kinds of events, but that is not why we follow Him. We follow because He is the key to life. He is *"the way, the truth and the life."* He is *"the resurrection and the life."*

The Bible is a **story** with a beginning (God created the heavens/earth & human beings and it was good), the middle part describes how sin entered the world and we were stuck with a major problem; the end, like the beginning is also good. The ancient Greeks had 2 types of stories: **Tragedy & Comedy**. Tragedy begins with an **individual** who wrestles with a problem (usually hubris) and ends with a **funeral**. Comedies are about **groups** of people who wrestle with a problem and

ends with a **wedding**. The Old Testament = a **tragedy**...it ends with a **curse** (ESV = “**utter destruction**”). The New Testament = a **comedy** – it ends with the **wedding supper** of the lamb. This is the last line of the New Testament: “**The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.**” It ends in blessing, not curse. It’s for “**you all**” not just for an individual. One person can experience a curse, but it is hard for one person to experience comedy by ourselves. We need one another. **Luke 24 is comedy**. It ends well. Luke 24 has 3 stories:

1.) The **Empty Tomb** (women & Peter)

2.) Jesus joining with 2 disciples on a walk to Emmaus. The story ends with, “*Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.*”

3.) His post-resurrection appearance with the disciples on **Easter Sunday evening**.

All 3 stories from Luke 24 follow the same **4-fold pattern**: **Confusion**,

Shock/Awe/Bewilderment; **Correction**/rebuke;

**Coaching**/commanding/instructing; **witness**

**(Stand as you are able and read with me from Luke 24:36-53)**

*As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, “Peace to you!”<sup>37</sup> But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit.<sup>38</sup> And he said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?<sup>39</sup> 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.”<sup>40</sup> And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.<sup>41</sup> And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?”<sup>42</sup> They gave him a piece of broiled fish,<sup>43</sup> and he took it and ate before them.<sup>44</sup> Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that **everything written about me** in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”<sup>45</sup> Then he **opened their minds to understand the Scriptures**,<sup>46</sup> and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead,<sup>47</sup> and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.<sup>48</sup> **You are witnesses of these things.**<sup>49</sup> And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”<sup>50</sup> And he led them out as far as Bethany and lifting up his hands he blessed them.<sup>51</sup> While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven.<sup>52</sup> And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy,<sup>53</sup> and were continually in the temple blessing God.*

The Ascension (vs. 50-53) happens 40 days later. Luke writes about it in his 2<sup>nd</sup> book – some of the “Acts of (some of) the Apostles.” The Gospel of Luke ends where it began: in the temple with notes of worship and joy. Luke gives us bookends.

1) CONFUSION: *As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, “Peace to you!”* <sup>37</sup> *But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit.* They are in a disruptive moment. Disorientation. Jesus pops in without using the door. On the one hand, they are in scared to death and think they are seeing a ghost. OTOH, they’ve seen a lot of things in 3 years, but they’ve never seen anything like this before. Jesus turned water into wine, Peter walked on water, He fed the 5,000, He was transfigured, He brought Lazarus out of the tomb – but they’ve never seen anything or imagined anything like this. They are overjoyed. Jesus shows them His “I.D.” – His nail scarred hands and feet. It’s hard for them to believe – the resurrection is too mind blowing.

2) CORRECTION <sup>38</sup> *And he said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? <sup>39</sup> 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.”* <sup>40</sup> *And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.* <sup>41</sup> *And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?”* <sup>42</sup> *They gave him a piece of broiled fish,* <sup>43</sup> *and he took it and ate before them. “Hey you guys, I’m hungry. I’ve not had anything to eat since my last supper on Thursday night.”*

The post-resurrection appearances forecast some of what we will experience when we are resurrected: we will have flesh and bone bodies, we will eat and talk and walk, and maybe even be able to travel by the Spirit without the all same physical constraints we have now. There will be a continuity between who we are and what we will be. Death is not the end, but a transition.

3) COACHING <sup>44</sup> *Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses & the Prophets & the Psalms must be fulfilled.”* <sup>45</sup> *Then he **opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,*** <sup>46</sup> *& said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer & on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day **rise from the dead,*** *“**everything written about me...**”* The whole OT points to Him. Law of Moses = the Passover Lamb; Psalms = 22:1; Prophets = The suffering servant of Isaiah 53 <sup>45</sup> *Then he **OPENED*** (Friday shut them down – closed them off) **THEIR** (In the midst of having an **experience** with Jesus; they are not just individuals – they are part of a larger group that will form the church (**tradition**) as they are connected to

others, not isolated. **MINDS** (He wants them to think (**reason**) so they can understand the **Scriptures to understand the SCRIPTURES**, Jesus would suffer, rise from the dead and this message would be proclaimed.

What's the message? Proclaim Repentance and forgiveness of sins

4) WITNESS <sup>47</sup> *and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should **be proclaimed** in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.* <sup>48</sup> **You are witnesses of these things.** What a great privilege. The best thing in all of life is to help others follow Jesus. We often say, "I don't know what to say. How do I witness?" 3 things

a.) Tell your story. What difference has following Jesus made for us?

b.) Ask questions – we don't have to do all the talking.

c.) Have confident humility. We are not the message – we are the messengers. The story is not about us. We do not have all the answers. We are disciples who can be confused, and we need correction and coaching.

<sup>49</sup> *And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are **clothed with power from on high.***" The HS empowers J's followers to proclaim the gospel.

#### **APPLICATION**

1) We have help (scripture, the Holy Spirit and other Christians). They were in a state of "Learned Helplessness." They had lost control. They felt there was nothing they could do. The religious leaders might arrest them. The Romans might crucify them. They'd better hide out or walk to Emmaus. They went passive. The one big event – the crucifixion shut them down. It was PERSONAL, PERVASIVE & PERMANENT. It would never get better. Tomorrow would be bad, too.

2) We have a mission – Helping Others Follow Jesus. We are witnesses – worldwide.

Put yourselves in their places – they didn't know what was going on.

3) We win because of Jesus. This is so important! When parents teach their kids how to ride a bike, they have to tell their children something that doesn't make sense: don't look at the handle bars or the pedals, instead, look where you're going. If you look down – you go down.