

Emmaus

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Date: 01 January 2000

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[0 : 00] Now today we study the road to Emmaus in Luke 24 and from verse 13 down to the end of verse 35.

Now last night our reflections came to a conclusion with the burial of the Lord Jesus. That burial or entombment made the death of Christ official.

I emphasise that the crucifixion itself took place within time, within space and history. And in many ways the burial searched to reinforce that fact that Christ's death was a real historical occurrence affecting the Lord physically and spiritually.

Now by the time we come to the Emmaus Road incident, the Lord has risen and has been seen by some of the disciples already.

He's been seen by Mary Magdalene first of all and then also by Samuel Peter and some of the others. But as I turn to the Emmaus Road, I want first of all to look at the men themselves.

[1 : 19] Those two men were walking this road along to Emmaus. It's a seven mile journey apparently to this particular location. And their mood is a very interesting one.

You know to begin with that as they talked, walked, they were talking and discussing the matters relevant to the Lord Jesus.

And that itself was surely of some consequence to us. There's no doubt that these men were profoundly disturbed and upset by the crucifixion.

And yet they are still talking about the Lord, discussing all these things that had happened.

So I'm very conscious of all the perils of a dead orthodoxy. And I know the dangers inherent in giving one's life to reflection, meditation.

[2 : 24] I know that we can have a discipleship which consists only in words. And I'm often painfully conscious that all my own work for the kingdom is word work.

It isn't in many ways very practical work. And yet it's always worth bearing in mind how close is the connection between word and gospel.

Words don't express God perfectly. But they express them better than anything else expresses them. And that's why God hasn't given us canonical pictures.

He's given us a canonical book. And if I may stretch you for a moment, as I'm sure I may, it's also worth bearing in mind that word is so important and so central, because there is word at the very heart of God himself.

The word, the Logos, was with God. And I believe that when God made man in his own image, that one very important factor in our divine image bearing is our capacity for word.

[3 : 53] The ability to speak, to think and to clothe our own thoughts in word. And I think that it is because there is this bridge of word, of verbalization between God and man, that God has given the world such a status in the economy of salvation.

That's why we are called upon to evangelize by teaching. We are called upon to hold fast our confession.

We are called upon to articulate in words the gospel of the Lord Jesus. Now I know it is always possible that a lie speaks so loudly that what we say cannot secure a hearing, because our conduct contradicts the message we are trying to convey.

And I am always very skeptical of what people refer to as a silent witness. It is important that what we say be reinforced by the way that we live.

But the gospel must be said. It must be spoken. Because the gospel is the proclamation of the Lordship of Christ, his enfleshment, the proclamation of his death for sinners, the proclamation too of his resurrection and second coming.

[5 : 33] Now there is no way that a silent witness can proclaim incarnation, atonement and resurrection.

And we must ourselves have the courage to express our gospel in words to all those who ask a reason for us, of us, for the hope that is actually in us.

And we also, without going too far off my intended track, remind you, that the promise of the Holy Spirit is related very, very directly to the whole business of speaking for Jesus.

You shall receive power, and you shall be witnesses to me. The whole point of Pentecost lies in those tongues by which we proclaim the wonderful works of God.

And there is another very precious promise too. The Lord tells us, don't worry what you say. When you don't thrive, when you're challenged for your faith, don't worry beforehand.

[6 : 47] Don't go out every day with prepared speeches and part answers. It shall be taught you in that hour, he says, what you shall say.

And I wouldn't mind challenging all of you today on this particular point. Do we have that sense of dependence on God?

Indeed that willingness to be dependent on God? So that we don't know what we're going to say.

We have no formula. We have no easy answers.

We have no speeches. But we go forth every day, hoping that God's Spirit will tell us what to say in every moment of crisis.

I would hope that by dint of repetition and of overstatement, we might get it into the mindset of our own church, that we are at bottom a charismatic institution.

[7 : 58] And that we survive not in terms of academic ability or organisation, or in terms of political power and prestige, but in terms of dependence upon the Spirit of God.

And that means that every functionary in the church, from preacher through deacons, deaconesses, and everybody else, they are all charismatics.

I mean that the level, the measure, of what you and I can achieve for Christ, is not what we are by inheritance, or by upbringing and environment, or by ability and training, that God's own Spirit is and must be the measure of what we can achieve for Christ.

And I do worry sometimes about the danger of being overprepared for so much of a Christian service.

So prepared that the tension of dependent waiting on God has evaporated.

[9 : 15] And we think that we have it all under control. Now it is, I think, true, that the Christian life, because it is a dependent life, is in many ways a tense life.

It is tense because I am never certain that I have this address, or any other address, under control. It may be that in five minutes, the soul can grind to some kind of embarrassing silence.

I don't know. We have to move, always independence upon God's Spirit, for our words, our thought, our courage, our wisdom to know what to say, at every given point in our own ministry, while these men were talking and discussing.

And I would hope that when Christians do get together, and when they relax, their minds gravitate naturally towards this area of conversation.

There are so many perils here. It's very easy to engage in ecclesiastical gossip, to engage in church politics.

[10 : 37] But these men, as they walked, they were talking about Christ, about His cause, about His person, His word, His teaching.

And He ought to be always at the centre of our own conversation. It seems to me that one of the major differences between the churches in which I lived as a youth, and the churches that we know today, is that in the earlier years, there was very much more talking, and very much more discussion, argument, across the barriers of age, and the barriers also of social rank and distinction. It had many priceless advantages. One was that we learned our own doctrines.

We also learned how to express our own beliefs. And in some measure, I think we learned how to defend our beliefs.

Because, as I remember the church then, there was no quarter given, and no mercy shown to woolly and invalid arguments.

[12 : 02] If you spoke nonsense, you were told it was nonsense, and it was demolished. Now, the advantage of that really is this. That when you go tomorrow back into the world, you've got to speak forth the gospel.

And it's a very hostile world. You'll be tense, you'll be nervous, you won't be among friends. You're going to object, you're going to attack your logic. You're going to be very, very vulnerable. And I fear that if we haven't had the training to express our faith in the shelter of our own Christian fellowships, and to defend our corners in our own fellowships, will foul uneasy prey to the attacks and arguments of the world outside. Though I know talk's not everything. And I know that to some of us, talk comes very, very easily. And at the same time, talk is important. Christ came and talked, talked a great, great deal. And Christ wants us to talk. And the way to acquire that skill is not in the hostile environment outside, but primarily in the comfort and security of our own Christian circle.

[13:36] Well, we're talking and discussing. And then you notice too, how sad and dejected these men were.

It's brought out especially in verse 21. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. And how poignant it is.

And I come back again to the tremendous advantages that these people had had.

They hadn't been so close to the Lord as Peter, James and John.

But they had been part of the wider circle of those who had been with them. Because we're told that there were two of them in verse 13.

[14:42] There weren't just two anybody's. There were two of the disciples. And they had seen him. They'd been exposed to all the impress of his own personality.

They'd seen his behavior, his demeanor. They'd heard the teaching. They'd heard the prayer.

They'd heard his love, his counsel. They'd spoken to him maybe time and again, face to face.

And now all that God is this. We had hoped. The cross had taken everything from them.

Now as we'll see, it wasn't simply an intellectual problem. It was a spiritual problem. You bear in mind that they have in verse 19 a very high view of Christ.

Or they had had a high view. He was a prophet mighty in deed and in world before God and all the people.

[15:50] They had stood before all the authority, the self-attesting authority implicit in the Lord's teaching. And they had seen the miracles, those mighty acts, those deeds that had attested him as God's Messiah.

And yet their hope had gone. We had hoped. So I don't want to be at all pessimistic.

But to what extent do our own faith and hope depend on circumstances?

We're not going to face any trauma comparable to that faced by those disciples, the crucifixion of our Saviour. But there are maybe to be other traumas in our lives, other tests of our faith.

It is a well known fact, on which there has been indeed some comment in private at this conference already. But there is a very distressing falling away from Christ among students after they leave university and college.

[17:15] The reason often is that at college they have the support of their own peer groups, their friends, their Bible studies, above all the Christian unions.

And those things hold them together. A kind of scaffolding that keeps their faith standing. But then when the scaffolding is removed, their faith is so shaky, it diminishes.

It sometimes almost disappears. Or it may be that at the present time we are members of some strong and flourishing Christian congregation.

Strong numerically or at least strong spiritually. There is meaningful preaching. There is strong fellowship.

There is a chance for some Christian service. But maybe one day in God's providence we find ourselves in very different circumstances.

[18:23] A different kind of church. Or no church at all. How then will we survive? Remember Paul's words to the church at Philippi.

Not as soon my presence only, but now much more in my absence. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. Paul was a very perceptive pastor.

And Paul suspected that the zeal and piety and self-discipline of some of those Philippians depended to a large extent upon the force of his own personality.

And he was very, very anxious as to the possible impact of his departure upon their faith and upon their discipleship.

Now as I say, I don't want to be pessimistic. But in a day when there is no see you. There is no strong congregation.

[19 : 32] In a day when there is no strong personality. To hold us and our fellowship together. Will we come to the point that these men came to.

When they were saying, we hoped. That he was the one to redeem Israel. It really isn't a matter of. Whether I judge myself or young people.

It is a matter of reminding ourselves. That the devil prowls about a roaring lion. Seeking whom he may devour.

And I think that all of us must be conscious. That he is far stronger than we are. And far more methodical and far more subtle than we are.

And that therefore, in principle, our faith is in peril. Every day and every hour. These were genuine disciples.

[20 : 34] And yet at this point in their lives, they were saying, We hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. There is a third thing too about these men.

And it's this. Their incredulity. There was in them a stubborn refusal to believe good news.

You see how it is again from verse 22. Some women. And again you see the role played with a woman. Especially important in Luke's Gospel.

These women, he says, of her company. They amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning. And they didn't find this body. And they came back saying, They had seen a mission of angels.

Who said that he was alive. In many ways. You would have thought the panic would have dropped. Because they had had all the evidence of the miracles on his own.

[21 : 43] Teaching his own authority. There had been the Lord's own words about the third day. Because these men in fact, they say, Besides, this is the third day.

And that third day had lodged in their minds. Because the Lord had mentioned the third day. And then the woman had come with her message.

The tomb is empty. We saw angels. And the angels said that he was alive. And still they didn't believe.

They were told sometimes that the resurrection in fact, Was a result of a willful mass hallucination. On the part of the church.

That they were so keen to believe that he had risen. That they in fact convinced themselves that he had come alive again. That the mood of those men was so different.

[22 : 43] In a place of willful belief. We have willful unbelief. They refuse to believe. Now, it may be that these men have a particular kind of temperament.

Certainly their position is very, very strange. That with all the echoes of the Lord's teaching. And the total background to these words.

They don't move on to conclude that the Lord had it felt risen from the dead. But if I may be so bold as to say so. Isn't our own collective psychology.

Our own collective mood. Our collective temperament. Is it not very similar to that of these two men on the road to Emmaus. We are so willing to believe the worst.

And we are so unwilling to believe what is good and joyful and optimistic. When I began to mix with the brethren in England and Wales.

[23 : 54] I used to ask them how things were in their churches. And I can say that almost without exception.

They all said to me greatly encouraged. It was almost a cliché at Leicester. Everybody was greatly encouraged. And then I would ask them how big their church was.

And they would say a dozen or twenty. Greatly encouraged. I would ask three churchmen. With a hundred of a congregation.

Or seven hundred. How they were. And they would talk of a cloudy and dark day. And I began to realise that.

It was to some extent. A matter of temperament. If the Welsh will forgive me. To the Welsh. The bottle is half full. To the free churchmen.

[24 : 52] The bottle is half empty. It's the same bottle. The same amount of water. Now. Is it not true that sometimes. That pessimism.

Injuices paralysis. I was struck often in my own early days. When I was a real minister. And we began to discuss proposals.

To improve things. There was a terrible feeling. Among the eldership. That it didn't matter what you did.

It wouldn't make any difference. Nothing would work. It didn't matter when you met. Or where you met. Or what language you preached.

Or anything else. We had tried all that. And nothing had worked. Now I don't think that mood has gone yet. And I think it's enormously important.

[25 : 51] To crucify it. It has been my privilege. To see. That things do make a difference. And things actually will work. I can recall being told.

In Glasgow. Many years ago. Before I went there to minister. I was at communion. In a certain church. In the Glasgow area. And I pitched my heart out. On Monday evening.

As is my want. With my voice roaring. And my arms flying like windmills. And it was a very satisfying performance.

At the personal level. But when I went back to the manse. We had some discussion. And there was an unanimous belief.

That such preaching. And such a message. Would only interest free church people. Would only appeal to free church people. Only be understood by free church people.

[26 : 51] We were weird. And it wouldn't make any difference. To the world outside. I think it's safe to say. That my arms still flap.

In the same way. And my voice still roars. Equally. Cacophonically. If I can make up a word as I go along. But that in God's providence.

I spend at least half my life. Outside the free church. And sometimes people understand it. And I think it's very important.

For us to realize. That. The message is God's message. It meets the needs of Christians. All over the world.

Whether they're white. Or black. Or yellow. Whatever their background may be. And I think it's important for us to realize.

[27 : 50] That getting our own house in order. Reforming the free church. And praying for the free church. And working at all its problems.

It is meaningful. It is worthwhile. It is worthwhile. Because we can have God's life breathed. Into our congregations.

And I think that as we look at the church today. In the north and in the south. There are great signs of encouragement. I was trying to recall.

My own early days in the Stornoway congregation. And if memory serves. In 1958. I think there were four Christians.

In Stornoway. Who were under the age of 30. Now things are very different today. And while one wants realism. And while one wants a fear of apostasy on our own part.

[28 : 56] I don't want this Emmaus Road mood. That doesn't believe even angels. Because these angels came with the sublimest possible news.

How these men walked with their heads down. And their hearts broken. They were talking of cloudy and dark days. If I may sort of expand on this for a moment.

It does seem to me remarkable. That the late Dr Lloyd-Jones. Lived all his life in London. At least 30 years in London. Lived there amidst great blessing.

And yet all this ministry. He was praying for revival. Now I think. That at the local level.

He was living in the midst of it. And yet. His own assessment of things. Was so pessimistic. And I'm not sure of some of this.

[30 : 01] But in some parts of the church. We are living in the midst of unprecedented blessing. In some areas I think. That we enjoy today.

Days such. As we have never known before. At least since 1900. And men and women sit. In the very middle of that. And talk.

Of a cloudy and dark day. And one of my fears is. That God may judge them for it. And take from them. The blessings. Which they have.

Now there is this. Emmaus Road mood. They're walking together. And they're sad. Despite the fact. That they know. That an angel has told.

Their closest friends. That the Lord has risen from the dead. And the message has still. Not got home to them. Well there are these men on the road. They're discussing the truth.

[31 : 00] They're feeling utterly hopeless. And they are guilty. Of terrible. Stubborn. Incredulity. But then look at the Lord himself.

The Lord draws near. Now at one level you know. There is. A marvelous sovereignty about it. It is Christ himself.

Who takes the initiative. They weren't praying for him to come. They weren't hurrying. They weren't expecting. They weren't hungering and thirsting for his presence.

Indeed his presence. Indeed his presence. Was the very last thing they expected. And suddenly the Lord is with them. So let's see what happens.

The first thing is this. Their eyes are kept from recognizing him.

[32 : 02] Their eyes were kept from identifying the same. The same. Verse 16. Now we know that after the resurrection.

The Lord's body didn't have one consistent form or appearance. We know from Mark's Gospel. That the Lord appeared to disciples in different forms.

He appeared to two of them. We're told in another form. It seems that the Lord was able to assume different aspects and different appearances.

For those who are really interested in theology. It is a point worth pondering. It does seem to me possible.

That the Lord underwent some kind of ascension to his father. In between being seen by Mary Magdalene.

[33 : 07] And being seen by Thomas. He said to Mary. Don't touch me. Don't touch me. Because I haven't yet ascended to my father.

He said to Thomas. Put your hands in my side. It is I think quite possible. That in between.

Something significant had happened. As I say we find that the body varies in its appearance. We find that for example.

The post ascension body. Is very different to the pre ascension. Simple resurrection body. For example.

When Mary who is so important to this whole story. When she sees the Lord. She thinks he is a gardener. When Saul sees him on the Damascus road.

[34 : 08] He doesn't look like any gardener. He says Lord. What will they have me to do? It was the same Christ. The same body.

The resurrection body. But it wasn't a constant in its appearance. And it seems to me to have undergone some almost progressive glory.

Progressive glorification. So that what Mary Magdalene sees. Isn't at all what Saul of Tarsus sees. On the Damascus road.

But it is made very very plain to us here. That the problem wasn't in the Lord's changed appearance. There was a deliberate spiritual act.

On the part of Jesus himself. To prevent them recognizing him. Now. Between the body they had known. Before Calvary.

[35 : 08] And the body he assumed after Calvary. For it to be possible in principle. That they should recognize him. But the Lord prevents them.

From making that identification. Now we aren't told exactly. Why it is. The Lord had his own reasons.

But they aren't disclosed to us. But there they are. They walk the road. The Lord draws near. And their eyes are kept. From recognizing him.

And then you see in verse 25. There is the rebuke. Administered by Christ. Now I was very conscious as I.

Explored the moods. Of these men. Their sadness and incredulity. I was conscious that. You were thinking. That I was being very hard.

[36 : 08] And even being quite fanciful. In my analysis of their condition. Maybe expecting too much of them. After all. The Lord had been crucified. Now you see the Saviour.

Absolutely fair and just. Conscious of every. Mitigating circumstance. Knowing the whole truth.

And yet you see what he says to them. Fools. And slow of heart. To believe. All. That the prophets have spoken.

He doesn't at all assume. That it's natural. That people have been through. They've been through. Would react as they reacted.

There is a moral problem. They're fools. And they are slow. Of heart. To believe. They refused. [37 : 07] To be persuaded. By the message. Brought by the woman. They were so foolish. That they didn't believe the prophets. The Lord is saying to them.

That if they were sound in their minds. Not fools. If they were quick to believe. Then there was enough.

In the Old Testament. To have led them to believe the message. Brought by the woman. From the angels. And it is interesting to notice.

Where the Lord puts it precisely. Slow to believe. All. That the prophets have spoken. They believed some of it.

Just as we believe. Some of the scriptures. And that surely again. Is a point of practical contact. Between us and the men.

[38 : 05] On the road to Emmaus. That all of us are blind spots. With regard to the bible. Bits we refuse to believe. And refuse to obey.

And bits that we argue about. As if their meaning were dubious. For as it is utterly. And totally plain. How many of us really.

Is prepared. To abide. By the whole counsel of God. To let God's word regulate. Every area of life. What I believe. The way I live. The way I feel. My moods. My ambitions. The way I work. My career. The whole of the bible.

Becoming. Our canon. These people had. A partial commitment. And a partial response. To the word of God. And then.

[39 : 05] Christ takes these two poor souls. To whom he had given this rebuke. They still don't know who he was. And he gives. Them. A lesson in theology.

Was it not necessary. Says in verse 26. For Messiah to suffer these things. And to enter into his glory. He speaks of.

A two-fold necessity. The necessity first of all. Of his sufferings. But the necessity also. Of his glorification. Let's ponder both of those.

Just briefly. First. The necessity. Of Messiah's sufferings. Necessary because the Old Testament had predicted them.

The prophets were full. Of the sufferings of the Savior. The Psalms. 22 and 69. Isaiah. Zechariah. All of these spoke. Of the suffering. Of the Savior himself. And that prediction.

[40 : 07] Those predictions. Made a suffering. Necessary. And inevitable. But necessary also. In the higher. And indeed in the highest sense. That those sufferings were indispensable.

To his people's salvation. There was no way. That the church could be saved from the death. Of the suffering. Of the suffering. Of the Savior himself. And that prediction. Those predictions. That the suffering. That the suffering. Necessary. Necessary. Necessary. That the church could be saved from the curse.

Except by Christ. Becoming. A curse for us. If you go back to Eden. Man was expelled from the garden.

And man was barred from the garden. By a flaming sword. That turned every way. To guard the access. To the tree of life.

[41 : 09] And the Christ who had to. Bring man back to God. Could only do so. By encountering. That flaming sword. By himself.

Tasting. The curse. In my place. Condemned. He stood. That's why. It's worth asking yourselves. At the most urgent level. Were you there. Were you there. When they crucified. My Lord. Were you there. When they. Hung him.

On the tree. Christ. Must. Suffer. The wages of sin. The death. Which was. As people's due. He must. Tasted.

He became. A curse. For us. But there is a third. Necessity. To the suffering. It's foretold. It is. Integral to the atonement. And thirdly. It was essential.

[42 : 04] That the Lord. Should be compassionate. Sympathetic. And capable. Of fellow. Feeling. You must have. Compassion. On the weak. And on the suffering. Now it is a remarkable fact.

That the spirit. To the flesh. It's foretold. It is. Integral to the atonement. And thirdly. It was essential. That the Lord. Should be compassionate.

Sympathetic. And capable. Of fellow. Feeling. You must have. Compassion. On the weak. And on the suffering. But although we can learn a lot from books and a lot from observation, compassion can be learned only by experience.

That's one great reason why the captain of our salvation was made perfect through suffering. He has been in our physical pain, in our emotional pain, in our spiritual pain. He understands these in their extreme forms and therefore he is touched. He knows how we feel.

Now it is a great comfort to God's afflicted Church in many parts of the world today that, to quote John Duncan, the dust of the earth is at the right hand of the Majesty on High.

[43 : 44] But it's also important for you and me to realise that if God is going to use us to bring comfort to others, we too must be taught compassion the only way that men and women can be taught compassion. And that is by your own experience.

And I think that there are many episodes in life, there are many areas that God asks us to others which make sense only within that context.

The experiences which, as we endure them, seem to be as barren as they are unintelligible. For the end of the day, they have taught us. They have taught us compassion.

God is thereby helping us to comfort others with the comfort wherewith we have comforted ourselves. God teaches us to be judgmental.

God teaches us to be judgmental by bringing us through pain that we find unendurable, loneliness and temptation that we find well nigh unsupportable. And he's doing it in order to teach us to be judgmental.

[45 : 19] God is doing it in order to be judgmental. And he's doing it in order to teach us how to comfort those in need. It's a sure sign, I think, of lack of compassion, lack of self-knowledge, that people are condemnatory and judgmental of other human beings.

There is a fine word in Galatians 6 where Paul asks us to restore the brother who falls. If you catch somebody overtaken by a fault, restore him in a spirit of meekness.

Where does that meekness come from? From this he says, considering thyself. You know yourself. You know how you behaved in similar situations. I'm sometimes struck, indeed often struck, by the way that Christian teachers and pastors, leaders of all kinds and counsellors, how ashamed they seem to be of their own weaknesses.

Now it seems to me that that is a false perspective. I've come to the point where I regard my weaknesses as part of my ministry.

[46 : 55] Something almost to share. And something without which I might be even more useless than I am. I think that sometimes it's good for young Christians to see the older ones cracking, creaking, sweating, straining.

Not quite supermen and superwomen able to handle it. A very wise American who wasn't finally wise at the time said, One of my brothers is a minister and the other is a human being.

And I think it's enormously important for us to carry our humanity with us into our own form of service. And that means that we are seen often struggling.

Unseen, unable to handle things. When the Lord comes and rebukes those men, the Lord comes and teaches them that his suffering was necessary.

And its consequence today for us is that he knows how we feel. For he remembers we are dust.

[48 : 16] And he, our frame, well knows. In how many hospitals over this land today does Christ see his own children in the last moments of their earthly lives tasting death?

And to these people there is no comfort but. Jesus understands. Because he tested it too.

But then you know it wasn't only of his suffering he spoke. There was another must, the must of the glory enter into his glory.

The glory of the resurrection body. The glory of his session at the right hand of the majesty. The glory of his cosmic supremacy and universal sovereignty.

That too was a must. We have a category in theology which we define as the necessity of the atonement.

[49 : 35] We should have one too, the necessity of the glorification. Have you ever pondered why the glorification was necessary?

It was necessary first because of who he was. It was not possible that death could hold the Son of God. It was possible that he could taste it but it was not possible that death should have an unqualified and final triumph over the Lord Jesus Christ. Because of who he was he breaks the

fetters of death. His person is too glorious to be contained by death. But there is another element in it too and it is this. His glorification was essential for our salvation.

And I'm almost out of my depth on this but let me explore it for a moment with you. There is a magnificent verse in John 17 in which the Lord says this to us.

Glorify thy Son, Give him authority over all flesh that he may give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. Now you see the logic. He can only give the eternal life because he has the authority over all flesh.

How important that is. It is the risen Christ who commissions the church. Go. It is the risen Christ he is present with the church. It is the risen Christ that he opened the heart of Lydia.

[51 : 45] It is the risen Christ that he poured forth the Spirit at Pentecost. Without his glorification, without his authority, our mission is doomed.

Hearts won't be opened, the Spirit won't be given, eternal life won't be imparted. The risen Christ is still active as Savior.

Let me put it to you more dynamically. You have often been told that the book of Acts ought to be called not the Acts of the Apostles but the Acts of the Holy Spirit.

Now that is an interesting truth, an arresting truth, but it's only two-thirds of the truth. The real truth in the Lucan perspective on Acts is that the book is about the Acts of the risen Savior.

Pentecost isn't the Spirit's action. Pentecost is Jesus' action. The conversion of Lydia isn't the Spirit's action, it's Jesus' action.

[53 : 04] The conversion of Saul of Tarsus is the risen Lord who stands on the Damascus road like a solid wall between Paul and his intentions. The Acts of the risen Jesus.

So in that sense, his glorification is essential to our salvation. But there are even more moving words in John 17, John 14.

Let not your heart be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many rooms. I go to prepare a place for you.

And if I go, I will come again and receive you to myself. The necessity of the glory.

Because Jesus is going to prepare a place for us. If he hadn't gone, it wouldn't have been prepared.

[54 : 20] Now, this is your book, your Bible. You're supposed to be able to understand it just as I'm supposed to be able to do so myself. Tisn't Theology, simple Bible study.

You remember the Lord says, inherit the kingdom prepared before the foundation of the world.

I go to prepare a place for you. The place had been prepared from before the foundation of the world.

What was the one thing that was lacking? Lacking ever since the foundation of the world. There was only one thing lacking.

And that was the physical presence of Christ. Every word in that matters. Not the presence of Christ.

[55 : 23] Because he had been there. But his physical presence. The lamb wasn't in the middle of the throne until the ascension.

And it was in that one fact that the preparation had to lie. I go to prepare a place for you by simply being there.

That's all that's lacking. The glory of God enlightenment. And the lamb is the light thereof.

You remember how Mrs. Cusson sang, Glory, glory dwelleth in Immanuel's land.

The lamb is all the glory of Immanuel's land. The lamb is in the midst of the throne. And that is something of fundamental consequence to God's church.

[56 : 25] Not only because he is at the heart of the sovereignty. But because he is at the heart, he is the focal point of his people's vision.

And if you're looking at the throne as an engrossing object, then in the very midst of that throne, there is Jesus.

One of the moralist elements in the symbolism of Revelation, the book of Revelation, is a description of New Jerusalem the book of Revelation, is a description of the book of Revelation.

It is as long as it is high as it is broad. The height and the length and the breadth of it are equal. It is an allusion to the Old Testament Holy of Holies, which was also a perfect cube.

And there was no temple in it. Same as in heaven there is no Sabbath, in heaven there is no Lord's Supper. So in heaven there is no temple.

[57 : 37] And that is because it is all temple. And because it's all Lord's Supper.

And because it's all Lord's Day, it's one great Sabbath. Where Jesus is, tis heaven there. He must be glorified.

I go to prepare a place for you. And I will come again and receive you to myself. A great picture of the Lord standing on the threshold of the house of many rooms, waiting to welcome his own people. He must enter into his glory. Well he goes on from that to interpret to them in all the scriptures and he says, the things concerning himself.

Now I think that my time is more or less gone. But just to tie up a few of the more interesting points which remain. The Lord enters into the house that those men were making for, presumably the home of one of the two of them.

[58 : 55] And he takes a meal with them. It wasn't a Lord's Supper. It was an ordinary meal. But as he says the grace breaks the bread, their eyes are opened and they suddenly know who he is.

And as suddenly he vanishes. Again that body appears to have had a whole new range of physical properties with which we are totally unfamiliar.

And they are in these marvelous words of recollection. Their hearts burning within them.

And they recall that. Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures? It's an interesting thing that they don't seem to have been aware of it at the time.

And I come back again to that almost as a problem. Because so often we're going through times of great privilege.

[60 : 09] These men didn't know what a historic and glorious moment it was. They didn't even know how good they were feeling. And that's a remarkable thing.

And maybe in some of you churches today, you're having the same experience. You're going through something historic and something glorious. And you're enjoying it hugely.

And maybe you're not even aware of it. Their hearts were burning within them. There was some, you see, the emotional side. I've emphasized the word, the scriptures, the witness, the verbalization and so on.

But there were feelings too. Their hearts were burning within them. John Wesley remembered when he found peace with God after years of preaching.

Remember the experience he wrote afterwards. I felt my heart strangely warmed. Maybe all of us have known special moments of that kind.

[61 : 14] And yet it's interesting to notice, is it not, what it was that in their judgment had caused the feelings. He talked to us on the road and he opened to us the scriptures.

Now it is my hope for the free church that we will retain and cling to that combination of burning hearts and open scriptures.

And I read to us on the road and the Bible. I read to a day when hearts will burn unrelated to the Bible. I read to a day when we shall know the Bible and our hearts not burn within us.

It is a combination of knowledge and emotion that is so glorious. Then you know even the remaining details are so intriguing.

They arose that same hour and they turned to Jerusalem. They were so much more than the Bible. Well, so what? Well, it was at least seven miles back.

[62 : 27] They'd walked seven, another seven. In fact, according to some it was very much further, but I think that seven is the right figure.

It was a long, long journey. But these were new men. They had a message. They couldn't hold it. They couldn't contain it. They were on the road like fools.

Many folk would have thought they were fools. In the revivals which this land knew, men were often fools. They sang like fools.

They walked like fools. They went to meetings like fools. Meeting after meeting like fools. They were open and frank like fools.

Well, these men went off seven miles back into town. Because they couldn't contain the message. They found the eleven gathered together.

[63 : 34] Now, to get your perspective right, bear one thing in mind. All this has happened in one day. It's still Easter. It's still Resurrection Day.

The very same day that Mary Magdalene saw and Peter. They're still there gathered together. They found the eleven gathered together. And those who were with them.

And they were going to tell them about the man on the road. But they didn't have time to. They were interrupted. They said, The Lord has risen indeed.

And has appeared to Simon. Each longing to tell the other. You know, sometimes, witness isn't simply a matter of witnessing to non-Christians.

We witness to one another too. I love to think of Isaiah 6. And those seraphim. Who were crying, Holy, Holy, Holy.

[64 : 43] They weren't evangelising. Or speaking to unconverted folk. They were telling each other. And you keep on telling each other too. About the Lord.

As those disciples did. Each getting his word in first. Or trying to. And then they told what had happened on the road. And how he was known to them in the breaking of bread.

And he said, Well, I want to close on this note. I have survived my journey to this point. These men. They had a message.

And they went out with it. They couldn't hold it. They had a testimony. A witness. A witness to a recent saviour. And I'm going to ask.

What I asked. Almost uncanonically last evening. Whom shall I send.

[65 : 46] And who will go for us. The challenge again. Of the message itself. Of the need for men to articulate it.

A responsibility born by every single one of us. And I want us to face it. But the responsibility too. That God requires. The special messengers. Who will give themselves wholly. To the word of God. And to prayer.

And I believe that all of us are called today. Ladies and gentlemen. We're all called.

To hear God's question. Who will go for us. Says Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And shall our hearts say.

[66 : 52] Here am I. Send me. And then maybe the Lord will tell us. Thanks for offering. But you're too old.

Or you're too mute. Or too shy. Or too illiterate. Or too useful somewhere else. But how will we know if we never offer.

The real question is whether you and I are at the Lord's disposal. Which to me means being at the church's disposal. It's a question of the message itself.

The Lord is risen indeed. Our hearts burn within us. Does that message itself burn within us?

To our hearts say. Ye that fear God. Come. Here. I'll tell. What he did.

[68 : 01] For my soul. I don't believe that God wants all of you at all. In full time Christian service. But I believe.

That God wants you all to be on call. May he bless his word to us. Shall we briefly pray? O Lord we ask thee in thy grace.

To bless thy word to our souls. As our hearts interact with the hearts of those men. Of two thousand years ago.

As we stand with them. And hear thy message. The Lord is risen indeed. The whole world looks different.

We ourselves feel different. The Lord help us to adjust our priorities. In the light of this most important of all facts.

[69 : 11] To be available to thee. And available for thee. For Jesus sake. Amen.