

The Word of the Risen Lord

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[0 : 0 0] I'm going to turn to our Bible reading now, and you'll find that in Luke's Gospel, chapter 24, page 884 in the Church Bibles.

And we come now to this last chapter of Luke's Gospel. I think we'll have one more week with Luke next week, but this morning we're coming to this great chapter of the resurrection.

And the section begins really just with the last phrase of chapter 23, and I'll read from that second half of verse 56.

Having read all that we read last week of the death of Jesus, his crucifixion, his body being taken from the cross and buried in the new tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, we read that the women who were watching rested on the Sabbath day according to the commandment.

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

[1 : 1 2] While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, Why do you seek the living among the dead?

He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered unto the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day rise.

And they remembered his words. And returning from the tomb, they told these things to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary, mother of James, and other women with them who told these things to the apostles.

But these words seemed to them an idle tale, better, a delusion. And they didn't believe them. But Peter rose and ran to the tomb.

Stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves. And he went home, marveling at what had happened. That very day, two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem.

[2 : 2 5] And they were talking, disputing with each other about these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them.

But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, What's this conversation you're holding with each other as you walk? And they stood still, looking sad.

Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who doesn't know the things that have happened here in these days? And he said to them, What things? And he said to them, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death and crucified him.

But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it's now the third day since these things happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us.

They went to the tomb early in the morning, and when they didn't find his body, they came back saying that they had seen a vision of angels who had said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the woman had said.

[3 : 37] But him they did not see. And he said to them, O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?

And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. So they drew near to the village to which they were going.

And he acted as if he was going further. But they urged him strongly, saying, Stay with us, for it's towards evening, and the day is now far spent. So he went in to stay with them.

While he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed it and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight.

And they said to each other, Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?

[4 : 42] And they rose at that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, The Lord has risen indeed. He has appeared to Simon. Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of bread.

As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them. And he said to them, Peace to you. But they were startled and frightened, and thought they saw a spirit.

And he said to them, Why are you troubled? And why did doubts arise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me and see. A spirit doesn't have flesh and bones, as you see I have.

When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they still disbelieved for joy, and were marveling, he said to them, Have you anything here to eat?

They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it before them. Then he said to them, These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you.

[5 : 50] That everything written about me in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the Psalms, must be fulfilled. Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures.

And he said to them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.

Amen. May God bless to us his word. Well, do turn with me, if you would, to Luke 24, page 884, in our visitor's Bibles.

And you'll see the title this morning is, The Word of the Risen Lord. And that's because, so clearly, that is the particular focus of Luke's account of the resurrection of Jesus.

[7 : 06] Now that should hardly surprise us, by now, because we've lived with Luke the Evangelist for a long time. And we've seen his great emphasis on the Word of God. Remember, his very opening paragraph of the book speaks about eyewitnesses, whom he calls servants of the Word.

And he tells us that he writes, so that we might have certainty about the things that we've been taught. And all through the book, we hear Jesus telling people to hear the Word of God and do it.

Luke's second volume, the book of Acts, is entirely focused on what he calls the increase of the Word of God. And the Word of God increased and grew mightily. And as we saw last week, Luke's account of the crucifixion is structured all around Christ's own words from the cross, which give the true meaning of it all, the Word of the cross.

So we shouldn't be surprised that in this great resurrection chapter, what remains absolutely central is that same word. and that same word about the death of Jesus Christ and its absolute necessity according to the Scriptures.

Three times here, once in each main section of this chapter, we're told unequivocally that that death must happen. Look at verse 7. That's what the angels tell the women.

[8 : 33] Same in verse 27 and in verses 46 and 47, 44 to 46 from Jesus himself. You see, it is the message of the cross which is the great central message in this resurrection chapter.

That's the focus of the Word of the risen Lord. And it's understanding, at last, what that really means, according to the Scriptures, that is the transforming message, the majestic gospel of this glorious good news that transforms the disciples from their miserable grief and turns them into people full of missionary gladness.

And it's as this word is spoken and heard and understood in the light of Christ's resurrection that the lives of human beings are transformed forever.

And that's the key message that Luke wants us to be absolutely certain about so that we too will have confidence in this transforming, life-changing, world-changing power of the gospel of Christ, which is the message, according to Luke, of the whole Bible interpreted by Jesus in the light of his resurrection.

That is the word of the risen Lord all through this chapter. And that's why Luke orders and selects the material for his message as he does.

[10 : 04] He focuses, as you can see, on just one day. That looks quite clear. He tells us in Acts chapter 1 that Jesus appeared to his followers and taught them for 40 days before his ascension.

But here he wants us to see, as it were, the first day of a new era, the first day, if you like, of the new creation, and how everything is being made new by that word of the risen Lord.

Michael Wilcock in his book suggests that Luke is very deliberately pointing this up in that last line of verse 56 that we began our reading with. And in the first line of chapter 24, verse 1, he says this, on the Friday, the sixth day, the work of redemption is accomplished.

And on the seventh day, they rested according to the commandment. But then on the first day, a new week begins. It was the first day of a new era, a new creation.

A whole new world was coming into being on that first Christian Sunday. Thus Luke ends his gospel with an account of that first day which was to begin the new age.

[11 : 13] And in three episodes, he sets the new age on its course. Well, I find that quite compelling. And certainly Luke's structure is very clear.

Look at it. It covers three distinct periods of that day. First of all, we have the morning with the women at the tomb. Then we have the afternoon on the road to Emmaus.

And then we have the late evening back in Jerusalem with all the disciples. And in each case, we see, just as we saw at the cross, Luke's focus on evidence, that is, he reports real events, but also on explanation of those events.

And that is what transforms Luke's words from merely being history in the past to being filled with hope for the future. You see how each of these three episodes, morning, afternoon, evening, each one follows exactly the same pattern.

Each scene begins, doesn't it, with perplexity and bewilderment. In fact, we might say it was unbelief. The disciples are in the dark. So the women, they expect a corpse.

[12 : 21] And we're told in verse 4, they're perplexed and they're frightened. And they see the angels and the absent corpse. And the men on the road, we're told, are sad, they're dispirited. And in verse 37, the disciples, despite all that they've already heard, they still think that they've seen a ghost, a spirit, perplexed and bewildered.

And then in each case, they receive a very sharp rebuke. Again, verse 6, by the angels. And then in verse 25, the unknown stranger on the road rebukes them, O foolish ones.

And in verse 44, well, when they thought it was a ghost, that very person then rebukes them and tells them how foolish they are. In each case then, there follows the rebuke, a proclamation of the word of God, the majestic gospel of Christ crucified according to the scriptures.

And in the light of the resurrection, as they hear that, they're transformed. They're transformed from confusion to clarity and from weeping to great joy.

And in each case, again, do you see, the result is a new missionary gladness. They are telling forth that good news. Verse 9, the women returned and told these things.

[13 : 39] Verse 35, the two disciples told what had happened on the road. And then verse 48, Jesus says, all the disciples will be witnesses of these things to tell the whole world.

And of course, that is the great refrain, isn't it, through the book of Acts, preaching the good news of peace through Jesus Christ who is Lord of all. And we can't help but tell of what we have seen and heard.

So Luke is telling us something, isn't he? Both his followers in the first century and those in the 21st century like us who are reading him today who need certainty about what we've been taught and what we believed and who need confidence in what we also have been called to do in this world.

Because being a Christian is not easy, is it? Not in the first century nor in the 21st century. And mission isn't easy. Most of the time we feel utterly powerless. Can we possibly convince real skeptics about the faith that is in Jesus?

Can we possibly think that we would see skeptical unbelievers transformed into followers of the risen Lord? And how can discouraged and depressed Christians become flaming heralds of the gospel?

[15 : 02] Is that possible? These are real questions, aren't they? For all of us. When we think about our non-Christian family and friends, when we think of student colleagues or work colleagues and so on, those are the things we ask.

Well, that is precisely why Luke has written this chapter in the way he has. Notice again his focus on evidence, on real events that tell us of a real historic bodily resurrection.

resurrection. And notice how clear Luke is that there were skeptics right from the very beginning. In fact, all the disciples were skeptics, weren't they? They weren't gullible simpletons.

Oh yes, resurrection. Yeah, sure, that happens all the time. Of course not. Look at verse 11. They thought what the women told them was an idle tale. Well, as I indicated in the reading, that Luke, who is a doctor, he actually uses a medical word there that means the delusions of a delirious person.

The disciples thought these women were delusional, just like Richard Dawkins thinks Christians are delusional today. But unlike Professor Dawkins and many others, they're actually honest enough in the end to be persuaded by overwhelming evidence of the truth.

[16 : 23] So in verse 37, they still thought, despite all they'd heard, that this being was a ghost or a spirit. But verse 40, having seen his hands and his feet, no doubt with those nail marks still there, having watched Jesus eat a fish supper in front of them and having heard his voice again, well, they can't any longer deny that absolute reality that's in front of them.

So that response to clear evidence, and there are many other things through this chapter we could note. That is very important for us to note. But again, Luke is very determined to show us even more importantly how it is that that transformation comes to skeptical, unbelieving people.

He wants us to see where our confidence must lie if we also are to witness transformed lives among people in our own day as part of our mission.

just as important too, he wants us to see how our own hearts will be transformed and set on fire if we are to become real servants of the word ourselves. And the real transforming power lies in the explanation of these events according to the scriptures.

That's what makes Luke's message a gospel. And it is that majestic gospel and that alone that can transform miserable grief into missionary gladness.

[17 : 57] And each of the three episodes shows us that so very clearly. It's a long chapter though so I want us to focus on the middle section verses 13 to 35. This extended story which is unique in Luke's gospel and where as it were he zooms in on two ordinary people and shows us up close and personal what this transformation looks like and how it takes place.

So I want to look at this journey from grief to gladness through the gospel for these first disciples. The key verse really in the story in fact in the whole chapter is verse 32 because there we see so clearly the word of the risen Lord.

We see what it is and we see what it does. Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road as he opened to us the scriptures?

Let's look at the story in a little more detail and it's told to us you'll see in three scenes. So first of all in verses 13 to 24 we have a scene of miserable grief don't we?

Two very depressed disciples that first Easter Sunday. Now whether it's two men or whether it's Cleopas and his wife we're not told but either way they are dejected and downcast.

[19 : 18] Verse 17 their faces are sad and that's because their hearts are sad and grieving. They've lost their great hope they say in verse 21 that Jesus was indeed the redeemer of Israel but now he was dead and so when this stranger joins them he finds a scene of miserable grief.

Two disciples pondering a tragic death. It's heavy with irony isn't it? Because of course we know as the readers that here are two disciples on Easter day in the presence of the risen Lord Jesus and yet they're absolutely miserable.

And yet you know it's not so unfamiliar is it? Because there'll be plenty of people in church today in this country on Sunday on resurrection day on the Lord's risen day and yet whose hearts are sad and miserable because just like these two their hopes for what Jesus would do for their life have been dashed.

The salvation that they imagined Jesus would give them the job they wanted the career they wanted the spouse or the family they hoped for the health that they've lost hasn't materialized.

We had hoped that he was to be the one to redeem they said but no. And if your hopes are dashed like that you'll never be a missionary Christian will you?

[20 : 46] So when this stranger stopped this to me it wasn't to say to them oh please tell me the reason for the great hope that is within you. It wasn't that. He didn't say I can tell by your faces that you have a wonderful message to share.

No. His question was why are you so miserable? Why are you so sad? They're not missionary Christians they're miserable Christians. And you see what they're doing in verse 15 they're talking and discussing together.

Well again that word discussing really means disputing it means arguing that's how it's usually translated in the Gospels and in Acts. They were disputing with one another as miserable Christians tend to do.

Because they're focused on themselves and their disappointments and their problems. And it's a sad thing isn't it that 20 centuries later when the Lord Jesus draws near to his church so often he will still find not missionary Christians full of gladness but miserable Christians full of grumblings disputing with one another.

That's reality isn't it? That's why churches are often places of misery and not places of mission because disciples of Jesus are taken up with themselves and their unfulfilled hopes and desires and their problems.

[22 : 08] And so naturally they fall into arguing and disputing with one another about church practice or about music or about leadership or fringe matters of theology it doesn't really matter what it is you'll always find something to grumble.

And denominations too are like that in spades aren't they? When I think of what it used to be like having to go to presbytery meetings I asked Tom McGill endless disputes arguments about decline about money about all so it used to take me days to recover.

There was absolutely no sense of missionary gladness but plenty of miserable grief. You see where Christians are like that there will be no transforming mission will there?

there will only just be terrible misery in the church which will be the death of the church. Why are people like that who profess to be followers of Jesus? Well verses 18 to 24 give us the answer at least about these two.

See Cleopas tells this stranger the gospel that he has and look he has got the whole story of Jesus hasn't he? He's got every detail of Jesus life and death and even verse 23 he's in possession of an account of Jesus resurrection but he hadn't even begun to grasp what it all actually means.

[23 : 35] There's no message. There's no gospel. They just don't understand what the message of the cross is at all. You see at best to these two Jesus' death was a tragic death to be mourned because to them all their hope was in Jesus' earthly life and they wanted that life to go on.

They didn't want him to die. To them Jesus' death spoke only of the evil purposes of man. It didn't speak at all of the glorious purpose of God. And so there was no good news in the cross of Jesus.

And so the resurrection news was as of nothing to them. And that's why they were miserable. They had no message. They had no true gospel. And you see it is possible isn't it to have all the story of Jesus to even talk about Jesus' death and Jesus' resurrection and still to have no message and therefore to have no possible mission.

And that's why alas today many churches are still just places of misery full of miserable religious people surrounded by the pall of death. Not missionary people.

Liberated people full of the joy of life eternal. You see if you see the cross of Jesus if you see the death of Jesus as just a tragedy or worse as canon Jeffrey John wrote in the newspapers a few years ago at Easter if you see the cross as repulsive or if you preach as a certain parish minister in Edinburgh is preaching on the internet today Jesus did not die for our sins well of course the church will just be consigned to a miserable death and never be full of missionary life because you have a story but you have no message you have no good news to proclaim in fact you have a wrong message a dangerous message entirely of the cross as only the wicked act of men the cross becomes just like those terrible

[25 : 53] Paris murders cutting off life terribly senseless wicked evil that's all it's not a wonderful act of God it's not an act of his saving grace and mercy so you'll think of Jesus death as innocent as noble perhaps as poignant as moving but ultimately it's just like those Friday the 13th atrocities just a terrible tragedy it's a terrible disappointment and that was these two disciples wasn't it we meet them amid their misery and their grief and no wonder it was inevitable then as it is inevitable today if you don't understand what the cross of Jesus is really all about well let's flick forward to scene three as we have it in verses 32 to 35 and what an extraordinary difference what we see here is a scene of missionary gladness two disciples who were pondering a tragic death now they're proclaiming a triumphant death their sad faces are gone because their sad hearts are gone verse 32 their hearts we're told they're burning they have burning hearts and therefore they have bursting lips they have to tell others just like Peter and John they can't help telling what they've seen and heard they didn't have to be asked for a reason for the hope within they can't keep it in anymore they're missionary

Christians full of missionary gladness it's now late we're told verse 29 the day is far spent but they're up and off immediately to retrace those seven miles two or three hours walking all the way back to Jerusalem that same hour verse 33 now those roads in rural Palestine were not safe places to be remember the story of the good Samaritan they were very risky especially in the dark they're mad surely to take such risks just to carry that message I'm sure that's what their friends and family would have said don't you think it's fanaticism calm down don't go overboard don't go all fundamentalist keep it decent and nothing changes does it because that's what many a decent church going family will say when their son or their daughter wants to go off to some dangerous country just just to tell that message or even if they just want to give up a good income and a stable future to spend all their time telling that message in gospel work it's crazy it's fanatical it's madness to the world but no for the church and for the

Christian who has grasped the word of the risen Lord it's just natural missionary gladness what a difference in these two disciples they are utterly transformed just as the women are transformed in verse nine to go and tell and in the end all of the apostles and the disciples verse 52 are transformed to be witnesses no longer taken up just with themselves with their own expectations with their own desires no longer miserable Christians complaining Christians taken up with disputes no now only one thing matters to them that is telling forth the good news sharing this glorious truth about Jesus the truth of the message that has changed them and changed everything so what is then that message that has transformed this miserable grief into such missionary gladness well that is precisely what I want you to see says

Luke that's why I've written it this way I've shown you it three times to din it into your head so you can't possibly miss it miserable grief is transformed into missionary gladness like this by the majestic gospel by the powerful word of the risen lord himself now don't make a mistake here don't say don't say well these two men had an extraordinary experience they saw Jesus in his presence and if you gave me an experience like that I'd be transformed no no no look at what Luke writes for us that is not it at all look at verse 32 why does Luke record this key thing that they said amidst all the other things they must have said and blurted out in that moment he wants us to see that what made their hearts burn was not the sight of the risen lord the very moment they do recognize in verse 31 says he disappears no what transformed them what made their hearts burn was what his words to them did not our hearts burn within us when he talked to us and what was that talk that talk which to them was just from a complete stranger they didn't recognize look it was simply the opening up of the scriptures in their hearing while he talked to us while he opened to us the scriptures years the transforming word of the risen lord is what you see there in verses 26 and 27 and indeed also in verse 7 and in verses 45 and 46 it is the message of the whole bible opened up and explained as finding its climax and its true meaning in the death and the resurrection of

Jesus Christ it's the scriptures that explain his death and resurrection according to the plan and purpose of God and it's his death and resurrection that explain all the scriptures it's as simple as that now isn't that staggering wouldn't you have expected Jesus to just appear before these two men in recognizable form and say look you fools it's me let me explain it all that's what you would have done or I would have done but Jesus doesn't do that in all three episodes they are kept from seeing him at first and instead they are pointed to the scriptures because it's these scriptures that are the transforming power verse 25 you foolish ones not to believe the scriptures the same in verse 7 remember Jesus own words about what the scriptures said must happen in verse 44 notice again

[32 : 54] Jesus says explicitly this is very important that even when he was still with them he simply taught them what the bible said that's so so important to realize isn't it when foolish people talk today about Jesus speaking individual words to them out of the sky totally separate from the scriptures Agnes told me that was what a bunch of young people at a national conference were being taught recently about how God guides you look look at what Jesus says even when Jesus was present bodily on the earth how did he guide his followers by teaching them to understand the bible that is exactly how he guides us still do you see Luke's message loud and clear here these first disciples were transformed from misery to mission through this majestic gospel through talk through teaching that opens minds to understand the scriptures in the light of the cross of Christ and to understand the cross of Christ in the light of the scriptures and of that

Luke says we can be certain and because of that he is telling us that we can also be confident today that the journey from grief to gladness for the whole world will be through the same majestic biblical gospel people will be transformed from unbelieving skepticism to believing joy and from miserable argumentative Christianity to real missionary zeal as the scriptures are opened and as Christ is proclaimed they will hear the word of power that created the world and recreated the universe and they will be transformed by that as the bible is opened as the scriptures are proclaimed and understood that's Luke's message in this chapter that is the word of the risen Lord look closely at Jesus' words here in verses 25 to 27 it's important to see that it's a two-fold message first there's rebuke verse 25 oh foolish ones and slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken

Jesus says that these people are miserable because the basic problem is that they're foolish their hearts are cold and sluggish because they don't believe all of God's word even in the face of clear evidence of the resurrection verse 26 their unbelief remains until the entrance of God's word brings light you see faith is based on evidence of course it is and the evidence is abundant Luke records it for us but as the bible tells us sin so blinds our eyes and our hearts blinds us to the truth that we need the saviour's living word to lift the veil so that we can see what's always been there but what we've been blinded to by sinful prejudice it's what Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 4 isn't it that the God of this world has blinded the eyes of unbelievers and that's a theme that we see all through Luke's gospel do you remember Zechariah at the beginning a good man a faithful man far far better than most but the angels struck him dumb why?

because he didn't believe God's word to him about what God was fulfilling in Jesus Christ he believed some of God's word of course he did but not all he just didn't see what the whole thing was really all about and that was these men they were miserable because they were wrong about Jesus they were wrong about the whole Bible they wanted Jesus to fit into their expectations of a savior but he didn't and so they totally misunderstood what his death really meant they totally understood both the magnitude of the real problem of this world and our own lives and therefore of course they misunderstood understood the real magnitude of the redemption that Jesus came to bring if they had grasped that they would have rejoiced in the cross but instead they were miserable they wanted a temporal redeemer they wanted someone to change this world and make it a better place to kick out the Romans to promote their culture and their religion and so on and Jesus let them down on that and that is so often still the same today because people have the wrong expectations of Jesus because they haven't believed and understood all the scriptures the true biblical gospel they believe only what they want to believe and not the rest so you see the liberal theology that has so blighted the church in the west in the last century and a half it wants a social redeemer it wants a Jesus to make this world a better place and so they love some scriptures about justice and about the poor and so on but they reject other scriptures about the supernatural about bodily resurrection about sacrifice for sins and forgiveness of sins well what does the church in the west reap since the latter part of the 19th century disillusion despair and empty churches most parishes this morning in this country will be filled with a few ancient stalwarts trying to put our brave face on an empty church that's the truth no mission no joy no life on the other hand you get people who would call themselves evangelical people but actually who are just looking for a prosperity gospel

Jesus the redeemer for this world to make me healthy in body to make me wealthy to make me prosperous to make me feel good to make me find fulfillment of who I am in life that may bring zeal for a while but friends it leads so so often to disillusion and real despair in the end when you're not healed as you hope or someone you love isn't or when some tragedy or other blights your earthly life and Jesus says firmly but gently foolish ones how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken because there must be the cross for the Christ who is on the road to glory and there must be the cross life as I've been teaching you for every disciple who will walk that road to glory with me my kingdom is not of this world he said my kingdom is not coming that way with those kind of signs my kingdom is a whole new creation of this world and I came to usher it in ultimately and I came to prepare you for it now that's what I taught you when I was among you from the whole of the scriptures and that's what my death and resurrection has now begun on this first day this first day of new creation and so Jesus issues a rebuke and then he turns verse 27 to revelation you see they've already had evidence of his resurrection told them by the women and the other disciples but no one is saved by facts alone are they but by faith that grasps what these facts actually mean and as Paul tells us faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ well here is revelation in the words of the risen

[41 : 10] Christ himself directly to these people but notice there's nothing new in this revelation what does he tell them beginning with Moses right at the beginning and all the prophets he simply interprets to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself it is the scriptures opened by Jesus himself to those first disciples and opened by the spirit of Jesus to the whole world that is the power of God to open eyes to the reality of the cross and therefore that message is the power of God for salvation Jesus taught them that it isn't at all about us fitting the story of Jesus somehow into our human expectations it's about fitting all our human expectations into the eternal plan and purpose of God which is all about

Jesus Christ and the whole Bible he is saying is about him it's his story the whole of history is about him the whole of time and eternity is about him everything that matters in this whole universe matters only in so far as it relates to the Lord Jesus Christ he is the beginning and the end the alpha and the omega of time and of history and of eternity and the climax of his story the center of it all is his death and resurrection and ascension to glory his saving work is complete in that act and it's because of that and that alone that any of us can find a place in his story look down to verse 46 again and see Jesus telling us the Bible's message that in his death and resurrection now at last can be repentance and forgiveness for lost sinners and a glorious hope he says for all the nations for all eternity see it is grasping that and how vast and how majestic the true gospel really is it's grasping that that will turn miserable and depressed people into glad and joyful missionary ambassadors with hearts on fire with lips on fire for Jesus that's what happened to these disciples in this chapter at last they understood the word of the cross in the light of the resurrection because they heard the voice of the triumphant

Lord Jesus Christ calling them in a transformation of new life just as Jesus had promised the dead will hear the voice of the son of God and those who hear will live and so these miserable depressed self-absorbed disciples are transformed into flaming heralds of the gospel of the cross but don't miss it says Luke it all happened as he opened to them the scriptures did not our hearts burn within us as he opened to us the scriptures that's Luke's message all through the gospel and all through this chapter you can have certainty and you can have confidence in the transforming power of the risen word of God when it is heard with the Bible opened and the scriptures expounded to teach the majestic gospel of the cross of Jesus

Christ there is power to transform lost people from grief to gladness and to transform cold hearts to burning mission in the church this is so so important isn't it because you have friends and family who don't believe who are skeptical you have friends perhaps who are very vague about Christian things but are still miserable are still in the dark what they need is to hear the powerful voice of the risen Lord the transforming voice that alone can bring life to the dead and they can hear it and they will hear it as the scriptures are open to them and they're made to understand the majestic gospel of Christ as the Bible is opened and proclaimed his voice is truly heard just as it was on the road to Emmaus that's what we see all through

Luke's second volume the Acts of the Apostles when the spirit of the Lord Jesus came upon the church to do that very thing to empower them to do exactly that that's the power from on high Luke mentions here in verse 49 and is fully explained in Acts chapter 1 and it's exactly what you see all through Acts go to Acts chapter 8 later on the Ethiopian on the road in the desert reading from the prophet Isaiah and Philip comes up there and explains to him starting right there about the servant of the Lord and that it is Jesus and it's fulfilled in his cross and resurrection and that man is transformed he hears the call of Christ Acts chapter 10 you see it in the household of Cornelius where Peter expounds Jesus words and the words of the prophets to that whole household and we're told while he was speaking these words the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word they heard the voice of the risen Lord as the scriptures were open to them you see Luke is saying you can have certainty about the power of the biblical gospel and so you can have confidence to open the

[47 : 14] Bible and to explain from the scriptures the gospel of Christ and the voice of the risen Lord Jesus will be heard powerfully calling people into life you can bring your friends with confidence to hear biblical preaching whether the preaching is from Moses or the prophets or the Psalms or John's gospel or Acts or Revelation or wherever you can be confident of that Jesus will speak to people the transforming word of the risen Lord Jesus will be at work his voice will be heard and it will be heard to transform miserable and feeble and grieving Christians into missionary people people with truly burning hearts and bursting lips nothing else but the living word of Christ can possibly do that to the human heart nothing else friends will transform us or our children but the transforming power of the voice of

Christ in all the scriptures that's why the approach sadly in so many churches to children's work and youth work that says don't give them too much Bible we don't want to put them off nothing too heavy friends that approach is nothing short of catastrophic and has been in the life of the church in this nation if we as Christians and as churches are not opening the Bible with our young people well we'll reap what we sow won't we the death of the church but let me close with a question for you to ponder is this picture of the miserable and rather disappointed disciples does it strike a chord with you this morning maybe it's not visible on your face but perhaps deep down you are feeling rather dejected rather disappointed perhaps because of some of the hopes that you had had for Jesus for your life hasn't been materialized in the way you'd hoped maybe you've been arguing and disputing with him or perhaps with others because of that well if that's so maybe Jesus is saying to you oh foolish ones slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken you've been picky have you been wanting to choose your version of the gospel and of Christian faith blanking out some of those more challenging things that

Jesus says some of the things he's been teaching us even right here in Luke's gospel about what the way of the cross really means have you been doing that if you have that's why you don't have the burning heart perhaps that you long to have because you haven't properly grasped the whole of the gospel in all the scriptures the full story of the risen Lord Jesus whose glory comes only through the cross and only by walking the road to the cross and in the end friends that is the cause of every single spiritual dysfunction in our lives every single one we haven't properly understood the fullness of the gospel of Christ we need to stop trying to fit Jesus into our expectation for this world and instead we need to listen to

Jesus to how the risen Lord speaks to us how he always spoke in all the scriptures we need to let him help us grasp the greatness of his true story and grasp the wonder of the glory of his death for our sins and what he has truly accomplished for us forever in the greatness of his salvation so that we can share a part in his story he has done this for us the only way away for more and more miserable grieving about your own life and your own circumstances and the only way to more and more missionary gladness that will enrich others lives as well as enriching your own is to live more and more and more in this majestic gospel and if our hearts are not burning and our lips are not bursting it can only be because we also haven't yet grasped the greatness of this gospel or because we've drifted and closed our ears to his voice and let our hearts somehow grow cold we need to pray don't we for ourselves for our own church for churches all over our city all over our nation we need to pray for the bible to be opened in the power of the spirit and for the voice of the risen lord jesus to be heard to make hearts burn afresh with the joy of this majestic gospel of everlasting life that comes through the cross of our lord jesus christ our sins forgiven made certain by the reality of the risen lord jesus who speaks that great word of peace to us well let's pray heavenly father how we thank you for this your certain word the word that you've been speaking to this world from the very beginning of our rebellion the promise of hope and of life of forgiveness and transformation and redemption through the cross of your dear son who must humble himself and must be rejected and crucified to bear away our sins but who must also be raised to glorious life to assure us of a future that is ours for all who will love him so lord help us we pray in our hearts so easily turn to disappointment turn our eyes and turn our ears we pray to the voice of the risen lord may we find in all the scriptures the joy and the life that you alone can give and may we be a people who rejoice in the missionary joy of sharing this message with others to the very ends of our days we ask it in jesus name amen amen amen amen we and amen to let not be