

Was It Not Necessary?

Luke 24:13-31 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹³ And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And they were talking with each other about all these things which had taken place. ¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing, Jesus Himself approached and began traveling with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him. ¹⁷ And He said to them, "What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?" And they stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸ One of them, named Cleopas, answered and said to Him, "Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?" ¹⁹ And He said to them, "What things?" And they said to Him, "The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people, ²⁰ and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to the sentence of death, and crucified Him. ²¹ But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened. ²² But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning, ²³ and did not find His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive. ²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said; but Him they did not see." ²⁵ And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ **Was it not necessary** for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" ²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

²⁸ And they approached the village where they were going, and He acted as though He were going farther. ²⁹ But they urged Him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is getting toward evening, and the day is now nearly over." So He went in to stay with them. ³⁰ When He had reclined at the table with them, He took the bread and blessed it, and breaking it, He began giving it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight.

Introduction

Imagine that you, the movie director, are shooting a movie entitled, "The Walk to Emmaus." It's about two disciples of Jesus traveling from Jerusalem to a village called Emmaus on the first Easter day--the day when Jesus resurrected from the dead. Emmaus is about 7 miles away from Jerusalem. An average young person can walk 3 miles per hour. So, it is a little over two hours of a walk. They are not in a hurry, so they are walking rather casually. For the first scene, you let the camera zoom in on them focusing on their conversation.

Two hours are plenty of time to talk with each other. The two disciples are talking and discussing what happened in Jerusalem in the past week: how Jesus their Lord was betrayed, arrested, tortured, and crucified. They also share how sad and disappointed they were with the crucifixion. Then, you bring in a stranger, the risen Christ, joining the two in

their walk. Their eyes are prevented from recognizing Him. Jesus asks them what they were talking about. Soon, with Jesus in the middle, the three are having a live conversation until they arrive at their destination.

Content

Today's text details what they talked about on the road, from which I would like to draw the following three lessons:

First, **everything about Christ: His birth, betrayal, suffering, death, and resurrection were God-ordained.**

The two disciples told Jesus how sad they were to see Jesus their hope crucified. But the greatest puzzlement was the missing body of Christ. *The women who visited His tomb this morning, they continued, didn't find His body but heard the angels saying He was alive. Some disciples even went to the tomb to check it out and verified that the women were telling us the truth, but they didn't see Him. We don't know what to make of this mystery, they implied. Jesus said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! **Was it not necessary** for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?"* (v. 25-26). With this question, He was expecting an affirmative answer from them. Jesus was looking at them with a look like "You should've known all about this."

Let's focus on the meaning of 'necessary' here.

It means 'must.' Christ had to be betrayed and suffer. There was no other way. 'Necessary' also means that His suffering, death, resurrection, and glory were predestined by God. No one or nothing can change or challenge what God has planned in the life of Christ: from birth to death, from cross to crown. Everything about Christ was ordained by God and fulfilled according to the prophecies in the Scriptures and in God's appointed times.

Let me emphasize again that Christ's suffering and death on the cross were not an accident. Neither were they a sequence of random human interactions. Some people claim that it was the religious leaders' envy of Jesus' popularity among people that killed Him. However, the truth is that Christ's suffering and death were methodically planned and perfectly executed according to the plan. All by God. It was God's idea. It was prophesied in God's Word over centuries through prophets. Then, in God's perfect time, it was fulfilled. Not too late. Not too early. Just in the nick of time. According to God's will. In His ways.

Was the crucifixion pretty? Of course, not. It was a tragedy. It was brutally violent. Was it well accepted by His own people? Not at all. On the contrary, it vexed many people including Christ's own disciples. It betrayed their hope and understanding of the Messiah. It dashed their hope in the Messiah to the ground. They wanted a powerful and almighty Messiah who would crush the iron fist of Rome and liberate Israel from her enemy. They expected the triumphant king riding into Jerusalem on a white stallion. Instead, to their

disappointment, Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey. There was no parade of war spoils or slaves. Nothing. Just ordinary palm-waving crowds. Their despair culminated in Christ's death on the cross.

What was the cross? In human eyes, it was a total failure and humiliation, yet, in God's eyes, it was a complete divine victory over sin. The salvation of humanity. The cross doesn't make any sense in human eyes. It is 'the mystery of salvation' beyond human comprehension.

Yet, all of it was done as exactly as God had planned: pre-destined in the beginning. Before the foundation of the world. Executed in a perfect divine time: Kairos. All for our eternal life. To bring sinners to God in Christ. Once and for all. Done. Period.

For your information, there are at least three more things that are 'necessary' (that is, bound) to happen: 1. *Everyone must stand before God's Judgment throne after death* (2 Corinthians 5:10). 2. *Gospel is to be preached to all nations* (Mark 13:10). 3. *We the believers must enter the Kingdom of God through much tribulation* (Acts 14:22). These are ordained by God to happen and there's no change of God's plan.

It was necessary for Christ to suffer, die, and rise again according to the Scriptures.

Secondly, **don't be a fool when it comes down to the mystery of salvation.** Jesus spoke to the disciples, "*O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!*" (v. 25).

Guess who's the real fool in the sight of God? Not those who act "unwisely or imprudently" (Oxford Dictionaries). Nor those who are illiterate. But those who are without the Kingdom knowledge: those who don't understand how God's kingdom works, and what matters in God's kingdom. E.g., the currency in Heaven is not dollars.

You can be savvy in worldly matters, but at the same time, you can be totally blind to what is going on in the spiritual world, therefore, can be called by God a fool. E.g., the rich fool who was rich for himself but poor for God (Luke 12:20). You can also be a fool in God's eyes if you are slow of heart to believe what God's Word says about Christ. You are a fool if you refuse to believe in Christ's bodily resurrection or doubt it even after you read the accounts of the witnesses in the Bible.

On the other hand, you are blessed if you believe with all your heart that Christ is risen indeed from the dead. Don't be a fool in God's eyes. Believe like a child in the mystery of salvation.

Lastly, **take communion seriously.** Pay attention to verse 31 one more time, which reads, "**Then** their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him" (v. 31). The time reference 'then' separates the time into two periods: 'before' and 'after' the breaking of bread. Verse

30 says, *When He had reclined at the table with them, He took the bread and blessed it, and breaking it, He began giving it to them.* Please note here that until Christ broke the bread, the disciples' eyes were closed during the whole time of travel together on the road for over an hour. For the entire time, they had no clue with whom they were conversing. Then, as soon as they received the bread from the Lord, their eyes were opened and they recognized Him.

In the Church, every first Sunday of the month, we break Christ's body and drink the cup of salvation. We call it Communion. At every communion, as we receive the bread from the Lord, God can open our spiritually blind eyes so that we may see Jesus. After the bread and wine are blessed in the name of the Lord, as we partake in the Lord's Supper with faith and humility, the Lord can reveal Himself to us as He did to His disciples (v. 35). Wouldn't it be great if it happens to us all? It is my prayer for all: may the Lord open our eyes to see the risen Christ every time we break bread in the name of Jesus, amen?

Conclusion

Recap: first, everything about Christ was ordained before the foundation of the world, was fulfilled in His time, and was executed by God in His ways. Next, don't be a fool in the sight of God. Ask for God's grace to open your mind to understand God's Word. Accept what Christ has done for you with childlike faith. Thirdly, at every communion, take the body and blood of Christ with the anticipation and prayer that the Lord would reveal Himself to you. Pray that the Lord will open your eyes to see the risen Christ. Amen.