

Scripture Reference: Luke 24:13-35

Date: October 26, 2014

Title: "The Invisible Reality of God"

Focus: Choosing to trust the voice of God. Hearing God Series (Hearing God Series 11 of 11)

Ever wonder about Jesus' appearance to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus? Why He elected to approach these two men and what the purpose was for Luke to include this event in his account of Jesus' life?

We've been talking about prayer as an interactive relationship with God. Trying to broaden our understanding of what prayer precisely is. This event is an appropriate case study on prayer.

vv. 13-31; Trying to Make Sense of Life

These two disciples were trying to figure out recent events, Jesus' arrest, trial, crucifixion, and *supposed* resurrection.

Notice what Cleopas said to the *stranger* in verses 18-24;

"Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days? And [Jesus] said to them, 'What things?' And they said to Him, 'The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people, 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. But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning, and did not find 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 went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said; but Him they did not see."

These men were struggling with Jesus' claims to be Messiah in light of what had transpired. The discussion Jesus walked into the middle of was their attempt to figure things out.

However, try as they might, they needed additional information. Hence Jesus' arrival.

It must be recognized, there are things humanity is incapable of understanding apart from a word outside of themselves.

Understanding is based on perspective, and this is defined by experiences. What humanity is able to understand and accomplish defines our abilities to conceive of what is possible.

Listen to Thomas, "*So the other disciples were saying to him, 'We have seen the Lord!' But he said to them, 'Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe'"* (John 20:25).

Apart from God speaking into the lives of humanity (what we call *revelation*) we are the blind leading the blind. The limitation of our experiences, and hence our understanding, necessitates God speaking into our existence.

v. 16; God kept the disciples from visibly recognizing Jesus.

You'll note, Luke recounts the disciples were *blinded* to the physical reality of who Jesus was. Seeing Jesus, they were prohibited from recognizing Him.

Why? What purpose was there in this?

As the adage goes, "Seeing is believing." Wouldn't it have been easier for the disciples to see Jesus and believe, like with Thomas?

Yes, it may have been easier, *for the disciples*.

However, what is easily gained can also be easily lost. These men were not merely looking for an answer as to whether Jesus was alive or not. They were seeking understanding on Who Jesus is.

For this reason, Jesus, "*beginning with Moses and with all the prophets . . . explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures*" (v. 27).

These two disciples enjoyed the opportunity for an interactive discussion with God (prayer). In this, they were able to wrestle with their doubts, questions, and experiences conversationally with Jesus. In the end, they were blessed beyond what simply seeing Jesus would have imparted to them.

What a joy and encouragement it would be to see Jesus. However, as Christ told Thomas, "*Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed*" (John 20:29).

v. 32-35; The Disciples Came Away with Conviction

The narrative opens with the disciples attempting to reconcile what had happened. Into this situation Jesus intervened.

Even though the disciples did not know it was Jesus who was speaking to them, they acknowledge that His words provided an inner affirmation of their truth and validity.

v. 32; "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?"

This verse is the pinnacle of the account.

When God speaks, His words carry a testimony of authenticity.

Paul experienced it; "*When I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ and when a door was opened for me in the Lord, I had no rest for my spirit, not finding Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I went on to Macedonia*" (2 Cor 2:12-13).

Paul taught the believers in Rome about it; "*The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God*" (Romans 8:16).

John also spoke of this inner witness; "*The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself*" (1 John 5:10).

It is this inner conviction of truth that changed the situation for the two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

vv. 33-34; "[The disciples] got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found gathered together the eleven and those who were with them, saying, 'The Lord has really risen.'"

It is this inner testimony that makes prayer the significant act it is.

The Last 18 Inches

Prayer is more, more than cursory action, more than looking for guidance, more than seeking blessings for our endeavors.

Prayer is an encounter with God. it is a meeting that results in insight that expands what the disciple believes is possible.

Prayer such as this instills in followers of Jesus commitment and dedication.

Prayer like this is at the heart of the Christian experience.