

From Suffering to Glory

Isa 53:3-8; Luke 24:25-27, 44-47

SS Lesson for 04/27/2014

Devotional Scripture: Matt 16:21

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CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM STEVEN COLE

1. We all face times when we are disappointed with God.

- (1). We may be disappointed with God because our expectations do not match His sovereign purpose.
- (2). We may be disappointed with God because He has closed our eyes from seeing the truth about Jesus.
- (3). We may be disappointed with God because we have foolishly focused on part of His Word, but not the whole.
- (4). We may be disappointed with God because we are slow of heart to believe His Word.

2. When we are disappointed with God, we need to join with His people in seeking the risen Savior through faith in His Word.

- (1). Join with the Lord's people.
- (2). Seek the risen Savior.
- (3). Seek the risen Savior in His Word.
- (4). Seek the risen Savior in His Word through faith.
- (5). Keep a teachable heart when the Lord rebukes you.
- (6). Entreat the Lord to stay with you.
- (7). When the spiritual highs end, go on in faith, in the Word, and in fellowship with other believers.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE NIV STANDARD LESSON COMMENTARY

PRACTICAL POINTS FROM THE BIBLE EXPOSITOR AND ILLUMINATOR

Introduction

Overview and Approach to Lesson

The lesson reviews how Jesus went **From Suffering to Glory**. The **study's aim** is to examine and study how the Old Testament prophecies specifically foretold Jesus' death and resurrection. The **study's application** is to understand that since Jesus is the Messiah of the Old Testament who died and rose again, we can trust Him for our salvation (From the Bible Expositor and Illuminator).

Key Verse: *Luke 24:27*

27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

Two of Jesus' followers were walking to Emmaus, which is about seven miles (northwest) from Jerusalem. They were talking... about the things that had happened, that is, the report that Jesus had been resurrected (vv. 19-24). When Jesus joined them, they did not recognize Him. When Jesus asked them to tell Him what they were discussing, the men related the view about Jesus that most of the nation believed at that time. The men, one of whom was Cleopas, said they were talking about Jesus of Nazareth. Cleopas commented that their fellow companion must be the only one living in all of Jerusalem who did not know what had happened. By this question Luke got across the point that Jesus' ministry and death were known to everyone in the city and in most of the nation. The entire nation was responsible to accept the Messiah. The two men added that the chief priests and our rulers handed Him over to... death. Along with many others these two men thought that Jesus was the One who was going to redeem Israel, that is, be the Messiah and bring in the kingdom (cf. Simeon's words in 2:30 and Anna's in 2:38). They even related that they had heard a report of the Resurrection directly from some... women. But despite all this, their faces were downcast (24:17). Jesus chided them for not understanding and believing. He explained from Moses and all the Prophets what had been said about Him. He implied that these disciples should have understood from the Old Testament what had happened. It was not until after Jesus had broken bread with them that their eyes were opened and they recognized Him. Their experience with Jesus caused them to hurry back to Jerusalem (seven miles) and affirm the Resurrection to the Eleven and others who were meeting together. The two men now acknowledged the truth of the reports about Jesus' resurrection for they had recognized Him themselves. The disciples who were meeting together now had at least three reports of the Resurrection: the women, Peter, and Cleopas and his companion. But still they did not understand (cf. v. 38).

Approach to the Major Outlines in Lesson

The concept of the major outline of the lesson came from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary and from the points revealed by the study of the Scriptural text.

| Verse | Phrase | Commentary |
|------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Isa 53:6 | And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. | Suffering for Mankind |
| Luke 24:26 | Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory | Prophesied to Suffer |
| Luke 24:45 | And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures | Enlightenment of Understanding |

Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

In the business world, there is a phenomenon called scapegoating. This happens when an employee leaves a company; problems are then blamed on the departed one for a few months. (This can happen with churches too.) The scapegoat concept comes from the Bible: on the annual Day of Atonement, the high priest was to lay his hands on the head of a goat, confess the sins of the people, then release the goat into the wilderness to be the scapegoat ("escape goat") that took away the sins of the people. This ritual therefore was understood to be a transfer of the people's sins to the goat (Leviticus 16:7-10, 20-22). This idea of transfer of guilt for sins is at the heart of the sacrificial system used by the Israelites. There were many kinds of sacrifices, but the most potent were those that involved killing an animal by shedding its blood. For example, a goat was to be killed on the Day of Atonement (before the other goat, the scapegoat, was released into the wilderness), and its blood used in an atonement ritual (Leviticus 16:15-19). The concepts of transfer of guilt and sacrificial shedding of blood are keys to understanding the atoning effect of Jesus' death. Today's lesson demonstrates that the idea of the sacrificial death for God's chosen one was prophesied over 700 years before it happened. While the early chapters of Isaiah celebrate Immanuel, the special child to be given as a sign of God's presence (Isaiah 7:14; 8:8; 9:6), the latter half of the book presents the Messiah as the servant, the one designated for a special ministry for the Lord (see Isaiah 42:1-4; 50:10; etc.). The most detailed prophecies about the role of the servant of the Lord are found in Isaiah 53, parts of which are in today's text. Here we learn something of how the Messiah is to bear the sins of the people, as the scapegoat did at the tabernacle. Our lesson today also addresses two sections from the Gospel of Luke. The two passages have a similar theme (Jesus' resurrection), but from different settings.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

Suffering for Mankind (Isaiah 53:3-8)

3 He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.
4 Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.
5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.
6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.
7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.
8 He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.

Rejected by man (3-5)

Rejection by man through ignoring God's advice and not accepting His rebuke (Prov 1:24-26)

24 But since you rejected me when I called and no one gave heed when I stretched out my hand, 25 since you ignored all my advice and would not accept my rebuke, 26 I in turn will laugh at your disaster; I will mock when calamity overtakes you —

Rejection by man will cause trials and discipline to become heavier (Isa 28:22-23)

22 Now stop your mocking, or your chains will become heavier; the Lord, the Lord Almighty, has told me of the destruction decreed against the whole land. 23 Listen and hear my voice; pay attention and hear what I say.

Rejection by man will cause God's anger to burn (Isa 5:24-25)

24 Therefore, as tongues of fire lick up straw and as dry grass sinks down in the flames, so their roots will decay and their flowers blow away like dust; for they have rejected the law of the Lord Almighty and spurned the word of

the Holy One of Israel. 25 Therefore the Lord's anger burns against his people; his hand is raised and he strikes them down. The mountains shake, and the dead bodies are like refuse in the streets. Yet for all this, his anger is not turned away, his hand is still upraised.

Rejection by man through backsliding (Jer 15:6)

6 You have rejected me," declares the Lord. "You keep on backsliding. So I will lay hands on you and destroy you; I can no longer show compassion.

Rejected by man through oppressing and deceiving others (Isa 30:12-13)

12 Therefore, this is what the Holy One of Israel says: "Because you have rejected this message, relied on oppression and depended on deceit, 13 this sin will become for you like a high wall, cracked and bulging, that collapses suddenly, in an instant.

Jesus the innocent Lamb (6-8)

The Lamb that paid the guilt offering (Lev 14:25)

25 He shall slaughter the lamb for the guilt offering and take some of its blood and put it on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot.

The Lamb that takes away sin (John 1:29)

29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

The Lamb who was sacrificed for us (1 Cor 5:7)

7 Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast — as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

The Lamb that leads us to the springs of living water (Rev 7:17)

17 For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

The Lamb that His people will follow Him wherever He goes because He purchased them (Rev 14:1-4)

14 Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. 2 And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of rushing waters and like a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps. 3 And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. 4 These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they kept themselves pure. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among men and offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb.

Prophesied to Suffer (Luke 24:25-27)

25 Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!
26 Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?"
27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

Rebuke of unbelief (25)

Unbelief is doing things without faith (Rom 14:22-23)

22 So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves. 23 But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

Unbelief is condemned by God (John 3:18)

18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

Unbelief because of not being one of Jesus' sheep (John 10:26)

26 but you do not believe because you are not my sheep.

Unbelief because of doubt (John 20:24-29)

24 Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it." 26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." 28 Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Unbelief because of ignorance (1 Tim 1:12-14)

12 I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service. 13 Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. 14 The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

Suffering preceded glory (26)

Suffering foretold by the prophets (Acts 3:18)

18 But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer.

Suffering that make Jesus perfect (Heb 2:10)

10 In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering.

Suffering that was predicted (1 Peter 1:10-11)

10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, 11 trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.

Suffering in His body (1 Peter 4:1)

4 Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin.

All Scripture points to Jesus (27)

Scripture tells the good news about Jesus (Acts 8:34-35)

34 The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" 35 Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

Scripture proves who Jesus is (Acts 17:2-3)

2 As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3 explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ," he said.

Scripture teaches about Jesus in the Law and Prophets (Acts 28:23)

23 They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.

Scripture tells the story of the Gospel (1 Cor 15:3-4)

3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

Scripture is used by God to speak to us about His Son (Heb 1:1-2)

1 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.

Enlightenment of Understanding (Luke 24:44-47)

44 Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me."

45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

46 Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day,

47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Enlightenment of Scriptures (44-45)

Scriptures enlighten because they train about righteousness (2 Tim 3:16)

16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

Scriptures enlighten because hope can be found in them (Rom 15:4)

4 For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

Scriptures enlighten because we can find truth through examining them daily (Acts 17:11)

11 Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

Enlightenment of the Gospel (46-47)

The gospel enlightens because it proclaims that Jesus died for sins (1 Cor 15:2-4)

2 By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. 3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

The gospel enlightens because it declares the power of Jesus' righteousness and His deeds on the cross (1 Cor. 1:17-18)

17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel — not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. 18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

The gospel enlightens because it is the light of the glory and righteousness of Jesus and God (2 Cor. 4:3-4)

3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Concluding Thoughts From Steven Cole

From the series: Luke

If your expectations are wrong, you can even be disappointed by God. It's not that God was somehow lacking. He is far more glorious and perfect than we could ever conceive. But often, because of our limited perspective, we feel as if He let us down. We thought that He would do something, but He didn't do it. We thought that we were trusting in the promises of His Word, but they didn't come true. We thought that we were praying in line with His will, but He didn't answer. God didn't come through as we had hoped.

That's where two weary travelers were at as they walked the seven miles from Jerusalem to Emmaus one Sunday. They had been hoping that Jesus was the promised Messiah who would redeem Israel (24:21). But their hopes had been dashed when the Jewish religious leaders suddenly succeeded in crucifying Jesus. They were going home, dejected and disappointed. They were still in shock. They didn't understand why God had let them down.

They were talking about these things as they walked when a stranger caught up to them. He was really not a stranger; He was the risen Lord Jesus Christ. But "their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him" (24:16). The passive voice of the verb suggests that God had closed their eyes from recognizing Jesus. Why would God do that? As we'll see, He had some important lessons to teach them (and us) about trusting in His written Word before He allowed them to see the living Word who was there with them. The story begins with these two men (or, it could have been a man, Cleopas, and his wife) dejected and sad. It ends with them rejoicing in hope. The overall lesson is that ...

God will turn our disappointment to hope if with His people we will seek the risen Savior through faith in His Word.

The first thing we must acknowledge, although we may not want to admit it, is that, like these men, ...

1. We all face times when we are disappointed with God.

Every good doctor first diagnoses the problem before he treats it. The Lord asks some questions to draw out the source of their spiritual disappointment. There are probably more sources, but we all probably struggle with these:

(1). We may be disappointed with God because our expectations do not match His sovereign purpose.

Twice in our chapter it is emphasized that God decreed the death of Jesus Christ. The risen Savior tells these two men that it was *necessary* for the Christ to suffer these things (24:26). Earlier (24:7), the angel reminds the women at the tomb of Jesus' earlier prediction, "that the Son of Man *must* be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified."

The Greek word translated *must* and *necessary* is a favorite term for Luke (18 times in his Gospel) that points to God's sovereign purpose. Luke wants us to know that God is in charge of history, moving it along according to His sovereign purpose. This is especially true of the greatest tragedy in history, the crucifixion of the sinless Savior. Although it was the worst crime that could ever be committed, and the men who did it were responsible for their wicked deed, God sovereignly ordained it (24:7; Acts 2:23; 4:27-28). It did not thwart His plan; it fulfilled it.

The Bible makes it clear that sin is part of God's sovereign plan or decree, but at the same time, God is apart from all sin and not responsible for it. To delve any deeper into this subject is beyond my intellectual ability. If you wish to do so, I refer you to Jonathan Edwards' treatise, "Concerning the Divine Decrees" (*The Works of Jonathan Edwards* [Banner of Truth], 2:525-543). But here is how this works out practically: If the worst sin ever, the death of Christ, was a part of God's sovereign plan, then no sin can thwart His sovereign purpose. And this truth brings great comfort in a time of tragedy if we will cling to it.

I have heard pastors try to comfort grieving people by saying that some terrible tragedy, such as the Columbine High School murders, was *not* God's plan. While they mean well, those who say such things actually rob God's people of comfort. If *anything* can happen outside of God's plan, then He is not absolutely sovereign. If He is not absolutely sovereign, then Satan is in some sense sovereign, at least sometimes, which is a most scary thought! If this were so, we would have no guarantee that God's ultimate purpose will triumph! I find it much more comforting to affirm what the Bible teaches, that God works *all things* after the counsel of His will (Eph. 1:11). Even the blasphemies of the wicked antichrist fit in to God's sovereign purpose!

But still, it is hard when we have prayed and hoped for something that we thought was God's will, but then it does not happen. These men had prayed and hoped that Jesus was God's Messiah who would redeem Israel. No doubt they were thinking about political redemption from Israel's enemies. But that was not God's will for His Son at that time. When our expectations do not match God's sovereign purpose, we will have to wrestle with disappointment with God.

(2). We may be disappointed with God because He has closed our eyes from seeing the truth about Jesus.

Again, this seems unlike God! Isn't it His kind will that His people have assurance, comfort and hope? Why then would He shut their eyes from seeing the risen Savior? The answer is, because He had a better reason and a better time. God also closed the disciples' minds so that they could not understand Jesus' frequent references to the cross (9:45; 18:34). God knew that it was best for them to go through the despair and confusion of the cross before they came out into the full light of the resurrection, and so He closed their minds from grasping the plain statements about Jesus' death.

Even so, God knows what is best for us, and so He sometimes closes our minds to the plain teaching of Scripture for a time, so that we will learn lessons that we never would have learned if we had understood and embraced it from the start. Spurgeon pointed out that we all are born by nature as Arminians and that God must open our eyes to the glorious truth of His sovereign grace. He tells of his own experience, as a young believer, of sitting in church and not paying much attention to the sermon. Suddenly the thought struck him, How did you come to be a Christian? He said, "I sought the Lord." But how did you come to seek the Lord? The truth flashed across his mind, "I should not have sought Him unless there had been some previous influence in my mind to *make me* seek Him." He realized in a moment that God was at the bottom of it all, that He was the Author of his faith. From that day Spurgeon ascribed his conversion wholly to God (*C. H. Spurgeon Autobiography* [Banner of Truth], 1:164-165; italics his).

I have believed and taught wrong things, such as using psychology along with the Bible. At the time, I defended myself, saying that I only used that which was in line with biblical truth. When God opened my eyes, He used it to help me grow in repentance, humility, and grace toward others who are in error. But sometimes we can experience disappointment with God because He has closed our eyes to the truth because He has a deeper lesson to teach us later.

(3). We may be disappointed with God because we have foolishly focused on part of His Word, but not the whole.

The disciples were all quick to focus on the glories of Christ's kingdom, but they were slow to grasp the sufferings that had to precede that glory (24:26). They often thought, "Won't it be great when we're all there, reigning in glory with Jesus!" But somehow they overlooked the Scriptures that predicted the suffering and death of Messiah as the sacrifice for the sins of His people. They thought rightly that Jesus would redeem Israel, but they didn't understand that redemption required the offering of Himself as the Lamb of God!

Notice the emphasis on “all” in 24:25, 27: They were foolish not “to believe in *all* that the prophets have spoken.” “Beginning with Moses and *all* the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in *all* the Scriptures.” Their fault was in focusing on parts of God’s Word, but ignoring other parts.

We often are disappointed with God for the same reason. We like all the promises about the good stuff that God will do for His children! But what about the promise of 2 Timothy 3:12: “And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted”? Do you have that one in your “Promise Box”? What about Hebrews 12, which promises discipline for all of God’s true children? What about the many references to the struggle and warfare of the Christian’s walk? If we only focus on part of God’s Word, we will be disappointed when trials hit, as surely they will.

(4). We may be disappointed with God because we are slow of heart to believe His Word.

It is with the heart that we believe in Christ unto salvation (Rom. 10:9, 10). I think that these men had believed in Christ unto salvation. They are described as “two of them” (13:13), that is, two followers of Christ. But Jesus rebukes them for being “slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken” (13:25). Believers may be slow of heart to believe all of God’s Word, especially the difficult doctrines, such as the doctrine of election, which confronts our pride. But we will be prone to disappointment with God if we do not believe *all* that is written in His Word.

If these, then, are some of the causes of disappointment with God, what is the cure? Our text shows us that ...

2. When we are disappointed with God, we need to join with His people in seeking the risen Savior through faith in His Word.

There are at least seven parts to this cure:

(1). Join with the Lord’s people.

These two men were not walking to Emmaus alone, but together, talking about the things that had transpired. As soon as they realized that their unidentified guest was the Lord, even though it was late and a two hour walk in the dark back to Jerusalem, they went immediately to share what had happened with the disciples there (24:33). And, to their great delight and astonishment, the Lord appeared again, to the whole group, and they were privileged to witness it! Thomas was not there that first night, and he missed out until the next Sunday when he was there and Jesus graciously appeared again (John 20:19-29). The point is, it was when they were together, talking about the things of the Lord, that the Lord Himself appeared to them. While the Lord appeared to Peter when he was alone (24:34), to restore him, He did not appear to Thomas when he was alone, but only when he joined with the other disciples.

As American Christians, we are far too individualistic. We come to church for years and sit next to people that we don’t even know. We like our anonymity! We make major life decisions, such as changing churches or moving to another part of the country, but we never think to submit our decision to other believers for their counsel or prayer. I have met many Christians who have been hurt by other believers, and so they drop out of church altogether, but insist that they are still following the Lord.

But you cannot follow the Lord as He intended unless you do it in fellowship with other believers. The church is His body, and body parts can only function in close connection with other body parts. If your hand gets hurt and decides that it’s because your stupid arm thrust the hand in front of the saw, it would be rather foolish to say, “I’m just going to cut myself off completely from that arm!” And yet, that’s exactly what many hurt Christians do! When you’re disappointed with God or with His people, don’t yield to the temptation to isolate yourself from other Christians! Get with them and talk about what’s troubling you.

(2). Seek the risen Savior.

While these men and the other disciples were at fault for not believing the report of the women concerning the resurrection, at least they were right in not being satisfied only with the empty tomb. They say, with disappointment, “Him they did not see” (24:24). (*Him* is emphatic in the Greek here.) They wanted to see the risen Savior. It was seeing Him that turned these disciples’ disappointment into great joy and hope.

I’m not suggesting that you seek some vision or dramatic experience with Jesus. I believe that most who claim to have had such visions are deceived. Peter commends those who loved and believed in Jesus, even though they had never seen

Him (1 Pet. 1:8). We who know Christ as Savior should seek to know Him personally more and more (Phil. 3:10). He has promised to disclose Himself to those who keep His commandments (John 14:21). Where do we seek Him?

(3). Seek the risen Savior in His Word.

Jesus took these men to the Old Testament to show them Himself. “Moses and the prophets” (24:27) is a phrase that means, from all of the Old Testament. I would gladly trade my seminary education for the privilege of being there and hearing Jesus walk them through the Scriptures (by memory), bringing all of it into focus on Himself! The whole Bible centers on Jesus Christ and His substitutionary death on the cross for our sins.

I’m sure that Jesus would have taken these men to Genesis, where God shed the blood of animals so that He could clothe Adam and Eve after their sin. That pointed to Christ, whose shed blood covers our sin. He told them that He was the seed of the woman who would crush the serpent’s head (Gen. 3:15). He explained how the ram caught in the thicket that God provided so that Isaac would be spared pictured Jesus’ death in the place of sinners. He took them through the Passover and the sacrificial system instituted under the Law. He walked them through Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53. While He spoke, their hearts were burning within them as He opened up passage after passage to them.

Many Christians neglect the Old Testament. I believe that there is great profit in reading consecutively through the whole Bible. Don’t skip the hard parts and camp on your favorite sections. Read it all, over and over again. As you read, ask God to open your eyes to see Christ in all the Scriptures.

(4). Seek the risen Savior in His Word through faith.

Academic learning without faith is not enough. We must believe the Word and act upon it as true. The writer of Hebrews tells about Israel under Moses. They had seen God’s mighty works, but they grumbled and did not believe God, and so He did not allow them to enter into His rest. Then he warns, “Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God” (Heb. 3:12). We sometimes shrug off unbelief as if it were no big deal. But God connects the words evil and unbelieving. To disbelieve God is to malign Him as not being good. We must confess our unbelief and seek to believe God’s unfailing Word of Truth.

(5). Keep a teachable heart when the Lord rebukes you.

Jesus rebukes these two men, and yet they shortly invited Him into their home to hear more! That’s the right way to respond to the rebukes of God’s Word. “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching”—what’s next?—“for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16). When Paul exhorted Timothy to preach the Word, he told him that the way to do it is to “reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction” (2 Tim. 4:2). So many in our day want to have their ears tickled by teachers in accordance with their own desires. But if you want to grow closer to the Lord who is holy, you must have a teachable heart when His Word says to you, “O foolish one and slow of heart to believe!”

(6). Entreat the Lord to stay with you.

After this wonderful discussion on the road, Jesus acted as if He would keep going beyond their village, but they prevailed on Him to stay there with them that night (24:28-29). Just as the Lord’s earlier questions (24:17, 19) were for the purpose of drawing these men out in order to teach them, so His acting as if He would go further was to elicit this invitation from them. They invited Him in and He accepted their offer. He always comes into the heart and home where He is invited.

But notice that although He entered their home as a guest, He quickly took on the role of host and owner. Normally the owner of the home would break the bread and bless it, but Jesus took that role here. If you entreat the Lord to stay in your heart, be prepared: He isn’t a polite dinner guest! He takes over!

(7). When the spiritual highs end, go on in faith, in the Word, and in fellowship with other believers.

No sooner did these men recognize the Lord than He vanished from their sight. They didn’t even have time to ask any questions. Jesus wanted them to know that He is alive, but also to know that they would not experience His physical presence as they formerly had. He would now go to the Father and send the Spirit to be with them permanently. As soon as Jesus vanished, these men could have become dejected and disappointed. They could have tried to conjure up

another great spiritual experience. Instead, they went to gather with other like-minded believers to share what the Lord had done. After that, they went on in faith, in the Word, and in fellowship.

Spiritual highs are wonderful, but you can't live on them. You must learn to walk by faith, to be consistent in the Word, and to gather regularly with other believers to build one another in the things of God.

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Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

The Wonder of Prophecy

The "Scopes Trial" of 1925 received widespread attention, becoming a referendum on the merits of the theory of evolution. Some saw it as a contest between Christian belief and atheism. The attorney for the evolution side was Clarence Darrow (1857-1938), perhaps the most celebrated lawyer of his day. Less remembered are two later debates that involved Darrow in the 1930s. His opponent in these was P. H. Welshimer (1873-1957), minister of the First Christian Church in Canton, Ohio. Darrow had debated many people on the merits of the Christian faith, and his great intellect served him well. His opponents were usually not prepared to meet his challenges. Welshimer, however, employed a tactic Darrow had not encountered before: Welshimer focused on the unity of the Bible as a book of prophecy as he laid out some of the wondrous prophecies of the Old Testament that found fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Darrow had no answer for this approach and admitted as much to Welshimer in private. (Unfortunately, Darrow died a few weeks after the second debate and never had a chance to read the books on prophecy suggested by Welshimer.) Prophecy and fulfillment are inconceivable unless there is a God who is orchestrating them. The intentions of God must be communicated, and then the intended events must take place. We have only a vague idea of how God accomplishes this, but we can marvel nonetheless. God lost us when we sinned, but he was unwilling to allow us to remain lost. We are restored to him through his grace and mercy in the atoning death of his Son—all planned and revealed ahead of time through God's messengers, the prophets.

Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

1. Those who reject Christ must think that they are good enough for God without Him (Isa. 53:5-6)
2. Because He loved us, Christ endured the utmost suffering to achieve His desire, which is our salvation (vss. 7-8)
3. Often we fail to do God's will because we concentrate too much on our own (Luke 24:25-27)
4. We appreciate God's perfect plans for us as we realize how intricate they are (vss. 44-45)
5. Christ's death for our salvation would have been of no benefit for us without His resurrection (vs. 46)
6. Sometimes one person can reach someone for Christ when others cannot (vs. 47)