

How to See the Risen Lord

Luke 24:19-24

October 12, 2024

Well, we're in Luke 24, so you'll want to turn there in your Bibles as we rejoin the disciples on the Emmaus road. We got a bit of an introduction to this section last week, as Jesus was drawing near on this Emmaus road, to two-broken hearted disciples.

He started to, while he's walking and talking with them or listening to them, he started to draw them out. And we learned a little bit last time about Emmaus itself, where they were heading. Learned about Cleopas, a Greek proselyte, his companion, unnamed here. But we talked about why they were headed to Emmaus in the first place.

Their previous week had been, well, let's just say a bit of a roller coaster of emotion from the very high point of the

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triumphal entry and what followed from that, where Jesus entered into Jerusalem, going directly to the temple and cleansing it, casting out the buyers, the sellers, the money changers, and reclaiming the temple for his purposes, for the purposes God designed it for, to be a house of prayer for all the nations, to be a place of teaching.

So he started teaching, and the chief priests and scribes and the Pharisees didn't like that. Sadducees, they came attacking him and challenging him about his authority to do what he did. And he answered every one of their challenges and sent them away with their tails between their legs.

All that triumph and all that glory and all that rejoicing, that high point for Jesus and his disciples, followed by the low, low point of the events of Christ's passion, betrayed by one of his inner circle. How could that be?

He's arrested at the behest of the Jewish leaders, followed by a night of sham trials, and he's handed over to their will,

delivered to a public execution by the most shameful death possible, on a Roman cross.

So these disciples are headed home, probably the home of Cleopas. They're just trying to get away from that city. They're discouraged, and they're in no frame of mind, really, to stay in Jerusalem for the Feast of Unleavened Bread. They're not in a festive frame of mind at all. They need some space to think and pray, regroup, consider their next steps. What does life look like when your Messiah has been killed? What's next?

So they're making this seven-mile trek to Emmaus from Jerusalem, and the two disciples are discussing all these things. In fact, that reference to "these things," you can kind of trace it in your text, these things, these things. It's repeated six times in the passage.

And these things, kind of, it's a big bucket that holds a bunch of jumbled facts and details and stories, and all of them are kind of jumbled up and scrambled together and confused in the minds of these men until Jesus draws near to draw them out.

Take a look at verse 13. We'll just cover the text we read last time. "But behold, two of them were going that same day to a village named Emmaus, which was sixty stadia from Jerusalem. And they were conversing with each other about all these things which had happened. And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself approached and was going with them. But their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. And he said to them, 'What are these words that you are discussing with one another as you're walking?'

"They stood still, looking sad. And 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?' He said to them, 'What things?'" Their answer gets right to the point: "'The things concerning Jesus the Nazarene.'"

Jesus' questioned them has a focusing effect. It draws these men to the chief subject of, quote, "all these things." What are "all these things" about? Jesus the Nazarene. By the

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time we get to verse 27, the ambiguity and the uncertainty in their minds kind of gives way to clarity that Jesus provides through Scripture, a new-found certainty as "these things" become laser focused on in verse 27: "the things concerning himself."

Folks, let me ask you something. Before we look any further at the text, just kind of think about this. What are we doing here this morning? Why are we here? Why do we come here week after week after week after month after month, year after year? Why do we come here? We sing, we pray, we read the Bible together, we listen to sermons, close in prayer, go home.

I wonder sometimes, though, if we're not prone to be a little bit similar in some ways to these two disciples, with some bits and pieces of Bible in our minds, different stories, different doctrines, different words, scattered thoughts, varying and differing, diverging even sometimes, motivations in our hearts about why we come here, what we're doing here, what this is all about.

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And in that frame of mind, when we're not really focused on what it is we're doing here, why we're doing this, why you would get up on a Sunday morning, come here, sit down, listen to the likes of me?

But in that frame of mind, we can very easily get distracted during the week. We could become involved in so many things that don't really ultimately matter. We can start looking to ourselves and our own thinking, our own thoughts. Maybe if we have a question, we run to the Internet and type in some words and whatever AI feeds us, rather than occupying ourselves chiefly with the "things concerning himself."

And in that frame of mind that does not have Christ and his Word, God and his Word, God and his priorities, God and his intentions, God and his *telos*, his great aim, his eschatology, his plan for the earth; when we don't have those things in our mind and shaping our perspective and framing our days and framing our thoughts, we can very easily drift, can't we? We can allow doubts to fester and grow. We could become discouraged,

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sorrowful. Our hearts are very easily upset, unnecessarily troubled.

If you look closely at the text this morning, if you'll read along with me, listen prayerfully, maybe the text will become for you something of a mirror, that though it's the image on the pages, here, of two discouraged disciples, confused, minds going everywhere, all kinds of things they're discussing and debating and troubled about, they're walking on the Emmaus road, but maybe that image reflects your own face back to you. Maybe that's what you'll see. Show you maybe your own heart. Sometimes your heart can be all over the place, your thoughts distracted, your mind drifting.

But if you'll follow the risen Lord Jesus where he would lead you, as he does for these two disciples in the text, and it's very clear where he leads them, isn't it? Well, if you follow him, he'll show you the way back. It's not by way of some extraordinary experience. It's not by way some subjective impression. It's not by you navel-gazing, getting more into

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yourself, in touch with your thoughts, really discerning your feelings.

It's really not internal to you at all. It's external. It's about the regular practice of reading God's Word. It's about hearing a voice that you, that is not inside of you, but a voice that is above you, beyond you, that's transcendent, eternal, infinite, from an infinite mind. That's the voice you need. That's salvation for us. That's redemption. That's glory: its majesty, its beauty.

Too often we spend our time hearing many other divergent voices. We're actually attracted to them. We want to click on the next thing and see what it is that that person has to say. Well, how did that person react? Well, what's going on there? Oh, I wonder what that interesting movie is. Wonder what that show is. Wonder who's been creative next. Who will allow me to passively just sit and watch, not think too hard? That's what we sometimes want.

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It's not what we need. It's not at all what we need. I want to see you at the end of this sermon go out of here with a mind oriented around the Word of God. I want you to be dedicated, devoted, and if you need to repent, repent, but set a trajectory to seek and find your Savior and your Redeemer, who is here in the pages of Scripture.

I want him to be your chief love. I want you to know him. I want you to love him. I want you to worship him. I want you to find all your satisfaction and contentment and joy in him and in nothing else, not your spouse, not your children and grandchildren.

As wonderful as those gifts are, all gifts of God, even family, are intended to point your eyes up toward heaven to see the God who gave those gifts. Do not worship the gifts. Do not give yourselves to the gifts. Give yourself to the giver.

The great irony of the text before us, which really runs from the beginning to the end of this Emmaus road encounter, is that these disciples are mourning the loss of a Savior who is

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right beside them the whole time. Isn't that kind of funny? Walking beside them, listening to them talk, hearing their conversation, and they're sad and they're discouraged.

We kind of sympathize with them. But look, there's no need for that. They feel lost, forlorn, forsaken. But are they? No. He's there. He's been with them the whole time. In fact, even before he appeared on the road, he was with them. It didn't take his physical presence, standing beside them, walking with them, to be with them. He's been with them the entire time. He's never left.

They're anxious that their redemption hopes that are centered on him are kind of lost in the grim reality of his death. Facts is facts. I saw him die, buried in the tomb. They have little hope of seeing him alive again. In spite of the reports of an empty tomb, in spite of the reports about that angelic visitation, the message of resurrection that they'd heard earlier that morning, they're still not, they're still not lifted in their souls.

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But again, those hopes that they have in him are, they really were never in jeopardy. There was never any reason for their hearts to be troubled, for doubts to arise, even when Jesus is physically absent from them, as he is from us, because as he will show them, the Word of God has always been there.

The Word of God has never changed. The Word of God has always been true and reliable and trustworthy and steadfast. And everything that it predicted that was fulfilled in the Old Testament provides proof and evidence that God is faithful, that when he says something, it happens.

So Jesus comes to these two discouraged men. He wants to minister to their souls. He has to be looking at them like, you know, like when you go out, take your family out to maybe a, a stream or something like that, and you're kind of wading in the water. And one of your kids, your little ones, you know, he's just a little, little tyke, little guy, chubby little legs. But he drifts out a little bit further into the stream, he kind of falls over a little bit, right? And he's flailing and screaming

and terrified until you just say, Hey, stand up. He stands up.
All is well.

That's what Jesus is doing here. He's like a father to lift his children up and put them on their feet again, wipe their nose, wipe away their tears. There, there. It's okay. He does that by anchoring their hope deeply in the Scripture.

That's how they will see him, when their hope is anchored deeply in the Scripture. That's how he will abide with them, when their hope is anchored deeply in the Scripture. That's how they will abide with him as well when they are anchored deeply in the Scripture.

I don't mean some superficial reading, some take-it-or-leave-it understanding. This is not your, you know, *Our Daily Bread* devotions. This is real, deep reading, thorough reading, thorough understanding. It's the same thing for us today, beloved. We need to anchor our hope, our hope deeply in the Scripture, don't we?

So we're going to go along with these two disciples. We're going to walk with them on their journey, not a journey from Jerusalem to Emmaus, but from discouragement to hope, doubt to faith, from failing to recognize the Lord at all to seeing him and rejoicing in him. That's the journey we're going to take, all right?

Several points today as we join these two men on their journey, starting in doubt. There's two points about doubt: doubting redemption and doubting resurrection. Then we will end on this high point of confidence and certainty, believing revelation, believing in revelation.

But first, we've got to go down before we go up. So number one, doubting redemption. Doubting redemption. Jesus asked these men in verse 17 what they were discussing along the way. And as I mentioned, he is forcing them to clarity by having them summarize their concerns and kind of distill a myriad of disparate thoughts to boil down the issues that they are discussing into their bare essence.

So as they summarize for Jesus what they're discussing, they clarify what's troubling them. They get it out. They put it out there in their their speech. First, and chiefly, it's the hope of redemption in Jesus for them that appears to be in jeopardy. That's verses 19-21. These guys are struggling with doubts about that.

I'm going to start reading again, but I'm going to go back to verse 15 and read through verse 21. "It happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself approached and was going with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. And he said to them, 'What are these words that you're discussing with one another as you're walking?' They stood still, looking sad. And 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?' And he said to them, 'What things?'

"And they said to him, 'The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a mighty prophet in deed and word in the sight

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of God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to the sentence of death and crucified him. 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.'"

The answer to this stranger's question, they summarize the subject of their conversation in verse 19. They're talking about "the things about Jesus the Nazarene," "Jesus the Nazarene, who was," and note the past tense, there, "who was a mighty prophet in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people."

In that sentence, there, they give his name, distinguish him by his town. They affirm what he was, and they summarize his significance. Jesus the Nazarene, that distinguishes Jesus, this Jesus from every other Jesus, which was a very common name among the Jews. You know Jesus means, it's the Hellenized form of *Yeshua*, Joshua, the Lord Saves is what it means.

Joshua's famous in the nation's history for saving Israel, completing the redemption of Israel. There was the exodus from

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Egypt that Moses accomplished, but then there was the full salvation of Israel entering into the Promised Land, right?

Joshua: the Lord saves.

Again, note the irony. They're telling Jesus the Nazarene about Jesus the Nazarene, and they're wringing their hands about his failure to redeem Israel in verse 21, when this is exactly what he has done. It's exactly what he's done. He's lived up fully to his name.

They describe Jesus as "a mighty prophet in deed and word," which sounds, we know from our own fully realized Christology, we read the Bible in light of the entire New Testament, and we see that this Jesus is more than a mighty prophet. Sounds far too low of an estimation of him based on what we know.

But remember Peter's confession about Jesus in Luke 9:20, that Jesus is none other than the Christ of God? Peter said that. But then keep in mind that immediately after he made that good confession, Jesus commanded Peter and the Twelve not to tell anybody.

Okay, so that's even within the, the circle of disciples, the wider disciples. That's, that's still not fully known and unpacked and realized. Since Cleopas and his companion are more recent disciples, very likely they held Jesus in the highest esteem that they were able to at this point anyway in the narrative, at this point in, in redemption history.

So if, as they are thinking that this Jesus is, is maybe still dead, if that's what they think, could they have had any higher view of Jesus than this, than the one they've given us in Scripture, there, right there in that sentence?

In fact, had more time passed, if they'd had more time to reflect on this failure of Jesus to rise from the dead, to remain in the grave, they would have come to Paul's hypothesis of a world without Christ's bodily resurrection. He says this, Paul does, in 1 Corinthians 15, starting at verse 14, "If Christ has not been raised, well then our preaching is in vain, and your faith is also in vain.

"And moreover, we're even found to be false witnesses of God because we bore witness against God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if in fact the dead are not raised. Or if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless. You're still in your sins," dot, dot, dot.

We would also add that if Christ promised that he would rise on the third day, and he did, what does that make him? A mighty prophet in deed and word? Not that word. If we find one hole in his arguments, one errant word, one mistake, everything comes crumbling down. He's not to be believed. In fact, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the chief priests, they're all righteous in putting that man to death as a blasphemer because as we can see, he's perpetrated the greatest scandal, a false religion on the entire planet for two millennia now. But as Paul said, "Christ has been raised." He has been raised.

At this point, these men are holding Jesus in the highest esteem that they can at this point. A mighty prophet in deed and word in the sight of God, not only in the sight of God, not only

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sinless in the sight of God, but perfectly righteous in the sight of God and in the sight of all the people as well.

The people, they were astonished at Jesus constantly. He astounded them by his teaching, by his presence. It says in Mark 37 that they retorted, "He has done all things well." No one could dispute the power that was evident in his miracles, even among his enemies, no one denied his miracles.

He demonstrated power as he kind of recounts to the disciples of John, who, John the Baptist, he's jailed and imprisoned, in Herod's prison, he sends his disciples to Jesus to say, "Hey, are you the coming one? Are we supposed to look for someone else?" I didn't think I'd be in prison.

And Jesus told them to go tell John that he has had victory and power over every single malady that afflicts the human race. The blind receive sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up. He's got power over every malady, even death itself. He's got power over the fish of the

sea, on two occasions directing fish into the nets of his men, overwhelming their nets, of these seasoned fishermen.

On one occasion, I love this story, where, where Peter's asking about whether or not they should pay the temple tax. After he explains and teaches Peter through that, he's like, "Well, now, go down to Galilee. The first fish you catch down there, open its mouth and you're going to find a coin that's going to pay for my temple tax and yours. Just go ahead and do that so we don't offend them."

How did he do that? He's got power over the impersonal, inanimate forces of nature, commands the wind to stop blowing, the waves to stop raging. He's got power over malevolent spirits of the dark world, casting out demons with a word over and over. They are terrified of him. They know that he has the power of judgment over them, to cast them into the abyss to await their own judgment day.

He's a mighty prophet as well in his words. The chief priests sent officers at one point to arrest Jesus. He was there

at one of the feasts, John chapter 7. These officers, these arresting officers went out there, heard him, saw him.

They came back empty-handed, and they were asked, "Why didn't you bring him?" They said, Whoa, okay, guys, "never has a man spoken the way this man speaks." Big, burly officers, lots of swords, sharp things, you can't take one guy into your custody? It's his words. Pushed them back. He spoke with authority.

How unlike he is to an alarming number of pastors in our own day who are plagiarizing their content, who are plugging in concepts and themes into artificial intelligence and using large language models to generate their sermons. And then they're preaching those to unwitting and unsuspecting, trusting congregations, and they think, Wow, well done! Something's improved in his preaching ever since AI came out.

Jesus never relied on the work of other people at all. He knew, he was familiar with the rabbinical scholars, but he

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didn't read and regurgitate their opinions. He didn't fill his sermons with footnotes, like I need to do. He didn't do that.

He didn't engage in any of their debates. He transcended all of them. And he taught. Matthew 7:29 says, "He was teaching them as one having authority, not as their scribes," their scribes, who quoted one another, debated one another.

The living Word of God has both an essential and a filial relationship with the God of the Word. The God who spoke the Word, revealed the Word, the Spirit who gave the Word, that God is his father, he is his son. He is one essence with the father by his deity, and he is son of the father by generation, affiliation.

That's how he talked, like he knew the guy. That's how he taught. That's how he preached. He came out of the inter-Trinitarian councils of heaven, and declared, and decreed, and preached, and spoke, and confronted, and convicted.

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No one could accuse him, no one could condemn him, correct him, contradict him. No one could answer his arguments. We saw that as we studied Luke 20, right? Jesus is answering every single challenge that came at him in the temple, and in the end, they did not dare to ask him any more questions.

Jesus turned the tables and asked them, the Jewish religious establishment, asked them a question, “‘How is it that they say the Christ is David's Son? After all, David calls him “Lord,” so how is he his Son?’” They had nothing to say, nothing.

His convictions were not just spoken, delivered in oratory, in preaching, in teaching. They weren't just verbal. His convictions were lived out publicly and privately. They were known by all, whether those in heaven or those on earth. He was a mighty prophet, in deed and word, in the sight of God, and in the sight of all the people.

And yet, according to the inexplicable mystery of sin, the envious murderous spirit of greed, idolatrous love of money, the

chief priests and our rulers, our rulers delivered him up to the sentence of death and crucified him.

That little three-letter word, that first-person possessive pronoun, the word "our," reveals, I think, the extreme sorrow in their hearts. Remember, these two are Greek proselytes. That means that Cleopas, probably his unnamed companion, too, they had converted from their native pagan religion to trust in the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.

These men were following Mosaic law. They were coming to the temple, bringing sacrifices, sacrifices for guilt, guilt offerings, thank offerings. They were, they were engaged in the whole worship system. They found comfort in the piety of David, who wrote the Psalms. They learned from the wisdom of Solomon in his writings. They heeded the warnings and the admonitions and the history in the former and the latter prophets.

And then comes this Jesus the Nazarene, and by the Spirit's work, the Spirit drives them to this Jesus the Nazarene, the one from Nazareth. They start following him as

disciples. They hear him speaking in the language of the Bibles that they've been reading and learning from.

They joined the small band of Apostles and disciples, and they probably started with Jesus' Judean mission. It's kind of recorded at the start of that in Luke chapter 10. Remember when Jesus sent out seventy-two evangelists to go throughout the cities of Judea to announce his coming as he's making his way to Jerusalem, told them to go and preach the gospel and herald his kingdom, see what villages are receptive and what are rejecting so that he can go to the receptive ones, spend his time there, bypass the rejecting villages.

They've probably been converted some time in that time frame. These men having witnessed his deeds, and having heard his words, having believed in him, it seemed to them as they walked with him and talked with him and were part of this whole upswing journey to Jerusalem, nothing can prevent the arrival of the kingdom of God. It's unstoppable! Restoration promises are going to be fulfilled, the elevation of Israel to its rightful place.

Until these Jewish leaders, though they had been bested at every single point by Jesus, though they've been exposed as hypocrites and frauds, though they were on the same level as robbers who turned the temple of God into a robber's den, until those guys murdered him, and now, though, all the plans come crashing down.

Can you imagine what Cleopas and his companion are thinking? Now that Jesus is dead, are we once again under the thumb of those guys? Those are our leaders now? We've got to go back to their ineffectual, failed leadership, leadership that's abusive, heavy-handed, hypocritical shepherding, really kind of designed to take all my money, guilt me into giving more?

Again, note the sorrowful tone in verse 21. Hear the pronouns, there, "But we, we ourselves, we were, we were hoping it was he, he himself who was going to redeem Israel." They're so disappointed, crestfallen.

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At the same time that you hear the sadness in that sentence, there's also, I think, a note of hopefulness, there, ever so slight, but it's there in what they said. We find a glimmer of hope, believe it or not, in the verb tenses. Grammar, so useful. Can I encourage you to be good students of language and grammar because it really, it really matters. A small flame of faith still being, seems to be burning in their hearts like a, like in Isaiah 42, like a dimly burning wick that he will not quench.

Verse 21, "We were hoping." That's an imperfect tense. It shows continual action in the past, so it, they have an abiding hope that they're referring to that they had in the past. "We were hoping." That hope is kept alive, only just, but it's kept alive by an ongoing faith, in the present tense.

It's not, as our translation renders it, "It was he who was going to redeem Israel," but rather, that's actually present tense, "It is he who is going to be redeeming Israel."

Interesting. Those present-tense verbs, because of those, those pronouns are even more emphatic. You heard when I read and I

emphasized them, it's as if to say that, in spite of the fact that our leaders put Jesus to death, we were hoping that it is he who is going to redeem Israel.

Even now, the third day is not fully over. Many in Israel thought redemption meant God is going to deliver Israel from political oppression, military occupation, most recently being the iron hand of Roman governance.

More spiritually minded Jews, they realized and recognized that redemption had to go deeper than political deliverance. So they longed for true spiritual leadership in their nation, righteous, righteousness to reign from both throne and temple, for God to shepherd his people by his properly called, anointed, qualified, gifted, God-fearing leaders.

It's kind of what every Christian hopes for, too; God-fearing pastors, God-fearing elders, God-fearing deacons, ones that are exemplary, there's no hidden things in their lives. They're gonna find them scandalizing your church ten years down

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the road. It's what we all long for. We long for that in our political scene, too. People that we can really trust.

But more spiritually minded Jews recognize there's gotta be something done to the heart. There's gotta be something that changes, here, because we can't just keep on repeating the same things we've always done and expect different results.

What these men did not clearly see is that the redemption of God in Christ wouldn't start from the outside and work its way inside, as former redemptions were from Egypt and from Babylon. The redemption of God in Christ had to start on the inside. It had to start from the heart and then work its way to the outside to transform people from the inside out.

That's why any emphasis on political action, it's not wrong for us to be politically active, vote and put some of our members on school boards and town councils and county seats and all those things. Vote them in the right place.

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But any political action that fails to see the deep spiritual transformation-regeneration that takes place is doomed to fail and is actually a terrible distraction, distractions we've lived through for about 50 years in this country in the evangelical world.

We keep thinking that putting the right laws in place and putting the right people in office, it's going to change everything. It's going to make the gospel more acceptable. I know God has power on his Word, but you know what? We need our freedom of religion. We got to protect that at all costs. Otherwise we can't do this.

Ask the Christians of the second and third centuries. They did this. Yeah, they went to jail for it, but they did this. They worshipped God, preached his Word. Yeah, they were chucked into the arena, eaten by lions and rejoiced for it. What does that?

The Word of God is not hindered. It's unchained. It's powerful. Redemption is like that. It's got to start from the

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inside, in the heart, and work its way to the outside, where it will transform individuals and families. And when families are transformed, it transforms society and culture. That transforms politics and religion in the entire nation.

They realize that: redeemed, transformed nation of Israel. God starts in the heart and works his redemption from the heart outward, and he brings redemption to all the nations through Israel, to all the nations for his glory. None of that happens apart from individual redemption, apart from heart regeneration, apart from life transformation.

So Cleopas and his companion, Greek proselytes to the Jewish faith, disciples of Jesus Christ, why did they fail to discern the redemption that was needed, here, which Jesus provided when he died on the cross for sins? Why did they fail to see that?

It's not as if he wasn't clear. It's not as if the Bible hadn't said it. His death had rattled them, yeah, shook their confidence in God's redemption through that man, Jesus. Is it,

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is it this man? It's like they're asking the same question John the Baptist asked, Or is it you we're looking for? Were we kind of mistaken? You're like Part 1, and then there's a Part 2?

At the end of verse 21, there's an itch they can't quite scratch in the brain, something they can't quite figure out. "Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened." What are they talking about? They're talking about his predictions. Predictions circulated among Jesus' disciples since Galilee. Luke 9:22, "'The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, be raised up,'" and there it is, "on the third day."

You see why they're thinking is in a bind? It's the third day. They believe he's still dead, and so they're without hope. Let me restate that and put the emphasis where it needs to be. They believe he's still dead. They are not believing that he is alive as he said he'd be on the third day. Do they know that he's dead on the third day? No, they do not know that. They don't see it, but the evidence is standing right in front of

them, talking to them, walking with them. They believe he's dead, contrary to what he told them, contrary to reliable witnesses, and contrary to the live body walking next to them on the road.

More prominent in their minds at this particular moment is not the prophet of verse 19, "who is mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and men." No, in their doubting, struggling, confused minds, it's those who killed him who are prominent. The chief priests, the rulers of verse 20, in their minds, those guys have the upper hand.

Why is that? Because in a fallen world ruled by death, death is how we tend to think. Death seems to be the ultimate power, not life. Death is more powerful to them than life. The Word of God for them has been set aside. It's been subjected to their subjective feelings. It's been subjected to their erroneous interpretations of their experience. This whole thing needs to be flipped around into its proper orientation, doesn't it? They got everything backwards and upside down.

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And believe me, beloved, the more we think biblically, doctrinally, theologically, we're the ones who are thinking rightly. We don't do that by our own power. I don't, I'm not bragging, boasting for us. We boast in our God.

But when he teaches us his Word, when he illuminates the Word to us, when he illuminates the truth to us, we're thinking right. It's the rest of the world around us that is upside down, backwards, and stupid. And I know this sounds a little bit, like, churlish, but they think they're so smart, and they think you're so dumb. They think they're so clued in and so above you. Beloved, they're, they're fools and the more they reject God, the more foolish they are. To not think according to the Scripture is the dumbest thing in the world.

And we'd be right there along with them if God hadn't been kind to us and opened our eyes to the truth. We're no better. But God has been gracious. God's been gracious to these two guys on the road to Emmaus. Jesus has come alongside to show him how gracious God will be.

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And that takes us to our second point, verses 22-24, where they're doubting resurrection. First, they're doubting redemption; now they're doubting resurrection. As I said, they, they don't know that Jesus is dead on the third day. They simply believe he's dead, and it's contrary to what he told them, contrary to evidence standing right beside him, also contrary to reliable witnesses who spoke to them.

Verse 22, "But also some women among us astounded us when they were at the tomb early in the morning and not finding his body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive." "Some of those who were with us," that's a reference to Peter and John as recorded in John chapter 20, "Some of those who were with us went to the tomb, found it just exactly as the women also said, but him they did not see."

Again, "him they did not see." Ironic. And I can imagine them looking directly at him when they said it. "Him they did not see." Jesus is, like, Hey, look a little harder.

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See what's happening? They're oriented negatively to what they do not know by sense perception. Seeing Jesus alive with their physical eyes does not help them when their hearts are not inclined to believe it. Their hearts are assaulted with doubts. Their sorrowing confuses their minds. It leads to despair.

But there is no need for sorrow, is there? The problem is, they've come to doubting what Jesus said. Do they have any reason to doubt him? Do they have any justification for doubting Jesus' words and setting them aside?

Let's consider this. They tell us about several reports here, don't they? There's the report of the women. There's the report in their report of what the angels had told them. There's the report of "some who are with us," Peter and John.

At first, as Luke tells us in verse 11, these two disciples on the road to Emmaus, they are among those who thought the women were talking nonsense. The word *leros*, as I mentioned to you, is like they're hearing, they're hearing these women report all this stuff about the tomb and the visit to the tomb, empty

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tomb, angels and all that. It's just fairy tales to them, born out of unrestrained emotion, hysterical frame of mind. They didn't believe it.

A little later on, and when, then with the confirmation of Peter and John, now they're walking on the road. They've got a little distance between that room and where they are now, out in the open air. Maybe it's the fresh air that did them some good and cleared their minds, but they're starting to soften their initial judgment a bit, modify their position.

They don't say that the women are *leros*, hysterical. Now they just say, "The women astounded us." It's a dynamic well-known between men and women. Astounding. But the word astounded, *existemi*, amazed us, confused us. Again, dynamic between men and women.

But here they're softening their judgment a little bit, aren't they? They are still trying, by the way, to blame the women for their confusion. It's not the women who confuse them. They are to blame. They are to blame. Because if they had

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considered all that the women had told them, they'd have an entirely opposite frame of mind.

Notice, remember when they told Jesus about the reports of the women, what we just read verses 22-24? What have they left out in their report?

Go back to Luke 24:4, starting in verse 4, "It happened that while these women were perplexed about this," this empty tombstone rolled away, they don't find the body of Jesus while they're perplexed about it, "behold, two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling clothing, and when the women were terrified, bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, 'Why do you seek the living one among the dead? He's not here. He has risen.'"

Thus far they have reported, haven't they? What did they fail to report? "'Remember how he spoke to you,'" the angels tell the women, "'while he was still in Galilee, saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be

crucified, and the third day rise again?'” They remembered his words.

So in recounting and giving their summary of what the women said to Jesus, why did the two disciples leave that out? They got the empty tomb, they got the sight of the angels, they got the message of resurrection. Those parts of the message are transmitted just fine. Why not the part about what Jesus said in Galilee?

We'd be wrong to assume the women failed to tell them. We read in verse 9, they went back and reported, quote, “all these things.” This is not on the women, as if they failed in their duty, as if they neglected to give a full report. The problem is clearly some of the eleven. All the rest who heard him, or at least these two disciples, thought the main message is “He is risen,” and the reminder of Jesus' predictions in Galilee are simply augmenting material and not the main point.

Those words that he taught them in Galilee are part of the main point. They are what interprets his body not being there in

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the tomb. The angels, one of the women, the eleven, all the rest, to remember Jesus' predictions, remember what he said, his words. Again, I know I'm a Greek and Hebrew nerd. The grammar, syntax, lexical information is so important. The words matter. How they're arranged matters. Understanding, communication matters. Remember Jesus' predictions, believe them, gain assurance, and not by sight, but by faith in the truth.

What Jesus said to them while he was still in Galilee made its rounds among the disciples, and Jesus repeated it several times on his journey to the cross. But he said in Luke 9:22, "The Son of Man must suffer many things." Did that happen? Jesus said, "The Son of Man must be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes." Did that happen? He said, "The Son of Man must be killed." How are we doing on our batting average?

If you continue then down that line of reasoning, why not also accept the final prediction in that list, the most joyful one, that Jesus is to be raised up on the third day? Why the sorrow? Should not these men be leaping with joy, excited

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anticipation, hopping around like little kids on the path? In fact, why would they even leave Jerusalem in the first place?

Nope, they're slinking back home to Emmaus. They're going entirely in the wrong direction because they're waffling in their faith, because they're giving in to doubting. They trusted him enough to hope in his redemption as they just rehearsed several predictions of his, now fulfilled. But these men failed to trust him to the very end. Doubt set their expectations about the future, not faith. They're oriented toward the future in sorrow, not joy.

How many of you are like that? When some new idea, excited thought comes to you, and you're kind of the one who kind of shoves it down, ignores it, nah, come up with all the reasons why you can't, why it can't be done. Nah, people aren't going to like that. Nah, that's not enough. Don't have enough money to do that. No, just, this is, this is just Greeley. Greeley people aren't kind of into that kind of stuff like Bible teaching.

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Faith, trust, hope, seeing the power of God working through his Word, it sets our orientation. There's great excitement and joy about what God can accomplish beyond all you can ask or imagine or think.

Beloved, that's how we need to think as a church because we have a God who's all-powerful and loves to exalt his Word to his name, and he loves to exalt his Christ. And anybody who's preaching Christ, he wants to give them a wider berth, wider platform, wider voice. That's what you need to do in your life, and rejoice.

What's prevented these men from recognizing Jesus? What's affected their physical sense perception? Their unbelieving hearts, minds that refuse to accept what their eyes are telling them, the one that their eyes are showing them? The eyes are working just fine, all the visual perception working, the information traveling down their optic nerve into their brains.

But you know what's affecting and afflicting their brains? It's dark unbelief that creeps up into the brain and muddles it,

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restricts the blood vessels and says, Nope, that's not Jesus. They can't see him for who he is because they're not believing.

They interpret this man on the road to be not Jesus risen from the dead, but just some stranger. Some stranger. The only one visiting Jerusalem, verse 18, who's ignorant of the things that had just happened there. Even they're incredulous about that. How could you be the only one?

It turns out he's not. Again, evidence is not the problem, It's the interpretation of the evidence. The women, verse 23, go to the tomb, do not find the body. The men of verse 24 find the same thing. The empty tomb is the evidence, and to interpret the evidence God sent his angels, as verse 23 says, and the women had seen.

But notice what they report. Not that they had seen angels, but they had seen what? "A vision of angels." Hmm, that's a little twist, isn't it? What did they see? Actual angels or just a vision of angels? Which is it?

If they're going to twist the actual presence of God's angels and sent to interpret the evidence to them as an apparition or a vision, how ought we to understand the men of verse 24, which says the men did not see Jesus? Which interpretation are we to believe? The testimony of God sent through his angels or the testimony of men who are earthbound and unbelieving?

Nothing wrong, I just want to add, nothing wrong with using our physical senses to go and investigate, seek things out, examine evidence. In fact, I'm using my physical sense of sight right now to read my Bible, read my notes, to see all of you, though fuzzy, through my glasses. But I'm using my physical senses right now. There's nothing wrong with using our physical senses in the way God intended them.

But our physical senses have to be informed by our principles of interpretation and our principles of interpretation come from the orientation of our hearts, whether

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believing or unbelieving. You know what? I believe the things I'm telling you. I believe them.

Brute facts, evidence alone will not lead us into truth because all evidence is interpreted evidence. All evidence is interpreted evidence, whether it's the evidence in the geological record or the evidence in the stars of the sky, or the evidence in relationships. All evidence is interpreted evidence, and interpretation is grounded in presuppositions, assumptions, base grounding assumptions. Whether they're right or wrong, those assumptions are principles of interpretation that we use to weigh evidence, to sort and sift evidence, to organize evidence, examine it, come to conclusions.

So had these two men listened carefully to the women, had they heeded the need to remember what Jesus had said in Galilee, that "the Son of Man must be delivered in the hands of sinful men, be crucified, and on the third day rise again," if they had believed that, what weight would believing presuppositions have on their eyes, on interpreting the evidence of the empty tomb?

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Verse 16, "Their eyes were prevented from recognizing him" because they're not believing, because they're weak in faith. They allow doubts to grow and to fester. Standing right in front of the one that they so dearly long to see alive and still not recognizing him. Boy, that's tragic, isn't it? Kind of laughable at this point, but, "Alas, him they did not see." Deep sigh.

If you're doubting and you're prone to doubt, maybe prone to kind of a darkness of mind, maybe a Debbie Downer, Eeyore kind of a vibe you got going on in your soul, but don't let that dominate your thinking.

If you're doubting anything in God's plan of redemption, if you're doubting your own justification, where do you go? Inside? No. Outside, to the Scripture. See what Jesus teaches, see what God teaches, see what the record of Scripture, the written record in black and white that does not change, see what that says.

If you're doubting anything about your sanctification, I got this, I got this sin, it just will not go away. I don't

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think I'll ever be delivered from it, and I, I'm just going to continue to disappoint people and let people down and hurt people. This is never going to change. Stop it. It's not true.

Your God did not save you to show himself powerless for you. God saved you to show his power in saving you, redeeming you, sanctifying you, glorifying you. You will overcome all sin. You will. And there is no sin that afflicts you, "no temptation has come upon you except which is common to man, and God is faithful; he'll always provide the way of escape so you can bear up under it."

You can deal with temptation. You can resist it. You can stand firm. You can put on the full armor of God. We got a lot of instruction on that. Trust your God. If you're doubting the resurrection of Jesus, that's at the very heart of the Gospel, like the Corinthian church was. There were elements within that church denying bodily resurrection itself, which negated the bodily resurrection of Jesus.

Why? Why were they doing that? Because philosophical presuppositions had crept into their congregation through them walking in the door, because they they lived and breathed and had their being in the world and they came in with those assumptions. They started passing those things around and cratering the faith of those who did believe in the bodily resurrection of Jesus. And Paul had to include that in his letter in a huge section saying, Stop that! You can't believe the Greeks. They are not the fountain of all wisdom. God is. Go back to his Word.

To get one thing out of this message, write this down: Go back to his Word. And then stick around because I have more to say.

Final point, verses 25-27, and we're going to expand this next time. So this is not a full point. But number three: believing revelation. This is the way back, believing God's revelation, believing revelation, his special revelation, the truth of the Word. "He said to them. 'O, foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken.'" Note

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the call back to verse 19. Is Jesus a mighty prophet or not? Well, if he is, why haven't you believed him and the others?

He goes on. "'Was it not necessary?'" Again, that little, short little *dei* verb that means necessary, divinely necessary, decreed of God. "'Was it not necessary for the Christ to'" do two things, "'suffer these things and enter into his glory?'" If he has suffered these things, as he has, he will enter into his glory as well. And I'm standing with you. You who long for Israel's redemption, have you not read what God's redemption is all about? Do you not know what this whole thing, the suffering, what it was for?

As far back as Moses, God said redemption starts with heart circumcision. Deuteronomy 36, 30 verse 6, "YAHWEH, your God, will circumcise your heart and the heart of your seed, your descendants, to love YAHWEH your God with all your heart, with all your soul, so that you may live."

That's Israel's redemption ever since Moses. Without a circumcised heart, cutting off, removing the old, judging sin,

removing uncleanness from the heart, without a circumcised heart, Israel's going to keep on sinning, resulting in the same condemnation because God doesn't change, the offense of sin doesn't change. It leads to the same divine judgment.

In the progress of revelation, God revealed the path forward to his redemption, internal transformation, what we know as regeneration, that's promised in the New Covenant. You can turn there if you want to. I'm going to turn to Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36, so go ahead and turn there if you'd like to, but write them down at least.

Jeremiah 31:31-34, "'Behold, the days are coming,' declares YAHWEH, 'when I'll cut a new covenant with the," house of Israel, with the house of, "house of Judah. It's not like the covenant which I cut with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, and yet I was a husband to them,' declares Yahweh.

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“‘But this is the covenant which I'll cut with the house of Israel after those days,’ declares YAHWEH. ‘I'll put my law within them, and on their heart I will write my law. I'll be their God, they shall be my people, and they'll not teach anymore each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, “Know Yahweh,” for they'll all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,’ declares Yahweh. ‘For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.’”

How will they know the Lord from the least to the greatest? What guarantees longevity in a new spiritual trajectory and a steadfastness in faithfulness? That's Ezekiel 36, starting in verse 25, “‘I'm going to bring you into your own land,’ he says to Israel. ‘But then,’” here's individual regeneration, “‘I'll sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean. I'll cleanse you from all your uncleanness and from all your idols.

“‘Moreover, I'll give you a new heart. I'll put a new spirit within you. And I'll remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I'll put my Spirit

within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you will be careful to do my judgments.'”

Again, their view, at that time, of what redemption entailed was so low. It was so superficial. They thought political institutions, religious institutions, those are the things that stay. They looked at that temple on the mount and they said, Indestructible! In just 40 years from then, they're going to see, oh no, it's not.

Mere political redemption, deliverance from Roman oppression, just another temporary fix. Religious redemption, even, deposing false spiritual leadership, installing called, qualified new spiritual leadership, that, too, temporary. Death ends the ministry of even the best of men, as we've been losing a lot of our heroes lately, haven't we?

No, it's spiritual redemption that's needed, starting in the heart, to execute full and final justice on sin, to ensure a lasting righteousness never to be undone. This is the redemption that they need most. This is the redemption, though, that Jesus

secured by his death on the cross, and they didn't recognize it. Why not?

I mentioned earlier the irony in the text is that the risen Lord Jesus is walking with these men while they sorrow over not seeing the risen Lord Jesus. But there's a deeper irony embedded in the text, embedded in the subtext here, a latent theme that Jesus is exposing for us, here.

Just as the risen, yet unrecognized, Jesus is with them, he's walking with them, talking with them, and yet they don't perceive it, he's ministering to the deepest need of their souls, the living, incarnate Word takes them to the written Word of God, which has likewise always been with them, has never left them, has never changed.

What's the problem? The problem is they're not reading it, they're not looking at it, they're not studying it. They're saying, I got enough. They've neglected their Bibles. They've taken the Scripture for granted. They've failed to read it

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deeply, meditate on it fully, reflect on its truths, develop his doctrinal, theological implications, live thereby.

Too many professing Christians are like that. They treat God's Word as an optional thing. Biblical understanding is maybe a nicety, but as long as it comes easy. Don't make me work for it. Don't make me seek the truth like silver or search for it as for hidden treasures, like Solomon told his son to do. Nah, I just want it to be easy.

Friends, if you treat Scripture shabbily, like that, then sadly, and by the way, unnecessarily, you will live a shabby, impoverished life of mediocrity. And if after I've just delivered a warning like I just did, you continue neglecting Scripture, the problems of your attitude may be far deeper and more eternally dire than you realize.

On the other hand, if you give Scripture its proper place in your life, and you abide in God's Word, so that God's Word abides in you, and richly, notice the effects of biblical understanding in verse 32 in the testimony of these men. "Were

not our hearts burning within us while he was speaking to us on the road, while he was explaining the Scriptures to us?'"

Is that your experience as your pastors and your teachers explain the Scriptures to you? You say, Hey, it might be if my teacher was Jesus, if my pastor was Jesus. Fair enough. But then again, is he not your pastor? Is he not your Good Shepherd, the one who, according to Ephesians 4:11, "gave you pastors and teachers"? Weak though we are, imperfect as we are, did he not give us to you to equip you for the ministry through our ministry of the Word of God to you?

Beloved, don't take the treasure of Scripture for granted by neglecting to read and study it for yourself. Don't doze off during sermons. Don't let your mind wander. You've got to discipline yourself for the sake of godliness, and that means discipline your mind to learn. You say, Oh, but I'm not a reader. I'm more of a visual guy. Well, become one because God didn't give you a video. He gave you printed text and tells you to read it.

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Don't blame the messenger. He's the Good Shepherd; I'm an under-shepherd. I'm just doing what he's told me. He didn't verbally come into my office and say, okay? But don't take it for granted.

If your pastor or a pastor in your church or an elder is lagging behind in zeal or knowledge, man, pray for us. We need your prayers. Encourage us in our labors, make our calling a joy by being obedient to biblical instruction, by letting us know how teaching here has improved your sanctification, led to your repentance, convicted your soul, how you're living differently because of it.

And I realize I'm saying these things right now at the risk of sounding self-serving, but I could tell you in humble sincerity, as God is my witness, I have no self-centered aim at all, no ulterior motive. I don't need more pats on the back. I only want to see your confidence in believing, your joy in obedient faith, and your progress and salvation. I want to see you fruitful and joyful and happy in the Lord. And that will

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only come if you do what I'm saying. Read the Bible, study it for yourself, be good students, be Bereans in the text.

Jesus opened the Scriptures to these men, and by the way, not New Testament stuff, Old Testament Scripture. And he interpreted these things to them concerning himself, and they rejoiced in it, right? And what did they rejoice in? A deep, sustained three or four hour long Bible study, amen? Isn't that awesome? So I've just given my introduction as I see the clock.

It's by revealed faith in the Word of God that we will learn and receive and find grounding in the believing presuppositions that will allow us to interpret all things and interpret them rightly and righteously for our joy, for our good, for his glory and praise and honor.

We have so much more to see in this text, and as we come back next time. But I want to leave you with these precious words of the Apostle Paul. I'll read them from 1 Corinthians 2 and then close in prayer. But in this encouragement and exhortation to the Corinthians, they, the Corinthians, like us

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Americans, they were always seeking something new. They wanted something that kind of tickled their ears, sounded good, sounded like the philosophies they're used to.

They wanted their preachers and teachers to kind of come in the same mode as the influencers of their generation. They wanted Internet personalities. They wanted rock stars, celebrities, charismatic, cool, influential, highly regarded. Paul said, I'm not doing that. I'm not doing that because I don't want any of your faith to be in me. I don't want it to be in a celebrity. I don't want you to follow status and charisma. I'm going to, I'm going to know nothing in your midst except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And that is a message that the world hates. They scoff at it. They scorn it. But that's my message.

He goes on to say this in chapter 2, "We do speak wisdom among the mature. It's a wisdom, however, not of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are being abolished. But we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the wisdom that's been hidden, which, which God predestined before the ages to our glory, a wisdom

that none of the rulers of this age has understood. For if they had understood it, they wouldn't have crucified the Lord of glory.

“But just as it is written, ‘The things that eye has not seen, ear has not heard, which have not entered into the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love him.’ That's what we preach. To us God has revealed these things through the Spirit, but the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.

“For who among men knows the depths of a man except the spirit of a man which is in him? Even so, the depths of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. But we have received not the spirit of the world, not the spirit of the world which is passing away,” with changing theories and changing personalities and changing celebrities and changing theories.

“No, we, we speak from the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the depths graciously given to us by God, of which depths we also speak not in words taught by human wisdom, but

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those taught by the Spirit. And we join these spiritual words to spiritual people. We bring them together.

"Oh, but a natural man, he doesn't accept the depths of the Spirit of God, for they're foolishness to him. He can't understand them because they're spiritually examined. But he who is spiritual examines all things, and yet he himself is examined by no one. For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he will direct him. We have the mind of Christ." Bow with me in a word of prayer.

To have the mind of Christ, Father, is enough for us. To have the mind of Christ exposes us to the depths of God revealed to us by the Spirit. All these truths that eye has not seen, ear hasn't heard tell of, it's never even entered in the heart of the imagination of men what you've revealed in Scripture, what you intend for us for the future, and yet you give those things freely to your children. Babes we are, and you freely give them to us, exposing us to your thoughts through Christ and his Spirit.

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And we pray, Father, we would not be those who take your word for granted, that we would not treat your Word shabbily, letting our Bible lie on the shelf from Monday to Saturday, only picking it up to go to church on Sunday.

We pray, Father, that we'd be readers, learners, students, that you'd deepen our appreciation for what you've revealed to us and given to us, that we'd come to worship you, Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, who is the living and incarnate Word of God. We love you and thank you in his name. Amen.