

Hope in the Resurrection, After the Dust Settles

Luke 24:13-32

*“thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and then on the third day rise from the dead, and that **repentance for the forgiveness of sins** should be proclaimed in His name to all nations”*

Introduction: Pete Holmes is a comedian and actor that represents many people today. If you saw “*The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*” or follow the comic world, you would recognize his face or his work. He has found success as an author, actor, writer, producer and stand-up comedian, and is known for improvisational humor and satirical looks at the world, but also on his past of growing up in the church. Up until his early 20’s, Pete was part of a church that preached the gospel (or at least one that said Jesus died on the cross for our sins and rose on the third day), he did not swear (which he has made up for lost time now), or drink, or have sex outside of marriage. He prayed, evangelized, and got married at 22 years old, believing that he “*had done everything right*” and that God would protect him from bad things.

But everything turned for Pete when he found out his wife had an affair, which lead to a divorce. Devastated, Pete began to question the goodness of the God he had been taught about, including the existence or fairness of **hell**, and concluded that he could not follow a God who would condemn people to hell for simply following a different religion, or a God who looked down on sex outside of marriage if it didn’t work out for him **IN marriage**. Now Pete considers himself religious, believes in Jesus, but not the way the Bible describes. When asked if he is happier now, he laughed in a most overstated way (like he was trying to convince himself) that he was.¹

This is the experience of far too many. They believe there is a God and Jesus exists, know the story of Christmas and Easter, but do not give their lives by faith to that truth, and will believe it as long as life works around them. But when **trauma happens** (divorce), it reveals a wrong view of **truth and the gospel** (God wants me to be good, and if I do this, life will go well), and **unmet expectations**. This can easily set someone on a trajectory AWAY from God, rather than drawing them to Him.

This morning, we get to see what happened when all the dust settled. We are going ahead in the story of Jesus **after** the resurrection, as those who had pinned their hopes on a messiah were dashed, realizing that Jesus was far different than they hoped. We will focus on two men who had trauma, it was revealed their understanding of the gospel was incomplete, and who had unmet expectations, leaving Jerusalem discouraged on **Easter Sunday, the very day that should have been a day of rejoicing.**

The Conditions of Hopelessness

Luke 24:13-24 “That **very day** two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem,¹⁴ and they **were talking with each other about all these things that had happened.**¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them.¹⁶ But their eyes were kept from recognizing him.¹⁷ And he said to them, “What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?” And they stood still, **looking sad.**¹⁸ Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?”¹⁹ And he said to them, “What things?” And they said to him, “Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,²⁰ and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him.²¹ **But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.** Yes, and

¹ https://youtube.com/shorts/BLWmPe_wsW0?si=i8fC-RAOQlolljtn
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pq9AkpsFIXk>

besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened.²² Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning,²³ and **when they did not find his body**, they came back saying that they had even 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 as the women had said, **but him they did not see.**"

The Problem of Unmet Expectations

The scene sets up as a pitiful one. Two people, one identified as Cleopas and the other unnamed, are walking late in the afternoon on Sunday, literally a few hours after the tomb that Jesus was laid in was found empty. They began the week with the highest of hopes and expectations, believing to be on the right side of the One who would deliver and redeem Israel. Now they started the 7-mile journey home, a trip that would have felt longer going home than coming in. You could imagine their conversation with each other as they tried to piece together what had just happened. How did it all unravel so quickly? They went to bed on Thursday with hopes of **kingdoms and victory, and woke up with shouts of "Crucify Him" on Friday morning!** How did they move from celebration of the people and mastery of the religious leaders to arrest, trial, and death like a common criminal in a matter of hours/days? When the veiled Jesus asked them what they were talking about, they stood still looking sad, or literally **gloomy in countenance.**

When they explained back what happened three days before, you could almost hear the **hopelessness in their voices.** "We had hoped that this One was the One who would finally REDEEM Israel. All the markers were there. He was a prophet who was validated not only in the way He taught but by the mighty deeds He did. He was clearly the guy, and would have been the guy but the religious leaders (notice they did not call out the Romans – they were simply the instruments to carry out the deed) had their way and arrested, condemned, and crucified Him. Obviously He could NOT be the guy if all of this happened"

They had heard the stories of the women at the empty tomb, but this did not persuade. Even though there was testimony of angels, the validation of the women, and an empty tomb, these two travelers still were not connecting that this **WAS THE THIRD DAY**, the tomb **WAS** empty, and **JESUS WAS** alive. The fact that it **WAS** the third day and they had **NOT SEEN JESUS** led them to disenchantment, not hope.

What do you think the reaction of these two was? What is your reaction when you had expectations of a spouse, friend, or even God Himself, and they did not deliver? Life turned out differently, or marriage turned out to be harder, or having kids didn't bring ultimate satisfaction. I believe these two were dealing with a mixture of **confusion, anger, frustration, bitterness, depression, disillusionment**, and their greatest plight, **unbelief.** This meant their hearts were **cold**, their passion **low**, and their hopes **dashed.** They were returned home changed, but instead of vibrancy they were moping, turning their gaze inward, and focusing on what they lost, rather than what they gained.

If they followed this trajectory, following trauma and unmet expectations, it would not be a long walk to project where they went from there: **ISOLATION** – which is what Peter had done when he went back to fishing – running away from God and answers, trying to find solutions on our own; **NUMB** – instead of turning to the truth, we turn to pleasure or activity, anything to keep our mind away from the disappointment that we feel; **REPLACEMENT** – This is what Pete Holmes did – replace any truth that he knew with "new truth", one that puts self at the center, allows us to do what we want, and maintains a sense that we **STILL** believe in Jesus.

Reaching the Hopeless

Now notice that it was in this context that Jesus approached these two on their journey. This was the same day He rose. Apparently He had already appeared to Peter (Luke 24:34) between the morning and this walk, and just as He would restore Peter, He sought out these two to move them from their hopelessness to joy. What we want to look at is **how** did Jesus go about this. *If Jesus wanted to reassure His followers, wouldn't He simply show them His scars, have them touch His hair, and explain what really went on between the cross and the empty tomb?* Sometimes we think that today. Why doesn't Jesus just do something miraculous, create an HDTV in the sky and communicate on a broad scale with the world? Two reasons: 1) We come to Him by faith, not sight; 2) He left us a model we could actually emulate. What was that model?

Proactive Approach

Jesus himself drew near and went with them (15)

As these two were on the road, a stranger (to them) sidled up next to them and began to walk with them, asking questions. Remember, this is the same day that Jesus rose and the time He has left on this earth is limited. He would appear to Peter, the 12, and 500 at one time (1 Cor. 15:5-6). But in that limited window **He spent time with two seemingly insignificant followers**. It's not clear how long it would take to walk 7 miles, but if they walked a mile in 15 minutes, we are talking a little under 2 hours. He also stayed for a meal with them, which could have taken another couple of hours. In other words, on the day of His resurrection, He spent a good portion of the day with **two disheartened, struggling, and hopeless followers to restore them to joy**. He did not send someone else, work through delegates, or pass it off. He spoke with them, spent time listening, and clarified important holes in their thinking. It's fascinating to me that Jesus did not immediately rise from the dead and go to the Temple Mount and proclaim to all that HE WON --- but His goal was to draw real people by faith, not just rule over manmade institutions. Jesus cares about individuals, real people, not just numbers.

Provocative Drawing

"What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?"

"What things?"

Any good teacher will tell you about the power of the question. Asking good, thought provoking questions allows the listener to think, to process critically, and communicate honestly rather than what was expected. Jesus was the master of this. **He knew the answer already**, like any good parent who asks these of his kids. But rather than explain or declare, He allowed them to open up, both factually and emotionally. Their response to the first question is comical. "Have you been living in a box?" How do you not know what *just happened?!!* So Jesus followed up with a second, "What things?" This allowed Cleopas to show his cards, to display his disappointment, and declare what he really needed.

Jesus kept these men from knowing who he was (16) intentionally. Why? Because Jesus not only does not force Himself on us, but He was allowing these men to work out their disappointment and to reveal the holes in their understanding. It was at that point they were ready to hear the truth.

Presentation of the Word

Luke 24:25-27 *And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!"²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, **he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.***

Telling someone the truth is one of the most loving things we could ever do. Helping someone to understand the truth of Scripture as it relates and displays Jesus Christ is more loving still. The two people walking along the road had a knowledge of Scripture **but it was incomplete. Half-truth is dangerous, and half gospel is disastrous.** They believed the Old Testament was true, but there were far too many holes and gaps in their understanding to point them down the correct road. They had a fundamental flaw of missing the suffering part of the Messiah, missed the substitutionary act of a perfect Lamb taking away sin, and they missed the fact that redemption of the land and people could only come after this had taken place. They misunderstood that the **redemption He offered was NOT freedom from Rome but freedom from sin through repentance.** Even though Jesus had explicitly told them multiple times He would raise the third day (Matt. 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:10-19; Luke 18:31-33; John 1:19-21), they would NOT BELIEVE BY FAITH UNTIL THEY SAW HIM.

- **Direct Response to Honest Answers** – Honesty is not enough if devoid of the truth. We live in a time where authenticity is highly valued and honest is of supreme worth. However, we also use *honest* as a smokescreen to avoid change. Honesty is a starting point for change, not the end. These disciples were honest in their sadness, loss of hope, and disappointment, but where that left them was NOT a good place nor one that left them ready to be His witnesses. Notice that Jesus started by asking questions but was willing to make a direct response: **“You are being foolish and your heart is dull in unbelief, and that needs to change.”** Someone being honest allows us to enter this type of direct truth into root of the problem and the source where change needs to take place.
- **Reminded of the truth they already knew** – These followers had heard the truth and had seen the power of Jesus, but they quickly forgot what they already knew. Jesus asked them the rhetorical question of “was it not necessary that Christ should suffer and die?!” a message that He had given them before. Often in the midst of struggle and hopelessness we lose sight of dear truths that we know and understand but lose sight of in the midst of pain and emotion.
- **Connected the dots of redemptive history** - Notice that Jesus did not simply recount the stories of the OT, He told THE STORY of the OT that kept Him at the center. Often we think about the Bible as a collection of disjointed stories, moral anecdotes that fit well on flannel graphs or teach us about overcoming giants or conquering cities (David and Joshua - respectively). But the whole of the Bible is one story of redemption, arching back to the Garden of Eden when God promised that from the seed of the woman, her offspring would crush the head of the serpent (Genesis 3:15), the first message of hope for those who experienced death through sin. **All of the Covenants, sacrificial system, and promises of the OT found their fulfillment in Jesus, pointing to the cross and redemption that would come when Jesus entered into humanity to offer Himself in the place of mankind.**

Why did Jesus have to suffer and die? This was the only way God could draw back sinful humanity to Himself. We were ALL born into sin because we are descendants of the first man, Adam. Because of our sin nature, we continue to sin and are separated from God, without any means in ourselves to get back to Him. The Law of the OT could not do it, but pointed out the pervasiveness of our sin and the inability we have to keep the Law. So God had to provide a substitute, a Lamb, who was perfect, holy, blameless, and willing to go to the cross and die a death we deserved. God treated Jesus like He should have treated us, as a sinner, and poured out His wrath on Jesus: *For our sake he made*

him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21)

On the cross, Jesus paid the penalty of our **sin**, so that God could look at His righteousness when He looks at us. In the resurrection, Christ defeated **death**, demonstrating and proclaiming that death no longer has a hold on us. Sin and death dogged all of us, and were both dealt with on the cross and resurrection. And our only response is to **repent and believe**, to seek forgiveness, recognizing our great sin and that we deserve judgment. We believe that Jesus died in our place, and turn from a life of **self ANTHING in order to glorify God, not ourselves**.

The Resulting Change from Hopelessness

A Heart Set Ablaze

Luke 24:31-32 And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. 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?"

What warmed the heart of these two disciples? What ignited them from ice cold distance to passionate closeness? The answer is that their eyes and hearts were opened to the realities of the Scripture, which meant they could comprehend Jesus, truly, for the first time. Just as their eyes were opened to see Jesus sitting in front of them, Scripture was opened to them to defrost their icy, hopeless hearts.

These men got to see Jesus, but He did not stay, so that they would continue to walk by faith. They had enough in Scripture to understand all they needed. **What is keeping you from repenting? What is keeping you from moving from a mental understanding to a complete yielding to Christ?** These men moved from a hopeless trajectory to a transformed reality, and it was simply because of the fact that they believed all that Jesus told them.

A Mind Ready for Action

When our hearts are on fire, it means we are truly ready for action. These two u-turned immediately and went back to Jerusalem to talk to the eleven other disciples. They told them about the resurrected Jesus and recounted what Jesus had taught them. Anyone who has tasted of repentance and forgiveness will WANT to tell others, and these men became those who would have shared this story over and over. This is a mark of a transformed life.

*Are you struggling this morning? Are you feeling distant and hopeless, unmotivated, with unmet expectations? Have you had trauma in your past that has tainted your view of God, the church, or the gospel? Have you had an incomplete view of the gospel itself? The answer is right in front of you. It is **recapturing a right view of Jesus through and in His Word**. The solution to hopelessness? Understand the great love that God has for us in Christ, who lived, died, and rose to offer salvation for all who would believe. **Our response:** Repent, believe, and follow a risen Savior who died so we could be forgiven, know Him, and live with Him eternally!*