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Luke 24:25-27

SEEK JESUS IN THE SCRIPTURES

What's the point of the Bible? One thing: Jesus.

The Emmaus disciples puzzled over Jesus' death and the sightings of Jesus afterwards. In their own words, they were hoping that Jesus would be the one who was going to redeem Israel. They didn't know what to make of it all. It makes you wonder, what did they think *the Bible* was for? If it wasn't to explain Jesus to them and what He came to do for us, what was it about? Just a book about Jewish history? Or Jewish customs? Or a rulebook for worship and living? Or a book predicting their political future?

Jesus responded, *"How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?"* Then we are told, *"And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself."*

You want to find Jesus? Seek Jesus in the Scriptures. Jesus Himself tells us so. If Jesus had let the Emmaus disciples recognize Him right away, it would only have brought about more bewilderment as it already had that morning when He appeared to the others. No, first they needed to be convinced by the Scriptures who Jesus is and what He came to do. Then they could comprehend it when they saw Jesus physically in front of them. "Oh! He had to die and rise again to save us!"

There were many others who saw Jesus after His Resurrection, but they still didn't recognize Him or believe in Him. That's because they did not believe what the Scriptures said about Christ.

Notice, therefore, whether it was the Emmaus disciples or others, *everyone's* inability to figure it out on their own. Isn't that so often the case for us too? We're not exactly sure about God-related things, and we figure it's sort of hopeless to ever be able to find out for sure. Or maybe we're not exactly certain what happens to us after we die. We don't completely know what to make of the pope's death or Terri Schaivo's death. If you really pigeon-hole us, maybe we can't even put it into words exactly how it is a person gets into heaven or what God is really interested in. Even the most studied Christians find that they so quickly forget the simplest truths and they have to drill it into their brains over and over and even in spite of that they don't feel like they've got a good grasp of things.

That's because of the curse that covers our hearts and minds like a heavy curtain. It is the curse of sin. When Adam and Eve fell into sin they lost the true knowledge of God. Ever since, we have been born into spiritual blindness and natural ignorance of God. It is dreadful that countless millions are moving on the conveyor belt to death like sheep for the slaughter without any accurate inclination of how to be rescued, little realizing that the judgment of hell lies beyond. Mankind is doomed to such an existence.

But what extraordinary love God had for us that did not abandon us to that existence. He came and broke through our darkness to reveal Himself to us in the person of Jesus Christ. And Jesus Christ is revealed to us in the Scriptures. Seek Jesus in the Scriptures. That is how we can recognize Him.

Whenever another video recording of Osama Bin Ladan pops up, analysts have to evaluate if it's the real thing, or a fake, when it was recorded, before or after 9/11 and so on. Thankfully, God chose a much more reliable way to reveal Jesus to us on the pages of the meticulously, miraculously preserved Scriptures. Page after page what you see in the Bible are not merely words. You see the very face of Jesus staring back at you, the words are coming straight from His mouth.

Thank God for the magnanimous way He reveals Jesus to us. For He did not author the Bible to be a book of philosophies about life, or a rulebook on how to live, a guide for practical advice or a self-help resource for moral improvement. He does not instruct us how to get ourselves right with God and do what's necessary to rescue ourselves from death and hell. From beginning to end, the Bible is nothing but Jesus. He *is* the way for you to be saved. He lived the perfect life you get credit for. He suffered the full cost for our sin by His death on the cross. He rose again from the dead. He did it all. There is nothing left but for us to look on Him and rely on Him. What love God has for us that in spite of all our confusion, misdirection, carelessness or even ignorance, God shows us one thing in the Bible: Jesus. He is all that matters for our salvation.

It makes a person literally want to jump for joy! After Jesus showed Himself from the Scriptures to the Emmaus disciples they said, "*Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?*" By the power of God's Spirit seeking Jesus in the Scriptures has that effect. It sets your heart on fire.

Sometimes we feel like God's Word or going to church isn't having that much of an effect on us. If we are looking at the Bible or listening to a sermon or receiving the Sacrament for any other purpose than to see Jesus, then we should expect as much. Christ's main purpose for coming to earth was to take away our sins and to save our lives for eternity. Jesus said, "*Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?*" That is the truth about Jesus that sets our hearts on fire.

Consider the effect it had on the Emmaus disciples. With hearts on fire they begged Jesus to stay with them –even before they knew it was Him. Then in their home Jesus became the host and master, not merely a guest. It was Jesus who broke the bread, said grace and distributed it. Jesus becomes master wherever someone's heart has been set on fire by Him. With hearts on fire the joy of the Emmaus disciples didn't fade when Jesus disappeared either. They were still just as happy as ever because even though they couldn't see Him, they still had Him in the Scriptures. And finally, with

hearts on fire the Emmaus disciples made the trek all the way back to Jerusalem on foot several miles even though it was getting dark. They couldn't contain themselves. They had to go tell the others.

Do you think the Holy Spirit would have had such things written down for us only to dangle it like a carrot in front of us? Do you think the Spirit of Jesus only worked that way in people's hearts in Bible times? Then what would be His point in telling us now?

No, be assured that the same Jesus who gives Himself to you through Scripture and preaching and bread and wine, also generously gives you His Spirit through these vehicles. Otherwise we wouldn't have believed any of it in the first place. But here we are. We are seeking Jesus. We desire Him. The Scriptures is where we find Him so that we can recognize Him and so that our hearts are set on fire.