

✠ Luke 24:13-35 ✠

IN NOMINE IESU

The two disciples, Cleopas and his companion, did not believe the Scriptures or that Jesus was the Christ. In fact, they did not only not believe the Scriptures, they didn't even know what the Scriptures said. Sure, they knew the words and they knew to expect the Messiah, but their eyes were veiled with the veil of Moses. The Scriptures were locked to them. Else they would've understood that the Christ must suffer and die. The Scriptures were locked to them just as they are locked to anyone who denies that the Christ must suffer and die. You can think Jesus is God's Son all you want, but if you deny that He suffered and died for your sin, then you don't worship the Christ of God's Word.

The Scriptures bear witness to the Christ, that He must suffer and die and on the third day be raised from the dead. Moses wrote for us in Genesis that in order for shame to be covered and guilt removed, blood must be spilt. Thus, God took the life of an animal, spilling its blood, to cover Adam and Eve's shame by making for them coverings, even as they were sent into exile. Moreover, they were sent with the promise that their Savior would be a son of Eve and would crush the head of their enemy, the serpent, even as His blood would be spilled in the act of salvation.

Abraham, that great patriarch of faith, would be saved by the sacrificing of the son of the promise, Isaac. If Isaac was not sacrificed then Abraham would not have been counted as righteous. So through the sacrifice of the promised son, Abraham was saved from God's wrath and displeasure and was called a friend of God. Moreover, the Scriptures divine that Isaac was raised from the dead – as it is written – to vindicate Abraham of any guilt or wrong doing. Isaac returned from the dead, declaring Abraham innocent. In this way, the Christ is sacrificed to redeem us that we should be called the children and friends of God, and is raised from the dead to vindicate us and declare us “not guilty”.

So, too, did Moses write of Joseph, the Son of Jacob who is called Israel. Joseph was betrayed by his brothers, those closest to him, because it was revealed to Joseph that he was to be greater than his brothers. He was made a slave in a hostile land. He was imprisoned by on trumped up charges. He was as good as dead to his father and brothers, and even to those who imprisoned him. But God exalted him and made him ruler and lord over everyone save Pharaoh, who, if you can accept it, is a figure of God the Father, raising His Son our of the prison of death and exalting Him, giving Him dominion over the heavens and the earth and all that dwells therein.

And why did Joseph suffer in this way? So that he would save his people and all people from starvation and certain death. Joseph, probably more than any other Old Testament figure, is a type of the Christ.

And Moses, himself, condemned to die at birth by the king even as king Herod would seek to kill the baby Jesus, came back from exile to deliver the people of God from the house of bondage. Moses saw God face to face and was the messenger that brought God's law and promises to the people. If Joseph is the best type of the Christ, Moses is the best Christological figure, even interceding on the behalf of the people that God would not look at their sin and destroy them for it, but would show mercy.

Sampson, too, saved more by his death than he did in his life. And Gideon reveals the plan of salvation as he fought the enemy with no weapon, yet defeated him so that none who God gave to him were lost. All the prophets point to the Christ's suffering and death as well. Not only with their words but with their very lives. The Scriptures bear witness to the Christ, that He must suffer and die in order to accomplish His purpose: to save His people from their sins.

What a Bible class these two disciples got! Of all the conversations through all the ages, this one must be the greatest; even greater than Jacob wrestling with God or Moses speaking with God on Mt. Sinai. To have a one on one discussion of all things biblical with the One who inspired it – how fantastic! And yet still they did not believe.

Surely, as their hearts burned within them as the knowledgeable stranger opened to them the Scriptures, they believed that the Christ must suffer and die, the evidence was too strong to deny this. But they did not see Jesus. Here they have the Bible in all its truth and glory being broken into like a treasure chest where all the spoils and riches were theirs for the taking, and yet their eyes were blind and their hearts burned within them with longing and desperation, not assurance and peace.

This is evidenced by their asking this stranger to remain with them. Their hope was groundless, fashioned to nothing but the convincing words of this stranger. No wonder our Lord acted as if He were still going further. They did not pray to God, they asked someone they didn't know to be their guide and their shepherd. How often we attach ourselves to those we don't know simply because they make us feel all warm and fuzzy inside. How many times have we gone astray, desiring that the strangers of tolerance, equality, and political correctness guide us because they make our hearts burn within us and make us feel good? How many times have our decisions been based on what we want to be true rather than on what is actually true simply because the person leading us astray uses words like "Bible" "God" "Holy Spirit" and "love"?

Yet our Lord is merciful. He does not leave us. He guides us into the way of all truth. And contrary to pop Christianity, the destination is not love and acceptance, it is not heaven up there somewhere. The destination is not sacrificing the truth so that we can pretend there's unity. The destination is Jesus. Love is nothing if it does not come from Him. Sacrifice means nothing if it is not the cross of Christ. Unity is an illusion if the Cornerstone is not Jesus.

Greater is the little child who says in the simple words of a child, "I want the body and blood," because he or she has witnessed the faithful kneel to what they hear as for them as well. Greater is this child than all the Bible scholars coalesced into one person who can quote all the books of Holy Writ in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, and yet thinks our Lord's holy Supper a nice addition but in the end not all that important or significant. How many hearts have we turned from our Lord's blessed meal because we attach a laundry list of "Thou shalt's" before they can receive such a Gospel gift?

Greater is the infant whose head is wet with God's holy water than all the Bible studies from Augustine to Luther to The LC-MS rolled into one. For such a child is blessed by the Father, marked as one redeemed by Christ the Crucified One. Such a little one is holier than anyone who has a multitude of Bible verses memorized yet does not believe Jesus that whoever does not become like a little child cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

Repent. Stop trying to earn salvation and status before God and man by what you know. It is the Word of God that saves you, not your knowledge, and the Word of God is the Gospel that is preached to you: Jesus suffered and died and rose again to redeem you from death and the power of the devil. This is revealed not by your wisdom or ability to quote the Bible, but by

Jesus in the breaking of bread. “Take, eat, this is My body given into death for you. Take, drink, this is My blood of the new testament shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.” This is the Word of the Lord that will endure forever.

Even in heaven Jesus bears the marks of the cross. Even in heaven you will sit down at the Lord’s Table and commune with God, sharing in the marriage feast of the Lamb. You don’t approach this Table because you are worthy, or because you know enough stuff, but because He is worthy of honor and praise. You don’t kneel here because you have it all figured out, but because you don’t have it all figured out.

You are on life-support. You can’t stand on your own two feet. You can’t make it by slugging it out and holding your own. You are dependant. We work so hard in our society to remain autonomous. We have beepers so we can live alone, cars so we can drive alone, cubicles so we can work alone, video games so we can play alone, and some have jobs so their spouse will leave them alone. But it is not good that man should be alone. Just ask those in the nursing home or the orphanages.

You were not created to be autonomous, self-sufficient, dependant on no one. You were created to commune and to depend on others. You were created to desire the fellowship of other people. And you were created to commune with God. But ever since the fall into sin, we’ve tried to be alone, to hide from God. Now here come those heart-warming strangers. They may even tell you the truth, as this Stranger told Cleopas and his companion. But the truth without Jesus is just another lie. What good would it have done Cleopas and his companion if they had believed the strangers words that the Christ must suffer and die and yet never recognized Jesus?

That is what we say when we say our Lord’s holy meal is unnecessary, a pious afterthought to our faith. Or worse, something that has significance only as long as we believe it has significance. Do not pit the Word of God against itself. The Bible is the Word and so too is the Supper as is Baptism and Absolution. To say one is more or less important or needed than the other is to say that God is less available in some and more available in others. To divide them is to divide the Word of God. And it is the Word of God by which you are born again. And to those who accuse, saying, “You’re creating faith in the Supper!” I respond: so too did Jesus.

Cleopas and his companion were not in the upper room on the night when our Lord Jesus was betrayed. They most likely did not know about the Last Supper given the events they were discussing on the road to Emmaus. But it was in the breaking of bread that Jesus revealed Himself to them. Then they ran back to Jerusalem to tell the Eleven and those with them. And this is what they told those sainted apostles, “After we arrived, we reclined at table. And once He had our attention, He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it us. And that is when we recognized that it was Jesus and that He is risen!”

Jesus forced the topic of the breaking of bread. He made the two disciples bring it up. Jesus doesn’t give His people, His Church, this sacred meal only so that we can shelve it and pull it out only on special occasions. He gives us this holy meal to draw you to Himself. Here He feeds you, His people, to strengthen and enliven you. Here the Christ, who suffered and died as it is written, gives you His resurrected flesh and living blood so as so keep you alive in Him even while you await the salvation to come.

In the name of the FATHER and of the ✠ SON and of the HOLY SPIRIT.

✠ AMEN ✠