

**Reading:** Luke 24:13-35

**Theme:** The HEART at Easter

What thoughts and feelings would have gone through our hearts and minds if we were disciples, followers of the Lord Jesus Christ that first Easter. We see a glimpse of this from the two disciples in the passage read. There is much we can learn from them about the great truths of Jesus' resurrection, but the greatest is that it deeply affected their lives - their hearts burned within them (v32) The word "*heart*" used here means their innermost beings, the centre of their personality, the real them - their innermost motives and desires. To be honest, the Easter story is of no value unless it affects **our** hearts. It is more than a nice tale told; it is true and needs to affect us personally - that the Son of God who died to save us, is really alive - the risen conqueror over death and can be known as our own personal Saviour and Friend.

The resurrection is at the heart of Christianity and it must affect our hearts too. I want us to use the word HEART to take my headings off concerning this passage - five headings all brief and short used between songs:

### **1. Hopelessness**

The two disciples were hopeless - had no hope and even confused v21 "*had hoped*". They felt they once had a

hope, but all the events of the betrayal and crucifixion then happened. Yet the women brought news that morning of the empty tomb, a vision of angels and some of the disciples went and found the tomb empty, but they didn't see Jesus. Made them despair and more confused!

So, they left Jerusalem and were going to Emmaus - some 8 miles from Jerusalem. As they went, they were discussing everything that had happened. The word used for discussion here means *"to throw in turn, to throw back and forth"*. One said one thing and then the other would say "Ah but..." and "what about..." and "but..." - things Jesus had said and done, the hope they had had, their confusion or if the morning's news was true...

Their actions show they felt hopeless and confused - because they left town, did not stay around to see if those things were true; - if they'd believed they were true, they would have stayed. They felt hopeless as they faced a dark situation! It may sound like the confusing times we have had or are in! Many around us could feel life is a waste of time - no real hope, perhaps at one time they had dreams, loved someone and now things have gone wrong and life is hopeless and utterly confusing. Life can be like that - one crisis after another, no real light, no hope, maybe nothing but old age, loneliness,

illness and death to look forward to and the thought of death brings an even greater note of hopelessness.

The Easter truths transformed these 2 disciples' situation of hopelessness and continues to do so ever since in every life that has realised the power of the truth of Easter. This morning, if you are in a hopeless situation, then realise there is hope and it centres on the risen Lord Jesus Christ. So, listen on.

These 2 disciples in their hopelessness and confused discussions are joined by a stranger and He questioned them why they were so sad. They poured out their confusion and this led to:

## **2. Explanation**

The two disciples told their situation to the right One, for He could easily and readily give them answers. He was the risen Lord Jesus, the One they wanted, the One they had so many questions about and yet He, in His love and wisdom, kept them from recognising Him at that time.

You may have many questions concerning Jesus and Christianity. Realise that Jesus himself could be very close to you and ready to deal with your questions, even this morning. Yet you, like the disciples, are to use the ordinary means of listening, questioning, seeing what is

written in God's word, the Bible. Christianity doesn't dismiss honest questions and doubts. Christianity welcomes such and will withstand questions asked because the enquirer really wants to know the truth. We are to use all means we can to draw near to God and He will draw near to us - perhaps not in an instant, but God will answer our questions, deal with our fears and doubts, will cause our hearts to say "*Yes this is real and true!*" Are we prepared to seek and listen to the answers?  
***[Books and Bibles, NT available on table]***

The Lord Jesus drew near to the 2 disciples in their hopelessness and confusion. He heard them talking about these things and then told them off in verse 25. Literally "*You fools*". We sometimes need that - to be told off, to see what we should have seen all along! Jesus told them off for not believing what had been written in God's word and He answered them from the word of God.

It is so easy to look for this or that and fail to listen to God as He has spoken so clearly in the Bible. If you are not listening to or believing God's word then you are foolish, a fool - according to the Lord Jesus!

The Lord Jesus began to explain to them that the Christ - the Anointed One from God, had to suffer such things and enter into His glory. Jesus did so from OT - Moses

and all the Prophets. What a Bible survey as they walked along the road to Emmaus. It is never out of place to talk of the things of God and the Lord Jesus can deal with our questions in the most unlikely of places and not just confined to a church building, its car park or a meeting!

These disciples were given an explanation and as Jesus did so, they felt it true and real as this stranger spoke. They wanted to know more and He's invited in to where they were living/staying. We are to make the most of times to learn of Jesus and try to learn more as we are able to do so. Here in their home, the risen Lord Jesus was welcomed, even though unrecognised. Are we willing to welcome the Lord Jesus to our lives, to be prepared to have Him with us in the ordinary things of life? That's what these disciples did and they got more than they expected from this wise stranger:

### **3. Awareness**

As they ate, Jesus give thanks for the bread, then "*their eyes were opened and they recognised him*" - not that they had been walking about blind or with eyes shut, but in their understanding they suddenly recognised who this was, were aware that the One who'd been speaking to them about the Christ, was the Christ Himself - the risen, living Lord Jesus and all the things that had caused them confusion and hopelessness, suddenly disappeared

and they realised Jesus had risen from the dead, was really alive and their hopeless situation was then full of hope - in place of their sorrow and confusion, they then had joy and clarity.

An awareness, a realisation of who Jesus really is and what He has done for us to be our Saviour, is a tremendous thing. It transforms our lives - not just makes us feel good, but brings us to own Him as our own personal Saviour - this Jesus is not just out there somewhere, someone to pray to at times of trouble, but is real, can be known in a close and personal way in our lives. He is not to be seen as some fantasy figure like Superman, or just as some historical figure like Henry VIII, but can be known and loved and makes a difference in our lives in every day we will have.

These disciples were affected by this awareness. Many here in this church have been affected by this awareness too - ask us! We see something of the effect this awareness made on them in the next two points:

#### **4. Returning**

Even though they've not had supper and it was now dark, these two returned to Jerusalem - back to the place where their hopelessness and confusion began. As they returned - to what had seemed such a terrible and dark place before, they did so with joy and gladness! Now it

was a place of joy for it was the place the Christ had suffered **and had risen** - as God's word had said. Now each street, each event took on a new significance. The place of apparent defeat was recognised as the place of greatest triumph and victory.

Having the Lord Jesus as our own Saviour is to make such a difference in our lives, in the way we live, in the way we view things and even those bad and dark times and places can be viewed in a way we would not have thought possible before. They can be seen in a different light and not retain their horror and sadness. Yes, they will still affect us, but we can overcome, by God's help, their crippling effects on and in our lives. These disciples, the same ones who couldn't wait to get away from Jerusalem, now couldn't wait to return and return they did - not to sightsee, but we see them:

## **5. Telling**

They told the news that the Lord Jesus had risen from the dead and they'd seen Him! They told other frightened ones the great news and encouragement that Jesus had risen, how He had spoken to them, shown them from the word of God that He had to suffer, probably told of the rebuke He'd also given them! They were willing to own that rebuke years later to Dr Luke as he interviewed them and is how we get these details.

They spoke of their burning hearts and how they recognised Him and became aware this was their Jesus.

When we come to know the Lord Jesus as our Saviour, we are to tell others by our lives and our lips (words), that He is real and alive. We are to tell other Christians and encourage them; we are to tell others who yet don't know Him, so they can come to know this wonderful living Saviour for themselves and they too can know His love and care.

This Easter, our own hearts need to be affected by the truth of the Easter narrative, because at the heart of the Easter narrative is risen living Saviour who is able to deal with our hearts. To know Him will make such a difference in our lives. This Easter may we all have hearts and lives that love and know this Saviour and tell of Him by all we do and all we say. Then we too will be those who, all year through, will have burning hearts full of love for this Saviour who has done so much for us and we'll tell of Him who is alive forever and is able to save us and care for us.