

Sermon Transcript from 11th April 2025

Emmaus Road - Luke 24:13-32

Sermon TLDR

The sermon reflects on the transformative power of encountering Jesus, as exemplified by the story of Cleopas and his companion on the Emmaus Road. The speaker [Brian.S] highlights how this couple, initially **disappointed and downcast** after Jesus's death, experienced a profound shift when Jesus explained the scriptures to them, causing their **hearts to burn** within them. This encounter demonstrates the importance of rooting one's **faith in the Bible** and in **Jesus himself**, rather than personal expectations, and the invitation to a **relationship with God** through Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, which leads to transformation and a desire to share that experience with others.

Link to the Start of the Sermon (on YouTube)

<https://youtu.be/Gp3vQbaatTY?t=3451>

Sermon Transcript

It's great to be here and I always enjoy such a warm welcome. Thank you very much indeed. I do appreciate it.

It's an interesting story; this is this happens on Easter Sunday effectively what we've just recorded. So we're about we're about three weeks behind. But it's great to have the opportunity to uh think about it and spend time and think about this conversation. It's a it's a very interesting conversation. It just shows the power of transformation, doesn't it?

You know, you have two people probably couple in truth Cleopas and his wife who are, to use the words of scripture, downcast. Their hope has been shattered actually I don't know anyone has ever felt that I certainly have and maybe some of you are feeling that this morning whether you're watching online or in this room because as Chris has just said lots of us have different things going on in our lives the lady that you met in Swanage [*Brian is now referring to an earlier part of the service*], her world had changed hasn't it, Wendell your world has changed but in the on the upside. Isn't it great to welcome another grandchild into your world? And I too have four grandchildren. So I celebrate with you and I know exactly what that feels like.

But also, it's not true that everybody's in the same place at the same time. And what I think is wonderful about this story is the impact that Jesus and the Bible has on this couple. We do not have time to scan Moses and all the prophets in the way that Jesus did this morning. All right. But isn't it wonderful how he brings scripture to life in such a way that it makes a massive massive difference in these people's lives?

And I'll talk a bit more about that in a moment. Jim, thank you for reading [Luke 24:13-32] and for your encouragement as well.

By the way, let me just start with something else though because I want to try and bring a couple of things together because in a way the story is the story. It's a record of a conversation. And I love the fact that Luke brings together the reality of how ordinary folk feel. And as I said a minute ago, who in their life has not experienced at some point disappointment? Anyone here never experienced disappointment? No.

We're all there because we're humans. Hopes dashed. Whether it's shattered to the extent these folk felt, I don't know. But we've all felt it. But if you were to read on a few chapters in the Bible, and I know this

hasn't been assembled in this way, but let me just bring this to mind because he's spoken quite a lot this morning about the Holy Spirit and you clearly studying in your small groups at the moment.

If you were to read John chapter 4 this afternoon and look at verses 23 and 24, you will see an invitation from God. And it is an invitation to every human that ever lives and that is to draw into a relationship with him and worship him in spirit and in truth. And that invitation some of you have taken up and some of you may need to take up. But the whole purpose and premise for Jesus's life and what we're talking about this morning is because God wants you in a relationship one-on-one with him.

And he wants you, invites you and draws you in to a relationship that is based on the truth of who Jesus is and the words recorded about God's story in human history in this book, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit that Jesus imparts for those of us and for those of you that will believe and trust in those words.

Worshippers in spirit and in truth. I believe Cleopas and his wife were believers. But at that point in time, the Holy Spirit had not been made present in the way that he is now because this is pre-Pentecost.

So to Chris's point earlier, the Holy Spirit was given to specific people with specific purpose as it were, Jesus being one of them. But Jesus just a very few weeks later goes in and meets all the disciples and says, "Peace be with you." And breathe slowly breathes on them and the Holy Spirit comes and then more fully at Pentecost.

So bear that in mind. You are invited into a relationship with Jesus, with God through Jesus. And that invitation extends to every single one of us who's ever lived and will ever live. Couple of curiosities though about this conversation. I don't know that we have any indefatigable proof about this point, but it is said and it is relatively good tradition that Cleopas was probably Jesus's uncle.

So, it's a curiosity, isn't it, that Jesus walks up. So, brother of Joseph, his dad, all right, his earthly father. Jesus walks up to this couple who are probably in their late 40s, early 50s, all right? Walks up to this couple who are walking along and they don't recognize him. I wonder what would happen to Jesus post resurrection that they didn't recognise.

In the version that Jim read, it says that "God made them not see". But I just want to talk about for a moment where Cleopas and his wife's heart were at. All right? And this is for everybody in this room or ever listens to this sermon. All right? I don't know if you ever been walking along, someone comes up, apparently a stranger, and starts talking to you and says, "What you talking about?"

Quite unusual these days, isn't it? I go on the tube most I live in London. I go to into the city of London most days on the tube. If anyone speaks to me, the first thing I do is [look down] and well ignore them, let alone engage with you. Just don't talk to anybody on the tube, do you? You're just worried that he's going to be a weirdo or something like that.

Anyway, Jesus walks up, he talks to these people and Cleopas theoretically, probably his uncle, they don't recognize him, but they're walking along. What's been going on? Such was their frame of mind. They literally stood still. They're so hurt internally because they've been disappointed that the great hope they built up in this person they thought was their great hope didn't turn out as they thought to be who they thought he was going to be.

Let me dare to put this question out there this morning. Do any of you currently have a disappointment with Jesus? Are any of you disappointed with God because he hasn't quite lived up to who you thought he was meant to be? I'm 55 years old and I can say by the time that I have apparently believed in Jesus since the age of seven, so 48 years to do the math for you, I have gone through those moments because you see what they thought Jesus was and who he is wasn't who he turned out to be.

They were expecting someone to release them from Roman rule. They thought this was about politics. They thought it was about religious freedom. They thought it was about national identity. That's what they thought this was about. And they thought the Messiah rescuing or redeeming Israel was all about release

from Roman captivity and Roman rule and Roman influence. That's what they thought this was going to be about because they saw the world through physical eyes and physical terms.

So when he died, their hope died with him because he wasn't who they thought he was meant to be. Has anybody ever experienced that moment when it wasn't what you thought? it was going to be. I have and I know so I resonate with these people. I'm probably just slightly older than they were at the time of that conversation. Old enough to have seen enough of life, but nowhere near old enough to be sufficiently mature or wise. At least in my case anyway.

And by the way, they knew the Bible like the back of their hands. Are there many better summaries of the gospel than the one Cleopas repeats to the one who is the gospel? He starts and explains it all.

Have you not heard? Did you not know this guy called Jesus from Nazareth is the one who did all these things and was accounted for this way and believed on in this way and this is what they did. And by the way, we were sort of kind are hoping that on the third day he might come back like he said he would and he hasn't although this weird thing happened in the morning when some folk that we know very well and some members of our family went to the tomb and he weren't there but they didn't seem alive so despite our hopes he weren't there although it's a bit odd that that massive tomb still got rolled away and they had angels and all sorts of things but they couldn't quite see it because they couldn't quite grasp it so they believed the Bible they believed the stuff they knew the stuff like the back of their hands.

And yet somehow there was a missing piece of the jigsaw because it hadn't quite landed. They hadn't got it all quite together yet. It didn't quite make sense, did it? Because it didn't quite turn out in the way that they imagined it should or could. Ordinary folk just like you, just like me. Is anyone here this morning got tons of knowledge? Been coming here for decades perhaps, but somehow there's still something that's just not quite I'd love to have a Chris moment in Swanage where the Holy Spirit says to my mate, just put your arms around that woman, would you? It always seems to happen to someone else, but it never happens to me.

Maybe I haven't got the courage that Aileen has got to stand or sit in front of 90 kids and a few adults and explain the gospel. Therefore, it's for her, but it's not for me because that's not my personality. I could never do that. And maybe you're right. But does it mean you're excluded from having Jesus come and touch your life and intervene in the way that you need today or Tuesday coming or the next time you go to Swanage or a gift shop. No, it [didn't] because this is for everybody because the father wants worshippers who worship him in spirit and in truth.

This is probably possibly the first lengthy conversation Jesus has in his resurrected body. Can you imagine the power therefore the power that he had on people before he was resurrected? He was a great teacher who explained all these things was highly claimed in the sight of not just people but of God they claimed. And yet here he is in his resurrected body at that point not documented admittedly but in truth the logically declared to be the son of God because he was resurrected.

Can you imagine having Jesus speak to you in the way that he spoke to Cleopas and his wife because he was who he was always destined to be? Can you imagine the feeling? Not much wonder they said when Jesus explained the stuff to us, our hearts burned. They literally were transformed by Jesus explaining in the power of his resurrected body, full of the Holy Spirit, what the Bible actually meant.

And all of a sudden, the scales fell. The pieces of the jigsaw fitted perfectly and they were transformed.

How many of you here this morning would love to be transformed by a word from God and touched by the Holy Spirit in a way that makes you go from still two miles to go. Bit around here, isn't it? Did you forget the water? Yeah, I forgot the water. who I can't wait to go back.

Everybody, who met Jesus. It's real. He's alive. We met him and he's explained stuff to us. Seven miles. They ran back to Jerusalem. They were so full of God. They were so full of the Holy Spirit. They were so full of Jesus that he turned their life round. And they couldn't wait to tell everybody.

And they met a bunch of other people who said, "It's also true. Peter says, "I've seen the Lord. And just a few seconds later, who appears? Jesus enters the room and says, "Peace be with you."

How many of you would love to know the peace of God in your heart this morning, in your life, in what you're doing? And what's the premise for all of this? The premise is this. These people were open and willing to listen to the voice of God. They didn't root their faith in a cult figure. They didn't root their faith in a superhero. They rooted their faith in the son of God and in the word of God.

Do you know what? I believe that God kept them from seeing who he was because they God wanted them to have a faith that was based entirely on what you and I can read today. And that is the Bible. All scripture is useful for teaching, correcting, rebuking, and leading us into the ways of righteousness.

So on this morning, dear friends, and I might call you that because I've been coming here often enough and long enough to call you that, brothers and sisters, on what are you placing your faith? Some notion or idea that this is how life is going to be with Jesus? Well, yes, we all have aspirations and hopes, don't we, around that? I I don't think that's unreasonable. But to base it entirely on those notions of who you think he is or what he should be like is prone to and vulnerable to being shattered, if I might say so, because it starts to get soaked with imagination.

However, a daily walk with the Bible being read and digested at the centre of your life will be a rock and keeps us firmly squared and rooted as to where we need to be. And if you like gives us our true north star and it is based on that that the Holy Spirit has ground and good fertile stuff to work with to work in us for his good pleasure and enabling us therefore to do the works that God has head in advance for us to do.

Look at Ephesians 2. All right. So, if you want Jesus to get more involved in your life, start with a willingness. I'm open. We sang it a few minutes ago. Open the eyes of my heart, Lord, because I want to see you. I want to see you high and lifted up. Yeah. Where? In my life first and foremost.

And then having the Holy Spirit in us, going back to John 4, actually, streams of living water will come in. And streams of living water the Holy Spirit flow out. One of the benefits of having the Holy Spirit in our lives is that it overflows to touch other people.

And sometimes you won't even know who he touches just by you following him and having this at the centre of all you do.

So Cleopas and his wife were turned around by listening to the word of God explained in no other way or by no other person, no less person than Jesus Christ. I can never ever ever get close to that. Nor can you in truth.

The Giddy Heights is having Jesus explain it directly one-to-one to us. But what we can do is ask the Holy Spirit to use this word to meet every need in our lives and then to use us whether it's like Aileen or a hand or in a way that is more suitable to our personality and circumstances by the way to be available to him.

I've got a number of people who work for me and I still get people coming up to me and saying, "But you're a Christian, aren't you?" I've never ever ever uttered a word about Christ to them. I've got no idea what it is. I actually don't know what it is other than I can only think that the Holy Spirit is somewhere using me in the circumstance in which I pray at work because people say to me, "You're a Christian." I know. But he does.

And if you want to continue to have influence on this planet for him and see other people share in the excitement of who he is and join us in worship as worshippers in spirit and truth then we need to continue to root our life in the Bible.

Don't we read it, digest it and say go on Holy Spirit, use it in the way that you need to in my life and for the life of others people around you. And by the way, some of those people then we go on to have great conversations and we are talking still with them about how they might believe or not believe. Some of them it's quite good banter, because they deliberately try to not believe on purpose by the way but you just know in the end that God is chipping away.

It's great my daughter also works for me who was also well I say also she is a lively good Christian she's a great follower of Jesus and she's a great witness in the office and you can just see the impact that she's having as a young lady of 25 years old on people around her in the office who are responding to hearing and seeing the word of God expounded and used by the Holy Spirit in her life. You see these people started the day expectant and as the day went on their hope dissipated to the point that I've given up. I hope none of you this morning, it's not quite [over] yet.

None of you this morning have got to a place where you've given up with God. None of you. He hasn't given up with you. You might feel disconnected. You might feel you're drifting, but he hasn't given up. And if you're willing to allow him to come back, he's never gone, by the way.

But you know what I'm saying in terms of phraseology.

So look for a reconnection. He will. Now you might not do something [daft] like I did five minutes ago run across the stage like an idiot. But he will transform and reinstate and reignite.

So where are you this morning in terms of your connection with God?

I love Dan's story. I love Dan's story repeated an experience that you shared. I love Wendle's story like you know unexpectedly stuff happens and wouldn't it be great sometimes and every now and it's lovely to have something spontaneous and unexpected of life, isn't it? That's great that goes well. Oh, didn't expect that. That was good.

But more importantly and for longevity and sustainability, this is all about how we deal with the Bible. And dealing with the Bible is all about how we interact with and who we see God as. So, do you need more of what is happening with Aileen? Need more of what's happening with It's probably more like Cleopas and his wife this morning. They don't quite fit. I need the piece of the jigsaw just to fit a bit better.

Disappointed with God this morning? I don't actually think it's unreasonable and unhealthy to acknowledge a disappointment with God to him because sometimes I think we all feel let down and that's not true.

Sometimes some of us sometimes feel are let down by God because not all of you will feel that. What do you need him to do this morning for you? I'm going to give you a moment to ask him that question and ask him to do what you need him to do. Now, this is not some sort of consumerism I'm offering you, by the way, because in the end, he's going to want you to trust him, to listen to his word, and to follow him. The question is, how can you see and how can he help you? See how following him gets you the answer that you need. And in some cases, in some cases, it's not often you'll change. Your circumstances will be changed. The truth is very often our circumstances remain unchanged. But perspective does. And that perspective is shaped by acknowledging and knowing who Jesus really is.

And the victory that he has is not a political one. It's not an economic one. It may not even be couched immediately in relationship terms either. But what it is is a victory over the sin that clings onto our hearts and withholds us from having the relationship with God that he invites us to have as worshippers in spirit and truth. And the conquest he really came for and the liberation he really came for was to live raise us from the permanent scarring, damaging, destructing effects of sin and selfishness. And the ability to offer oneself up as a servant and in sacrificing ourselves in selflessness is actually the greatest liberation any one of us will ever feel.

Hold on to your life, Jesus says, and you might lose it. Lose your life for my sake in the gospel and you'll gain it. It's what he offers. Perverse, isn't it? Completely illogical. But maybe some of you this morning need to let go of holding on and hold on to him and not you. I do.

That's me this morning.

By the way, just so you know, you said, "Have I got challenges, Chris?" Yeah, I've got challenges. Of course I've got. None of us don't. So, I encourage you all in the last two or three minutes, I'm going to be up the front. Can you be pleased? I'm going to go silent. and just let you talk to God and God to you.

What do you need from him this morning? You need hope, inspiration, reassurance, love, strength to keep going and keep following, courage.

You need to acknowledge that you've got it wrong.

You need to repent.

You need to say sorry wherever you are asking to come to you.

Whatever you do, I urge you to be honest with him. You cannot sing open the eyes of my heart, Lord, dishonestly. Well, you can, but you shouldn't because it lacks integrity. So, what's it to be for you and God this moment, this morning? Where [are] you going to go? What do you need?

I'm going to leave it there. Cleopas and his wife were transformed. And by the way, not that this will be our outcome, I suspect. But again, tradition has it that they were so committed to the Lord after this that they went through the worst of all outcomes for him and were martyred. All right? They really loved the Lord and they lived their life for him completely thereafter. So, it's between you and God now.

[Brian closed in prayer]

Father, I want to thank you that you want us to be intimate with you and that you offer us proximity to you because of your mercy and love for us. I want to acknowledge that there is sin in my life. Not that I'm proud of that. Please forgive me.

I want to acknowledge that there are things that I think do patterns of behaviour which are unhelpful, which I know need to change. And I ask that you speak to me now and everyone here and that you will interact with honest hearts and minds and take us all forward. with greater joy or certain duration. I don't know, Lord. You know, I don't.

Lord Jesus, thank you that you interpreted the scriptures so well for Cleopas and his wife. Bring to mind for each of us passages or words from the Bible now that will help each of us in the circumstances we're currently in. And may we place our faith in you and your word and not in fanciful notions, however well intended, of who you're meant to be.

And help all of us give ourselves wholeheartedly to you for your service in any realm that we happen to operate in. For we are and we remain your servants who are bought at a price and we are yours.

Help us to give us your you us this morning and every day. And may we base our lives entirely on the strength of who you are and the word that you provide.

Please speak to us, Father.

[Amen]