

The Certainty
(Week 10--Easter)
Their Eyes Were Opened

SMALL TALK

1. If you got laid off from work or your job was “terminated” where would you go to “get yourself together”?

VIEWPOINT

2. **READ Luke 24:13-35.** If you had been listening to these two disappointed disciples, what would you have heard? What tone? What feelings? What hopes were dashed?
3. From what you know about Old Testament prophecy and law, what passages might “the stranger” have discussed with them (24:25-27)?
4. Why did Jesus do this roundabout Bible Study rather than reveal himself immediately and directly?
5. What opened their eyes (24:31)?

GETTING PERSONAL

6. Where was your “road to Emmaus” when “your eyes were opened”?
7. Have you had any recent eye opening or heart opening surprises from Jesus?
8. How well do you think you can explain the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and the way a person can have a relationship with him?

PRACTICE!

- a. What are you grateful for? Practice opening your eyes through reflection. Practice opening “your lips” with praise.
- b. What are you learning? Practice opening God’s Word.
- c. Who are you “pursuing relationally”? Practice opening your heart and your appointment calendar.

[EASTER] April 4, 2021

The Certainty: “Their Eyes Were Opened”

One dad tells a story about one sleepy Sunday afternoon when his son was five-years-old, how they drove past a cemetery together. Noticing a large pile of dirt beside a newly excavated grave, his son pointed and said: "Look, Dad, one got out!"

Today is a celebration of the Certainty that One did get out, making a way for us all!

This was such a certainty for Paul that he said, “*If Christ has not been raised, then all our preaching is useless, and your faith is useless*” (1 Corinthians 15:14).

Only Luke tells this story about a pair of disciples from Emmaus that moved from uncertainty to certainty when their eyes were opened by what they thought was a stranger. They were walking home on that event filled Sunday that we celebrate today, but they were not celebrating. Quite the opposite. They were arguing about what happened, and what it all meant.

Confused, uncertain, sad, depressed, short fused, stressed, and deeply discouraged...their argument is interrupted by what they thought was a complete stranger...and by the end of that afternoon, “their eyes had been opened” and they moved from uncertainty to certainty. As we look at that narrative of events, we discover what changed their lives and learn how we too can move from uncertainty to certainty about the most important truth in all of history.

Luke 24:13–24 (CSB) *Now that same day two of them were on their way to a village called Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ Together they were discussing everything that had taken place. ¹⁵ And while they were discussing and arguing, Jesus himself came near and began to walk along with them. ¹⁶ But they were prevented from recognizing him. ¹⁷ Then he asked them, “What is this dispute that you’re*

having with each other as you are walking?” And they stopped walking and looked discouraged.¹⁸ The one named Cleopas answered him, “Are you the only visitor in Jerusalem who doesn’t know the things that happened there in these days?”¹⁹ “What things?” he asked them. So they said to him, “The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet powerful in action and speech before God and all the people,²⁰ and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him.²¹ But we were hoping that he was the one who was about to redeem Israel. Besides all this, it’s the third day since these things happened.²² Moreover, some women from our group astounded us. They arrived early at the tomb,²³ and when they didn’t find his body, they came and reported that they had seen a vision of angels who said he was alive.²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they didn’t see him.”

The first thing we need to learn from Luke is this:

I. **An accurate description is NOT ENOUGH**

Sometimes an accurate description is just not enough. Let’s jump back into the story.

This is an accurate telling of the events, **but what is missing?** They tell of Jesus as **a powerful prophet in action and speech**. They tell of the **crucifixion**. They tell of their great disappointment because they thought he was “the one”, the messiah they were all waiting for. They even tell of the report of “some women” from “our group” who astounded them with the **news that the tomb was empty!** And that they had seen **angels saying he was alive!!!** So, what’s missing? **What is missing is “their certainty!”**

An accurate description of the events is not enough.

II. **They were still DISCOURAGED**

They have an accurate report, but they don’t know what to make of it! And somehow it doesn’t cut through their discouragement.

Have you been there before?

- Trudging through life's challenge half-believing, half-doubting?
 - You believe God exists and loves you, but you aren't feeling it.
 - You believe you are forgiven, but you are not dancing a jig about your life.
 - You believe you are saved, going to heaven, but people looking at you wouldn't know it because your face doesn't show it!

What's with that!?

Luke 24:17 (CSB) Then he asked them, "What is this dispute that you're having with each other as you are walking?" And they stopped walking and looked discouraged.

There it is. After all the good news of that morning, they were still discouraged!!

Jesus asked them, "what is this dispute you are having?" Sometimes the DISPUTE we are having is in ourselves. If Jesus were to walk up to us in our journey, would he say, "*What is this dispute in yourself? Why are you only half believing?*" If he did, wouldn't we stop and look discouraged?

We'd have to stop and think about the conflict inside ourselves.

- Perhaps we expected his protection, and we felt let down.
- Perhaps we expected life would be all roses and rainbows, and now we are in a stormy darkness of despair.

What do we do with that? Often we don't know what to do with that. We are still discouraged; still...angry, let down, frustrated inside.

PIE SHELL: Perhaps we are like the boy who ran away from home because he saw his mother put pie into the oven, but when she pulled it out, it was nothing but the shell. He was so angry at his mother he bolted out the door. What was she thinking?! How could she be so cruel?! It seemed so promising. Why would she only make the

shell?! Who would ever want to eat an empty pie shell?! So the boy ran away angry at his cruel mean mother. He only made it a block or so away when he turned around and came back home. It is a good thing he did. He learned from his mother that his anger and disappointment was all based on a misunderstanding. He learned the rest of the story! His mother was not finished with what she was doing! There was still a wonderful pie coming. This was just the shell!

Friends, our life is like that. We misunderstand God in the disappointments of life. But we only have part of the story. God will work out the rest of the story as you keep trusting him.

III. How were their eyes opened?

Luke 24:26–27 (CSB) Wasn't it necessary for the Messiah to suffer these things and enter into his glory?"²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted for them the things concerning himself in all the Scriptures.

In 24:28-30 something else happens before their eyes are opened, we'll get back to that in a moment. But for now we skip to ...

Luke 24:31 (CSB) Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, but he disappeared from their sight.

Luke 24:32 (CSB) They said to each other, "Weren't our hearts burning within us while he was talking with us on the road and explaining the Scriptures to us?"

Their eyes were opened because Jesus opened the scriptures to them; but their eyes did not open until they pursued Him!

Luke 24:28 (CSB) They came near the village where they were going, and he gave the impression that he was going farther.

Luke 24:29 (CSB) But they urged him, "Stay with us, because it's almost evening, and now the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them.

Theory: People have as much of God as they want. If we don't have any more of God than we have, it is not because we don't have what we want, it is because we don't want any more of God than we have.

God often uses this “giving the impression that he is passing on by” strategy to raise the level of our resolve and desire to want more of him and from him.

- **He did this with Abraham**

Genesis 18:3 (CSB) and said, “My lord, if I have found favor with you, please do not go on past your servant.

- **He did this with JACOB** in a wrestling match (Genesis 32:26-30) and Jacob was blessed because he wanted God's blessing so much he refused to let go.
- **He did this with a CANAANITE woman in Matthew 15**
 - Jesus said some off putting statements.
 - She refused to be put off. She would not let go of what she wanted from Jesus. Her faith in Jesus looked like persistence, trusting he could grant what she wanted and her persistence paid off big time.

The persistence of these two disciples in Emmaus urging Jesus to stay, insisting!, paid off big time ...

Luke 24:30–31 (CSB) It was as he reclined at the table with them that he took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, but he disappeared from their sight.

Some of us are too passive toward God: He wants us to want HIM more, and be more persistent. You will be blessed for it.

The Bible has been opened to us today. Have your eyes been opened? Are your hearts set aflame?

If not, what is the conflict inside of you? Jesus would have you stop and reflect more.

Come to him and open his word. When you open your Bible, come to Jesus; He is the key to understanding your own story! Don't be passive waiting for him. **He's waiting for your invitation to him. Ask him to stay with you. Want more.** *Show him* you want him more. You do that and you will know with a certainty that Jesus is alive!