

LOOKING AT LUKE
HEARTBURN

Saturday, September 5

Reading: Luke 24

Luke 24:25 He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! **26** Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter His glory?" **27** And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself...**30** When He was at the table with them, He took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them.**31** Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him, and He disappeared from their sight. **32** They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

Bruce L. Shelley was a well-respected professor and author. He wrote many books including Church History in Plain Language which is still used in many colleges and seminars today. In this book he writes: "It is easy to determine when something is aflame. It ignites other material. Any fire that does not spread will eventually go out. A church without evangelism is a contradiction in terms, just as a fire that does not burn is a contradiction."¹

The two disciples who journeyed the seven miles from Jerusalem to Emmaus that Sunday afternoon were confused. The death of Jesus had devastated His followers and now the news of the women who visited the tomb made them even more upset. While they wondered what was going on, a Stranger joined them. As they walked, He explained the prophecies of Scripture about how the Messiah would suffer and rise again. It was not until He broke the bread at the evening meal that they recognized the stranger was Jesus. Then Jesus vanished from their sight. Overjoyed, they ran back to Jerusalem to tell the apostles of their encounter.

How I wish I could have been on that road as Jesus taught through the Bible about Himself! It must have been the greatest Bible study ever conducted. No wonder the disciples' hearts burned as they started to understand the plan of God revealed in His Word. What Jesus explained to them (and later to the rest of the apostles - 24:36-49) was the heart of the gospel.

Sadly, in many American churches today evangelism has "cooled off." Our hearts no longer burn with the excitement and joy for the gospel that those first believers had. What has thrown water on the fire? Maybe we don't talk about it in "church world" as much as we ought. Or maybe it is because so many have attempted to water down the gospel message in order not to offend people. But the gospel is MEANT to offend sinful hearts (1 Corinthians 1:21-25). It is supposed to shatter the proud and self-sufficient attitude that says "I don't need any help! I'm fine just the way I am!"

We need to reignite our fire for the gospel and watch it spread like wildfire through our churches and communities. We need hearts like those of the two on the Emmaus Road who said, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" (24:32).

Do you have heart burn?

¹ Bruce L. Shelley. Christian Theology in Plain Language, p. 162