Slow of heart to believe

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Preacher: Prof D.M.Macdonald

[0:00] Luke chapter 24 at verse 13. Luke chapter 24 at verse 13.

Luke chapter 24 at verse 13.
Luke chapter 24 at verse 13.
Luke chapter 25 at verse 13.
risen and had appeared to simon then the two told what had happened on the way and how jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread while they were still talking about this jesus himself stood among them and said to them peace be with you they were startled and frightened thinking they saw a ghost he said to them why are you troubled and why do you do doubts arise in your mind look at my hands and my feet it is i myself touch me and see a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see i have when he had said this they he showed them his hands and feet and while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement he asked them do you have anything here to eat they gave him a piece of broiled fish and he took it and ate it in their presence he said to them this is what i told you while i was still with you everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the law of moses the prophets and the psalms then he opened their minds so that they could understand the scriptures he told them this is what is written the christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations beginning at jerusalem you are witnesses of these things i am going to send you what my father has promised but stay in the city until you have been closed with power from on high when he had led them out of the vicinity out to the vicinity of bethany he lifted up his hands and blessed them while he was blessing them he left them and was taken up into heaven then they worshiped him and returned to jerusalem with great joy and they stayed continually at the temple praising god amen may god bless to us this reading from his holy word to his name be all the praise and glory now let's again please turn now to this part of god's word that we read luke chapter 24 luke chapter 24 and we'll read again verses 26 and 27 did not the christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory and beginning with moses and all the prophets he explained to them what was said in all the scriptures concerning himself the resurrection appearance of jesus to the two in the road to emmaid is perhaps the best loved of these accounts we have of the appearances of jesus after he rose from the dead we can readily identify with these two unknown disciples who are walking along very sad very dejected very depressed their hopes had been shattered and now they were making their way perhaps to their home out in emmaus seven miles from jerusalem all alone and feeling very sad and downcast as i say we can readily identify with them because often our hopes are shattered often we have to face disappointment and we have to face tragedy we have to face times when we just can't understand why things have happened the way they have happened now i say we can identify with them and yet we don't know much about them we only know the name of one of them cleopas and he doesn't seem to be mentioned again there is another person called clopas but probably not the same man because the name names are spelled differently don't know who the other one was some people think he may have been not a man but a woman he may have been the wife of cleopas because in the greek here there's no indication the masculine is used to refer to them but then in referring to mixed company a man and a woman in greek they would always use the masculine to refer to the the two of them or to more so we don't know who these people were they were ordinary disciples not
[6:29] members of the twelve not members of the inner circle of jesus's disciples and yet they were believers in jesus they followed jesus around they listened to his teaching they believed that this was someone special as we see when they said to jesus we had believed he was the one who was going to redeem israel and now jesus had been put to death humiliated and put in the tomb there was no hope but then something happened to change their view of things something

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happened which would change their lives forever they were walking along talking about what had happened when the risen lord jesus appeared to them he appeared to them and yet they didn't know who it was we read here that jesus came along probably walking up behind them and drew alongside them and they were kept from recognizing him now there are various explanations of this i think the most straightforward one is that in some supernatural way god uh prevented them from recognizing him at once but there are other psychological factors too to be taken into consideration they certainly weren't expecting to see him again were they it would appear they did not believe that he had risen from the dead although they had heard rumors about it rumors that the tomb was empty rumors that he had appeared they still didn't believe they were not expecting to see him and you know what it's like yourselves if you meet somebody in a different situation from what you usually meet them perhaps they're dressed differently and you're not expecting to meet them sometimes you take a long time to have nine people who are perhaps quite familiar to you so there are these psychological factors it may be of course also that jesus had a different appearance from what he had before we will perhaps consider that later on perhaps this evening in what way the resurrection body differs from the body that we have before death it may well be that he looked different and thus they couldn't recognize him there are all these factors in any case they didn't know who this stranger was to death he was a stranger and a very ignorant stranger at that because they entered into conversation and notice jesus takes the initiative he asked them what are you talking about as you're walking along now jesus of course knew even before his resurrection he knew what was in the hearts of people and he knew what they were talking about it wasn't to gain information he asked them it was to get them to unburden themselves to him and that of course is highly instructed for you and me in our dealings with people jesus was a good listener he wanted to hear from their own lips what they felt he wanted them to express their difficulties their unbelief and he was ready to listen he was a good listener and so should we be what are you talking about as you're walking along together they stood still their faces down cast and one of them cleopas said are you only a stranger don't you know what's been happening in jerusalem these last few days and he said what things and of course he knew he had been at the center of himself again he wanted them to express their own feelings he wanted them to express what they believed and what they disbelieved he didn't just jump straight in and call them fools and all the rest of it he wanted them to tell him what was on their minds and he's still the same he wants you and me to come to him in our disappointment in our frustration in our failure in our sin and open our hearts to him he's still the same lord jesus about jesus of nazareth they replied and then they go on to tell what they believed about this jesus and it's wonderful they extend to what they did believe he was a prophet powerful in word and deed before god and all the people and you see where they laid the blame for his death the chief priests and the rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death and they crucified him the jewish leaders together with the roman authorities conspired to put to death this innocent man

but they don't major in that don't major in the suffering of jesus don't major in the fact that he was unjustly put to death cleophas stresses the fact that we believed we had hoped he was the one who was going to redeem israel now we don't know exactly what he meant by that that word redeem as you know it has very deep significance because it refers to the redemption to the buying back to the salvation of those who are under the power of sin but here it would seem to mean merely that they had hoped he would be the one who would redeem israel who would free israel from the power of the roman empire and set up the independent jewish kingdom once again that was really the messianic hope that was the hope of the jewish people at this time that the messiah would come free the jews and once again it would be a free independent nation and certainly it's the same term to redeem israel that was used to to describe the the freeing of the children of israel from the bondage of egypt that had been their hope but their hope had not been realized perhaps on that uh psalm sunday the week before this very day perhaps they thought something was going to happen because jesus was welcomed into jerusalem by all the people hosanna they said and they welcomed the son of david perhaps hoping that here would be the one who would set up the messianic kingdom but now their hopes were shattered this same one who would claim to be the messiah was indeed put to death and in the tomb and what's more it's now the third day since all this took place this was what we would call sunday the first day of the week and in addition some of the women amazed us we're quite surprised to hear they went to the tomb the stone was rolled away it was empty and in fact some of them went and even saw this and it was just as the woman had said but they didn't see him they had not yet heard of the resurrection appearance to mary

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magdalene and to peter they hadn't yet heard of it they heard rumors but they were not yet prepared to believe and then jesus gave them the explanation notice first of all he entered into conversation with them he wanted to hear all that they had to say of course he knew what was in their minds but he wanted them to express it and he wants you and me to do the same thing and then he gave them the explanation and first of all he gently debuts them how foolish you are you're slow to believe what you ought to have known all these things are already written in the prophets in the scriptures what we would call the old testament wasn't it necessary that the christ the messiah suffer all these things and then enter his glory and then beginning with moses and the prophets he expounded to them he explained to them the old testament scriptures all the scriptures that means the the law the prophets and the psalms these three divisions of the scriptures he explained to them everything concerning himself showing that christ the messiah was really the subject of the old testament and that's why we should never neglect the old testament that was the scriptures which jesus knew that was the scriptures which the early disciples knew and every page of these old testament scriptures breathed out christ to them the messiah and that's why when we sing the psalms for instance we should be looking for references to the christ there because jesus explained to them everything from these scriptures the things concerning himself we can think of the that psalm we just done about the king of glory entering in that of course it refers to the exaltation of christ to the entering of the christ into his glory and then there's another psalm we'll sing at the end of the the service psalm 16 telling about you will not let your holy one see corruption
for instance again a clear reference to the fact that although jesus died he saw no corruption i believe that his body did not decay in the tomb as did the body of lazarus during these four days but the body of christ saw no corruption he died certainly his spirit went to be with the father but his body lay in the tomb until the third day and then he gloriously rose again you can think of isaiah 53 for instance that wonderful a chapter concerning the suffering of the messiah the suffering servant he was led like a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before her sheers is dumb so he opened not his mouth and so jesus gave them insight into all these scriptures wasn't that wonderful to have a preacher like jesus who knew the scriptures because his own spirit the holy spirit had had written them through the influence of these writers of the old testament couldn't it be wonderful to be there to hear the explanation of christ yet we have the whole of the new testament now again written by his spirit to help us to understand the old testament the things concerning himself this then was the explanation jesus gave that it was necessary for christ to suffer why because of course he came to redeem his people from their sins and the only way he could do that was by taking their sins upon himself dying for their sins dying in his place bearing the wrath and curse due to them for sins and then gloriously rising again to prove that his offering had been accepted by the father and that his people were now saved and saved eternally and so he explained to them all the things concerning himself and as they approached the village jesus made as if he was going to go further so isn't that interesting he made as if to leave them but they immediately invited him to stay with them they invited him in fact they pressed him they urged him strongly stay with us it's nearly evening the day is almost over they invited him in the invitation was given by them jesus acted as if he was going to go further now why do you think that was the case again i think it was that he was well not exactly testing them but he wanted the initiative to come from them he had taken the initiative remember he had come up alongside them he had entered into conversation but he didn't hug the conversation he wanted them to explain to him all that was on their heart and they did so and then he explained to them and then he made it as if to leave them he gave them the choice whether he was to leave them or whether he was to stay with them but for them there was no question they had been given such insight into the messiah and into his ministry their ideas were now being changed around their disappointment was giving way to a new hope hope and they wanted this stranger to stay with them stay with us don't leave us explain more to us and of course jesus readily agreed to stay when he saw that their hearts were really changing now their faith was really being strengthened he responded to that and he came in to stay with them and to stay with you and me perhaps jesus has been talking to you about your life for some time now and you haven't yet fully responded to him and he's waiting for you to invite him in to your heart and into your life to be your lord and savior he won't force himself on you but he has already taken the initiative in dealing with you he's perhaps showed you your sinfulness he's perhaps showed you your weakness he's put in put in your heart some desire after eternal life after salvation he's waiting for you to invite him in well it's nearly evening the day is far spent who knows how far your day or mine has been spent before it's too late let's ask jesus into our hearts and lives he went in to stay with them

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and when he was at the table he took bread and gave thanks broke it and began to give it to them how strange he in a strange house it may have been an inn but more likely in their own home he took the place of the host and he took the bread blessed it broke it and gave it to them and it was in the breaking of bread that their eyes were opened and they had night him again i think a supernatural opening of their eyes or it may have been that as he gave the bread to them they saw his hands they saw the meal prince and they suddenly realized this is jesus this is jesus who's been talking to us and explaining of why the christ had to suffer and rise again and immediately there had night him he vanished from their sight again showing the difference of the resurrection body from the previous body which he had there was identity he was the same jesus and yet in a mysterious way he was different his body now had different properties he disappeared in their sight and then their amazement they asked each other were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us along the road and opened the scriptures to us how foolish we were how slow of heart to believe what he said was quite true we wondered who the stranger was he told us all these wonderful things our hearts were burning with excitement with joy at the thought that our jesus was going to rise again and yet it was him all the time how foolish we were he revealed himself to them in the breaking of bread their hearts burned within them when the lord jesus speaks to you perhaps through a sermon perhaps reading the scriptures does your heart burn within you perhaps sometimes it burns with shame burns with shame at your unbelief or at your slowness of heart to believe burns with shame as you look upon your past life perhaps it burns with joy and with thanksgiving when you realize how much jesus has done for you how he went to the cross for you how he rose again and is now even now interceding at god's right hand for you doesn't your heart burn within you when you think of these things well surely that's evidence that you're a believer in jesus if your heart burns within you as the scriptures are opened and christ is revealed to you and what did they do after this they got up and went back again to jerusalem they retraced their steps over these seven miles and no doubt these seven miles seemed much shorter this time than when they had come the the other way going out to emmaus they hurried back to meet with the disciples because after their experience of the risen christ they were their minds were set on testifying to the fact they had seen jesus testimony inevitably followed their experience of the risen christ they didn't want to keep it to themselves they went back and they met with the others the eleven and the others assembled with them the other believers now we know of course that all the eleven weren't there because thomas wasn't there it wasn't until later that thomas saw him the eleven there is a technical term for the disciples and notice it wasn't just the eleven disciples who were there other disciples were there as well and as these two burst in upon them before they had a chance to tell their stories the others were saying it's true the lord has written he's appeared to simon appeared to simon peter and then the two of them began to tell their amazing story how they had been walking along sad and disconsolate a stranger came up alongside them explained to them everything from the scriptures and then as they sat down at the table he revealed himself to them as jesus risen from the dead what rejoicing there would have been there as they shared these experiences as they shared the joy of the risen christ and as they were doing that as they were testifying to the fact that they had seen jesus alive that they believed he had risen while they were still talking about this verse 36 jesus himself stood among them and said to them peace be with you now isn't that significant isn't that important as they were testifying to the fact that they believed in jesus he himself came to be with them and to show himself to them again now if these two had stayed there and amazed and said well isn't that wonderful isn't it great jesus is alive well so what let's go to bed now and forget all about it not at all they went to testify to the fact they had seen jesus that their lives were changed forever because now they knew that jesus was alive what hope they had been given what courage and now they had a desire to testify and to share with others the good news the glorious news of the risen christ that as they were sharing this testimony that jesus came and stood amongst them and surely it's the same today when we testify to the fact that we believe that jesus died for us and is now alive and that he's with us then we know his presence we experience his presence we know his power as we tell others of the risen christ he himself comes alongside us and he deals with that person perhaps through witnessing to somebody who doesn't have yet believe in the risen christ well as we testify as we tell people our experience of the risen christ jesus himself comes alongside us and says peace be with you and he will deal with that person whom we are testifying to it doesn't all depend on us and our testimony but he wants us to testify yes it's he alone who can change people's hearts but unless we tell them unless we take the risk of testifying to them they won't hear but once we do that he will work through our witness he will himself appear and

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bring peace and joy even to that person the lord jesus christ is risen yes we know his body his glorified body is now at god's right hand he's no no longer amongst us in a bodily sense but he is with us through his spirit remember his promise i will not leave you comfortless i will come to you and according to his promise he has sent the holy spirit the holy spirit now represents him here on earth and he is with us now according to his promise have you met with the risen christ has the risen christ drawn up alongside you and asked you what you're thinking what are your hopes what are your fears what are your disappointments what are your frustrations what are the things burdening you open your heart to him confess all these things to him tell him all about yourself he knows already he wants you to make it known yourself and as you do that he will then begin to deal with you he will open the scriptures to you everything concerning himself and then as you open your heart to him he will come in according to his promise behold i stand at the door and knock if anyone hears my voice opens the door i will come into him and will stop with him and he with me he will come in and he will be the host even within your heart and you this time he will not disappear or vanish from your sight but he will stay with you forever and as you commit your life to him then you go out and you testify to him as these disciples did and then you will know his blessing upon you witness and upon your testimony what a wonderful thing it is that we believe in a risen savior one who died and is now alive again alive forevermore what hope and strength it gives us for each day and for that eternity which awaits us all let us pray for lord our god we give thanks for this wonderful story of the risen christ meeting with these two disillusioned disappointed and frustrated disciples and we give thanks for the change that came in their lives when they met the risen christ and believed upon him oh lord god we pray that you would help
[26:50] each one of us to meet with the risen christ this morning to know that he is alive and to commit our lives to him and oh lord help us as we go out into the world to testify to this fact it's so difficult people have no knowledge of these things and yet lord god we pray that you'd help us sincerely and simply to tell others that the risen christ and bless our witness we pray to those with whom we have contact here is lord we pray and we pray that you would continue with us throughout this day in the coming days and lord put our hearts with hope hope for the future especially hope that reaches beyond the grave to that day when time shall be no more and we shall appear before you throne hear us lord we pray forgive all our sins for jesus sake amen

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