

AND THEIR EYES WERE OPENED!**Luke 24:13-35****(Read Luke 24:13-35)****Intro:** What opens your eyes?

Sally Ashbaugh gave me a word search the other week. It's not the usual word search puzzle that might come to your mind with rows and columns where the objective is to find and mark hidden words that might be arranged horizontally, vertically, or diagonally. No, this was a story about the puzzle and the thirty books of the Bible that were hidden in it. Some were easy to find and others not so easy, and, for me, five of them are IMPOSSIBLE to find. I spent some time on the puzzle right after Sally gave it to me and found 17 of the 30 books pretty quickly. Then I started going cross-eyed trying to find more so I put the puzzle down and when back to the work I had been doing. Then I went back with fresh eyes, and I was able to find some more. And then I took another break. Having fresh eyes really helped.

Kathy sometimes loses a contact and after a few unsuccessful minutes of search, will call me into the bathroom so I can look with fresh eyes.

Looking with fresh eyes brings a new perspective or a different angle that you didn't consider before.

This account from Luke is a powerful picture of two grieving disciples who were given fresh eyes by this stranger who was curiously familiar but, as our text says, their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And when they did, WOW!!! They looked at each other and said, "*Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us?*"

That's what I love about this story – it's a perfect example of "You can't make this stuff up!" It's just that good. F. B. Meyer said this of it, "*This exquisite idyll of the resurrection is too lifelike and natural to have been invented. The sorrowful walk; the reasonings; the wonder that anyone could have been forever so short a time in Jerusalem without knowing of the events that filled their souls; the lingering hope; the despair that the third day was waning and he had not come; somebody calling the clue of the morning announcement which had not been followed up; the burning heart—all these touches are full of natural pathos.*"

Yes, you can't make this up. This is an episodic story from the mind of one whose heart still burned with the power of the experience. It's what happens when you find out something terrible has been turned to joy.

The people that should have known, the religious rulers, should have known better. But they refused to see Jesus for what he was. They refused to see. They preferred blindness.

And frankly these two who Jesus came upon on the road to Emmaus should have known better too – and they told Jesus as much. Not knowing they were talking to the very person they were referring to and grieving for, they share their sadness at their dashed hopes. "*We hoped he would save Israel. He told us he would rise on the third day – and here it is, the third day – and where is he? Well, yeah, his grave is empty but we haven't seen him.*"

But they WERE seeing him!

But they weren't seeing him, so he patiently set them straight before the big reveal. G. Campbell Morgan points that "*These weren't famous apostles, they were simple and half-anonymous followers of Jesus. 'I take it as characteristic of the Lord that in the glory of His resurrection life He gave Himself with such fullness of disclosure to these unknown and undistinguished men... He still reveals Himself to lowly hearts. Here is the Saviour for the common man.'*" And he took time with them. He will reveal himself to open hearts.

I can only imagine how Jesus must have been smiling inside as he did this. David Guzik says, "*Jesus knew both what they already knew (that they were sad) and what they did not yet know (that they had no reason to be sad).*"

He played along with the conversation, encouraging the two disciples (I think they were a husband and wife) to reveal their hearts. Even though He knew their hearts: Jesus wants to know what our hearts are saying even though he already knows – because that helps us to know. It opens our eyes. He found this out:

They knew His name and where He was from – Jesus of Nazareth.

They knew He was a Prophet.

They knew He was mighty in deed and word.

They knew He was crucified.

They knew He promised to redeem Israel.

But do they know He rose from the dead – just as he promised? You see, they had heard he had risen, but they had not seen him with their own eyes.

Here's where this applies to us on the Easter Day. It's why we celebrate. Jesus wanted to know from them what He wants to know from us today: can we believe without seeing with our own eyes? We can believe and must believe based on the reliable eyewitness testimony of other people – and we find that right here in the Bible

In verse 25, he calls them out and says, "*O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!*" He was essentially saying that the problem with their belief was more in their heart than their head.

Last week I caught an ancient video of Mylon LeFever in his southern fried rock and roll days. For some of you, you have no idea who he was – but he was from a Southern Gospel family the LeFever's but he was the black sheep that strayed from the flock for a few years until God got hold of him and pulled him out of his addictions and back into Christian music and in particular his Christian rock group Mylon LeFever and Broken Heart. Kathy and I went several of his concerts and in a fit of nostalgia I looked up a couple of my favorites and one was a sweet ballad with these words that are really apropos for this talk about the Emmaus walk.

Listen,

Break my heart and change my mind.

Cut me loose from ties that bind.

Lead me as I follow You.

Give me strength to follow through.

Holy Spirit fill me up.

Gently overflow my cup.

Touch my eyes and let me see.

Me in You and You in me

Oh more, more, I want to be more like Jesus.

More of Jesus, less of me.

By His power I will be.

Like a flower in the spring.

Brand new life in everything.

That's my prayer for all of us today... that we would all be more like Jesus and less like me.

Jesus shared and filled their hearts with truth – and then as they invited him into their lodgings and they began dinner – they were allowed to see when he broke the bread. **THAT'S WHEN THEY KNEW WHO THIS FAMILIAR STRANGER WAS!**

And their eyes were opened!

Jesus may be right in front of you, walking with you and sitting down with you at a meal – and your eyes aren't seeing him.

Are your eyes seeing him?

What will open your eyes?

What will turn you in your tracks and make you proclaim "The Lord has risen indeed!"

Pray for opened eyes and for your opened heart to be filled with the lasting joy this Resurrection Day brings every day. Amen.