

NOTES for PREACHING

Doug Beacham | 3rd Sunday of Easter

Introduction

As a reminder, the texts we will review from now to Pentecost are as follows:

Sunday, April 26: Luke 24:28-43.

Sunday, May 3: John 20:19-31.

Sunday, May 10: John 21:1-14.

Sunday, May 17: John 21:15-25.

Sunday, May 24: Ascension Sunday, Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 1:4-11

Sunday, May 31: Pentecost Sunday, Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:1-4.

New Testament Texts

Luke 24:28-43 – Key Points

1. Remember that the preceding passage from Luke 24 was discussed in the notes for April 19. The key point to remember from that passage is in verses 25-27, which set the stage for what occurred in the verses we are considering now.
2. To restate the emphasis of 24:25-27, the focus was on:
 - a. “Believe in all that the prophets have spoken.”
 - b. “Ought not the Christ (the Messiah) to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?”
 - c. “Beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He (Jesus) expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”
3. The three statements from 24:25-27 clearly root Jesus within the history of God’s covenant promises and purposes to Israel. This begins with the call of Abraham (Genesis 12, 15) and God’s desire for a person, and people, through whom God can bless the world with redemption.
4. Notice that Luke begins with Zacharias’s prophecy that in the birth of his son, John, and the promise of John as the forerunner to the Messiah, that God “has visited and redeemed His people” (1:69). The connections to Abraham and the Davidic promise dominate this prophecy. Notice that in 24:21 the theme of “redeem Israel” is mentioned again.ⁱ I find it interesting that in both instances the senses are impaired due to some measure of unbelief: Zacharias could not speak and the two on the road to Emmaus cannot see that it is Jesus with them. Speech and vision are impacted. We will return to the vision component a little later.

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5. The Old Testament story which runs from Genesis to the Messiah is tied together in Moses (the Law, Torah), the prophets, and the writings (especially Psalms). N.T. Wright has a great phrase for this: “the single-plan-of-God-through-Israel-for-the-world.”ⁱⁱ Wrights emphasis is to combat the idea that there are two plans of God in the Bible, one for Israel and another for the Gentiles. No, God’s plan from eternity, from “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,” (1 Peter 1:20; Revelation 13:8), was that through faith, righteousness would enter the world and be the agency through which the world would be put back into its God-created righteous order. Jesus, as the Messiah of Israel, is the One who has fulfilled Israel’s purpose. That purpose was begun in Abram’s faith response to the promises of God (Genesis), found community expression in the Exodus from bondage and the establishment of the divine will through the Law of Moses, and through the prophetic witness to that will (especially in light of Deuteronomy), focused on the call for Israel as a people to live in fulfillment of her corporate destiny. Though Israel failed, her failure actually led to the revelation and manifestation of the Son of God, born under the Law (Galatians 4:4), and His obedient suffering (Isaiah 53) through which righteousness came to Jew and Gentile alike.
6. All of the above is important as the Emmaus Road incident continues to unfold in Luke 24:28ff. The village in 24:28 is presumed to be Emmaus as it is mentioned in 24:13 and was about 7 miles from Jerusalem. The exact location of Emmaus is unknown, though it is suggested that it was about 7 miles west of Jerusalem, possibly near the city of Mozah.ⁱⁱⁱ
7. Regardless of the location, keep in mind that Jesus had many other followers (disciples) who were not part of the Twelve. As Jesus walked with these two people, “their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him” (24:16). Yet, in Leon Morris’s memorable line, “Jesus began a systematic Bible study” with them!^{iv} When they arrived at their destination, Jesus acted as if He was not going to stop. Luke 24:29 is strong language, “they constrained” Jesus to stay with them, with this appeal/argument, “Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.”^v Due to the dangers of robbers, wild animals, etc. as one walked at night, it was a natural appeal for the disciples to make to the still unknown person with them.
8. As they entered the house and began dinner, Jesus assumed a role that usually belonged to the head of the house, “He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them” (24:30). Why would this act have been the act of revelation? Their eyes were opened and they knew Him in this act (24:31). They were not present the previous Passover night when He instituted the Passover meal as “in remembrance of Me” (Luke 22:19). But no doubt they were with Jesus at other meals, and perhaps earlier Passover meals.

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9. Earlier I mentioned their eyes being restrained then opened. It's an important aspect of thinking about the nature of revelation of spiritual truth.
10. Jesus disappeared from the table setting once He was recognized. But instead of panic, the two disciples declared their amazement at His words to them on the road, "Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?" (24:32). Let's take a look at this verse a little more closely:
 - a. "Burn" is from *kaio*. Cleon Rogers Jr. mentions that the construction emphasized the "continuance of the emotion" expressed in "hearts burning."^{vi} Notice that it was not simply individual hearts burning but "within us." They heard together and experienced the Lord's grace together.
 - b. They also recognized that their hearts burned "while He opened the Scriptures." The Scriptures were "all the Scriptures" of 24:27 from Moses to the Prophets. The word "opened" is from the verb *anoigo* "to open," with the preposition *dia* and means to thoroughly open, to fully reveal.
11. Interestingly, the two disciples began the journey back to Jerusalem though it was dark. The normal concerns they had about safety at night were pushed aside in light of the personal revelation that Jesus really was alive (24:33ff)! Upon returning – think again of a journey of a few hours – they came to the eleven and others and told them, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon." The reference to Simon Peter was a way of confirming what they expressed in 24:24; clearly a reference to 24:12 where Luke specified that Simon Peter went to the empty tomb. This also corresponds to Paul's testimony in 1 Corinthians 15:5 that the risen Lord appeared to Cephas (Simon Peter).
12. This portion of the narrative concludes with a reference to Jesus being known "in the breaking of bread" (24:35). Though the cup is not mentioned, there are clear overtones to the spiritual realities of God's people eating, fellowshiping, together at table.
13. Luke 24:36-43 focused on two aspects of the presence of the Risen Lord:
 - a. Whenever Jesus is present, the reality of His Shalom, His peace, is manifest. There is an thought-provoking connection between the disciples' response of terror and fright (24:37), to Jesus' words of Peace, and how they responded on the Sea of Galilee as recorded by Mark (4:39-41). There Jesus spoke "Shalom" to the storm and it ceased. The response of the disciples is of fear. Later in Mark 6:49 when Jesus walked on the water to them, they thought He was a ghost and were fearful.
 - b. Jesus addressed the disciples' troubled and doubting response to His presence. There is something genuine about the disciples responded with doubt and fear to the actual presence of a person who was crucified, dead, buried, and risen from the grave.

- c. The second major aspect is that Jesus addressed the disciples' fears by revealing Himself more fully to them. He showed them the wounds of the Cross. By doing so He introduced them to the mystery of the new creation and the triumph over death in the resurrection. He, and in that day we, shall be more than bodiless spirits. We will have a body like that of Jesus in His resurrection!

Preaching Thoughts

1. While it may seem apparent to you that the Old and New Testaments have an inner connection that flows through history and revelation, it is important that Christians and the church be reminded that the Old Testament was the Bible of the first Christians. We do not disregard the Old Testament – as Marcion (c. 85 – c. 160) did, claiming that the God of the OT is not the God revealed in the NT. Nor do we claim that since Jesus fulfilled the Torah and Prophets, we have no need of the Old Testament. The Old Testament, viewed through the lens of the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, remains an inspired resource for us.
2. A primary preaching point of this part of Luke 24 is how the Holy Spirit opens our eyes to Jesus. As we reflect on how people are dealing with doubts and fear related to the novel coronavirus (or any other issue), we need to think about the process described in Luke 24 on how these two disciples came to recognize the presence of Jesus. Often the Lord is with us and we do not know it. But the time comes when we are able to look back and acknowledge we were not alone.
3. It is important to affirm that it was primarily through Scripture that Jesus came to be known to these disciples. This is why the preaching and teaching of the Word of God is so important. As Spirit-filled people, we certainly affirm forms of revelation described in the Bible: visions, dreams, prophecies, where the Lord reveals Himself to us. But it is imperative that we establish ourselves and others firmly in the knowledge of the Bible as the primary mechanism of revelation in our lives.
4. From a preaching standpoint, the phrase in Luke 24:31 – “their eyes were opened” – could be a powerful way of speaking about what we are learning and discovering through the unusual times in which we live.
5. The phrase in 24:32 – “our hearts burned” – points to a Holy Fire of the Spirit doing the Spirit's work of cleansing, purifying, and revealing.
6. Finally, the themes of eating in this passage are too numerous to not draw some conclusions. If you have not seen the video titled “Come to the Table,” which is available at <https://iphc.org/discipleship/videos/>, take time to watch it this week. It calls us to the implications of gathering at what we call the Lord's Supper, as well as the spiritual impact of what occurs when we gather at a table to eat together.

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7. As you start to think about coming back to services in your regular building, you may want to start thinking about how you will celebrate that reunion, and the importance of a corporate meal of fellowship, a meal commemorating the death and life of Jesus.

ⁱ This connection was made by Richard Hays in *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*.

ⁱⁱ This is particularly noted in Wright's *Justification: God's Plan & Paul's Vision* (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2009). A broad study of these issues, which includes overviews of Wright's massive studies, is found in *The New Testament in Its World: An Introduction to the History, Literature, and Theology of the First Christians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2019). This is co-authored by Michael F. Bird.

ⁱⁱⁱ See Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, Ill: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 254. Also, Yahanan Aharoni, et al, *The MacMillan Bible Atlas* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1993 Third Edition), p. 177.

^{iv} Leon Morris, *Luke: Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988 revised) p. 370.

^v One cannot help but think of the older hymn, *Abide with Me, tis eventide* (https://hymnary.org/text/abide_with_me_tis_eventide).

^{vi} Rogers, *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament*, p. 173.