

Open Our Eyes Lord
Luke 24:28-49

There are so many hidden treasures that are given all throughout these scriptures, Words of truth, Words of Wisdom, Words of Promise. And they are so needful to us in our times of learning and helpful in our times of trouble.

But one of the difficulties that we have with our ordinary senses is that we can only grasp words as they seem to be intended at the moment. And we often fail to perceive any deeper meanings that might be hidden within them.

And that is especially so with words like those spoken by the Prophets like Isaiah. Prophets especially chosen by God to speak forth some of His plans and His purposes that would take place on a different day, sometimes soon to the moment that they're given, but others many hundreds, even thousands of years later.

In some of those words that the Holy Spirit gave to the Prophet Isaiah that we'll study in a few moments, Isaiah was speaking for himself and for the circumstance that he was involved in at the moment. But then at other times, as we'll see in today's study, Isaiah was also mysteriously given a prophetic Word from God that would take place later, at another time, hundreds of years later.

And for us, as we read the precious words of these scriptures, we too often can't recognize those words for what they truly are unless and until we have the miraculous help of the Holy Spirit of Christ to open our eyes to their meaning.

But let's pause for a moment and read the passage that we'll study today, and we'll talk more about it.

Here in this passage, Jesus was first with the two men on their journey to Emmaus. And then next, He suddenly appeared to His disciples who were hidden away in fear and confusion. Listen again to these words given to us here in Luke chapter 24.

²⁸ Then they (this is Jesus and the two men who were journeying towards Emmaus) drew near to the village where they were going, and He (Jesus) indicated that He would have gone farther. ²⁹ But they constrained Him, saying, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And He went in to stay with them. ³⁰ Now it came to pass, as He sat at the

table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight. ³² And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?" ³³ So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, ³⁴ saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"

³⁵ And they (Cleopas and the other man) told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.

³⁶ Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you." ³⁷ But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. ³⁸ And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹ Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have." ⁴⁰ When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. ⁴¹ But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, "Have you any food here?" ⁴² So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. ⁴³ And He took it and ate in their presence.

⁴⁴ Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me."

⁴⁵ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷ and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ And you are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."
(Luke 24:28-49)

On an earlier occasion and now here recently again, I've been prompted by the Holy Spirit to have an often reading of the Psalms, especially Psalm 119. My purpose in this often reading and prayer is an effort to very intentionally place specific words from God into my path in such a manner as to allow God the opportunity to minister them to my heart, soul, mind and spirit, in a way that only God's Spirit can minister.

It's as the Psalmist pleads there in verse 18 of Psalm 119, "Open my eyes, that I may see Wondrous things from Your law."

I know that in those times when my heart becomes heavy from pressing difficulties, our Lord will open the eyes of our hearts to special truths that He has for us and He will bring us comfort and encouragement.

My thoughts often go to those words of the familiar hymn, "What a Friend we have in Jesus", where we sing . . .

O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer.

And I am also reminded of Jesus' words in Matthew chapter 11 where He says to us,

²⁸ Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30)

And I'm reminded that as I read and as I pray through these Psalms, the Presence and the peace of Christ will fill my heart and bring comfort to me.

And I am also especially comforted knowing that the Lord Jesus Himself is praying for me that my faith will not fail.

Here in these words of our scripture passage that we'll study today, we find the disciples in a similar condition. They were hidden away, consumed with fear. A strong "spirit of heaviness" had descended upon them and they were uncertain as to what they should do next.

Over the past three days, with Jesus having been arrested, beaten and then crucified, their hearts and their minds had been flooded with a whole range of emotions, first with grief, disbelief, confusion, and despair. But now here also, their hearts were, no doubt, filled with "delight" as Jesus was suddenly standing among them saying things and speaking forth truths from the scriptures that they had never understood before.

Yes, they had often read and heard those scriptures that Jesus was quoting to them now, the words of Moses and the words of the prophets. And they had thought they understood them.

But here, strangely, a clarity and understanding was coming into their minds that they had never experienced before.

It was as if all their lives they had been deaf and now they could hear, blind and now they could see. Here, Jesus "opened" their eyes and the understanding of their minds to receive truths in a way that none of them had ever known before.

Parables that once held a mystery, now were much clearer. And those "hard to understand" prophecies from the Old Testament writers were suddenly taking on meaning that they had never had before, especially those prophecies that spoke specifically about Him, the Lord Jesus.

And yes, on earlier occasions, the disciples had been listening to the teaching of the Lord Jesus, but their minds had not been able to grasp His full meaning.

You might recall one such occasion while Jesus was teaching in the synagogue. He stood up and read from the Prophet Isaiah, and then plainly declared to them that those prophecies were about Himself. Listen to those words of Isaiah as the Prophet spoke about the coming Lord Jesus. There in Luke chapter 4 Jesus read the words of Isaiah that said,

¹⁸ "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; ¹⁹ To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."

²⁰ Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him.

²¹ And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." (Luke 4:18-21)

As we mentioned at the beginning of our study today, one of the difficulties that we have with our ordinary intellect is that we can only grasp words as they seem to be intended and we fail to perceive any deeper meanings that might be cloaked within them. And that is so with words like these spoken by the Prophet

Isaiah. Yes, Isaiah was speaking for himself and for the circumstance that he was in at the moment, but he was also mysteriously giving a prophetic Word from God that would take place later, at another time.

These were words of prophecy given by Isaiah over 700 years earlier, but were specifically speaking about the Lord Jesus as He ministered among the lost people of His day.

Yes again, no doubt, the disciples had heard those very words many times before, especially as they would look forward to the coming of the promised Messiah.

And yes, for three and a half years, these men had been walking with the Lord Jesus, and seeing these exact words being fulfilled right before their very eyes, because Jesus was doing exactly as Isaiah had prophesied.

“He preached the gospel to the poor, He healed the brokenhearted, He set at liberty those who are oppressed and He proclaimed the acceptable year of the Lord”.

And then graciously here, at this moment He performed one more of His precious miracles. And it was on these men! He opened their eyes and their ears to a kind of understanding they had never known before.

May I read these same words that the Lord Jesus spoke, but this time from the Book of Isaiah, in Isaiah 61? And note with me, the words that follow concerning “heaviness of heart” that I spoke about earlier. . . . These words from Isaiah chapter 61 listen . . .

¹ "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good news to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound; ² To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, ³ To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." (Isaiah 61:1-3)

These disciples had been living in grief and confusion for three days, having been caught so unaware by the circumstances that had been suddenly thrust

upon them. And a “spirit of heaviness” like that spoken about by Isaiah the prophet had descended upon them.

Again, yes, Jesus had warned them often about these very events, how He would be beaten and crucified and buried. But He had also assured them that He would arise again on the third day. Unfortunately, though for some reason their minds had rejected His words.

But now, here on this day after His crucifixion, as these men hid themselves away in fear, suddenly everything began to change.

Knowing these men's continual inclination to doubt, Jesus, very graciously stooped to their need and came to them personally, showing them His hands and His feet, and then proving to them that He was alive and not a ghost by eating food.

And slowly, as the moments passed, their eyes began to open and the realization that Jesus was truly alive began to grow on these men.

Folks, His “grace” is grace beyond measure, and exactly what the disciples needed. Yes, they believed, but Jesus was helping them with their unbelief.

Such is the cry of all of our hearts, “I believe Lord, but help my unbelief.”

These disciples believed, but they needed just a little “boost” to “get them over the obstacle” of their unbelief. And knowing their need, Jesus reached forward to help them.

And then He did as He had done on so many other occasions. He began to explain truths from the scriptures. And their eyes were immediately opened and they began to understand.

In the Book of John, we read that it was also in these moments that Jesus first gave His disciples the presence of His Holy Spirit. We read in John chapter 20.
²⁰ When He had said this, He showed them *His* hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

²¹ So Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” ²² And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. (John 20:21-22)

Yes, later on, Jesus would pour out His Spirit upon these men more fully and in a mighty and powerful and visible way. But here, He gave these men their first taste of the most precious gift that mankind could ever receive. He gave them His Holy Spirit.

Praise be to God!

And as He did all these things, the “heaviness of soul” that had so consumed them began to lift and they were made glad.

That is a fulfillment of the words of Isaiah that we just read. Listen again! Isaiah 61,

² . . . To comfort all who mourn, ³ To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. (Isaiah 61:2-3)

Jesus gave these men a special “oil of gladness” that flowed down from the throne of God to wash away their tears of mourning. And He gave them “garments of praise” for their “spirit of heaviness.”

And folks, this is what God wants to do for each one of us, you and me, His “now day disciples”. It seems that more and more often these days we, I, find myself going through periods of “heaviness of heart”, or as these scriptures put it, “a spirit of heaviness”. We sit quietly within the walls of our homes, trying to make sense out of things in our lives that have suddenly gone wrong.

And too often, many otherwise devout believers have allowed the “heaviness” to go so far as to bring on despair and bouts of depression.

But here in these words, Jesus was making us to understand that our present suffering is only a part, and may I say, only a very small part of a greater plan that He is carrying forward in the lives of those who would receive Him as Savior and Lord.

Life truly is more than these few days that are full of suffering and anguish. Life is eternal, and if, and as, we receive and embrace the gift of eternal life, an “oil of gladness” will truly flow down over our broken hearts and our “spirit of heaviness” will be lifted from our souls.

Here in His resurrection, Jesus was beginning to prove and to put into place a whole new understanding about the things of this world that so often consume us and bring us down into those pits of heaviness.

In His resurrection, Jesus came forth with a whole new freedom from the power and the control of sin. And if we will join with Him and receive His Holy Spirit in Salvation, then when the struggles that often come from the world, the flesh and the devil, and especially from our sin nature throw us into pits of despair, we have an answer, and a relief from our troubles.

And here, as He did with these disciples, Jesus is saying to you and to me, receive His Holy Spirit, then read deeply into the words of the prophets and into the promises given within the gospels, and we will find rest for our souls.

His Spirit and His words are life and they are everything that we need for life and godliness. And instead of our descending into pits of despair and into a “spirit of heaviness” when we meet with affliction, we can say confidently with the Psalmist in Psalm 119, verse 71,

⁷¹ It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes.
(Psalm 119:71)

And in Psalm 119, verse 68,

⁶⁸ You are good and do good; Teach me Your statutes. (Psalm 119:68)

Two last thoughts before we close for today . . . first, may I encourage you to begin to intentionally place some of God's scriptures before you each morning. Read through them and pray through them. And I assure you that the Lord Jesus will do exactly as He did with His disciples. He will miraculously open your eyes to see wonderful truths that you have never known before.

And then lastly, may we keep these words of the Prophet Isaiah as a reminder to our own souls, that when the “demons of despair” come near to us, and we are overcome with a “spirit of heaviness”, if we will simply begin to “put on garments of praise” in remembrance of all of the many other good and precious things that God is doing in our lives, that “spirit of heaviness” will surely be taken away from us. That is God's promise to us, and He is faithful to keep His promises. Jesus said,

Pray with me.