

## Luke 24 "Just a closer walk with Thee"

Proposition: As we look at the appearances of Jesus from Sunday forward we see Jesus desiring to walk with, practically the two on the road to Emmaus and the disciples. My prayer is that this passage will inspire us also to a closer walk with Him.

As we read of Jesus going first to Peter the muck up, as we see Jesus listening to two men on the road to Emmaus, and enjoying their company, even though they were struggling with faith, as we see Jesus demonstrating his love for the disciples and blessing them, may it be today that we get a fresh revelation of Jesus' desire to walk with us daily – how much he looks forward to every prayer and every conversation.

Over the past 8 years we have studied together so many books of the bible and this morning and this evening we complete our study in the Gospel as recorded by Dr Luke. We are in Luke 24 the final chapter and its Sunday morning. Now, just to set the scene: The Hebrews would never do any kind of work on the Sabbath. You and I state that in our culture a day starts in the morning and finishes in the morning. For the Hebrews the day started at sunset and finished at the next sunset. Now remember Jesus was crucified for our sins on the day before the Sabbath. After they lifted him down from the cross and took him to the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea it was nearly dark and so there was not time to embalm the body in spices as was their custom. The Sabbath was to finish on Saturday sunset and so the first chance that the women who followed and loved Jesus had to go and embalm his dead body was three days later on the Sunday morning. These girls loved the Lord. Notice how eager they were to go and to serve him and honour him in this first verse.

### **Luke 24**

***1Very early on Sunday morning the women went to the tomb, carrying the spices that they had prepared.***

Can you picture this scene? For two days they couldn't embalm him, the equivalent today of putting flowers on His gravestone. They loved Him, they wanted to honour Him but to put spices on his body on the Sabbath ... no go... against the law and so these girls get up very early to go and minister to his body.

I am amazed how often people in the bible have great encounters with God or angels very early in the morning.

Proverbs 8 says, "I Love those who love me and those that seek me early shall find me." Jesus did it. Great prayers of history have always done it.

### **TWO ANGELS APPEAR TO THE LADIES v1 1-11**

#### **1. GO TO GOD EARLY AND YOU WILL FIND HIM**

When is the best time to pray? Early in the day is the best time for you.

When is the best time to talk to God about that business deal or that problem at work? As early as you can. When there is a problem at home when is the best time to seek the Lord's wisdom? Very early. The sooner the better.

I have always noticed that the people who obey God quickly; whether it is baptism or ministry or forgiving someone or a faith step; the people who obey God quickly seem to be the ones that see the most miracles and get the most revelation. Go to Him very early on, in every day, and situation. There is a cool little story I heard of. A granddad lost his watch during a big extended family event

at his house. Apparently the watch was of huge sentimental value to him and he called all the mokopuna's (Maori for grandchild) together and said \$25 for the person who can find my watch. Well the place went crazy... stone... trees, grass, cushions, everyone was looking except a 5yr old boy. The next morning at breakfast this little guy gives his granddad back the watch. The other kids are amazed, hey, how, where, when...? Apparently he got up early in the morning when there was no noise from cousins and brothers and sisters and listened for the ticking of the watch. Could be a lesson there? They seek Him early, the alarm is set the torches are lit, as soon as possible they are off to be with the body of Jesus and so what happens to those that get up and go to Jesus very early? They get a revelation from heaven.

***2When they found the stone rolled away from the entrance, 3they went in. But they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus, 4and they did not know what to think. Suddenly two men in shining white clothes stood beside them. 5The women were afraid and bowed to the ground.***

Later in the text and in the parallel gospels we see that these two glowing men were angels but it's interesting to me that these angels look like men. The book of Hebrews tells us that we are to be hospitable because we might be entertaining angels without knowing it. That person you gave a lift to or a meal to might be an angel in disguise. In fact that person you are sitting next to might be an angel with a very good disguise. Angels are amongst us and we may not know until heaven just how much they have protected and helped us.

Many have seen angels in services. Carol Tasker probably holds the record. Juliette one day before the Mezzanine was built saw an angel that was as tall as the apex of the ceiling. Once on our honey moon I saw an angel sitting in a chair at the end of our bed.

These ladies got up very early to serve Jesus and it's no surprise that they get to receive the good news first and that they get to talk to these angels that look like men.  
What do they say?

***But the men said, "Why are you looking in the place of the dead for someone who is alive? 6Jesus isn't here! He has been raised from death. Remember that while he was still in Galilee, he told you, 7'The Son of Man will be handed over to sinners who will nail him to a cross. But three days later he will rise to life.' " 8Then they remembered what Jesus had said.***

It's weird to me, sad really, that so often people talk about Jesus as if he just lived in history, and so they say he was a great teacher, the best person, great role model, wisest man, great prophet etc etc as if he was dead. It's true that there is more historical evidence for Jesus than any other person in ancient history but he's not dead. When two or three ... meet to talk about Jesus he is there in the middle of them, still talking, still healing, still guiding, and still delivering. Why are you girls looking for the living amongst the dead, do you remember what we heard him say to you back in Galilee (these angels were there watching and listening) that he would die and then be raised back to life? Crickey that's right they think and they remember, it all adds up and makes sense. I don't know how you feel about angels around us and watching us. Angels marvel and you and I.

Because they are concerned largely about order and worship and loving God and it appears from scripture that they watch the grace that Jesus shows you and me and they are amazed. Peter 1:12 tells us that the angels look at our salvation and are amazed. Wow God you would forgive that one – that Russell fellow, wow, that you would be patient like that with him, wow, God who are so Holy really want to give that person another chance. They watch observe and help us as God's agents

but trust me they hear our conversations and they are amazed at how God almighty deals with us.

**WHY ARE YOU LOOKING FOR JESUS IN A PLACE FOR DEAD PEOPLE HE IS ALIVE, AND HE IS WITH US NOW.**

Friends if we could truly perceive how close Jesus is right now, that he is in this room right now, that he is with us whenever there is any sized gathering of Christians, how that would change how we pray to Him and worship Him and even talk to and about each other. He has risen and he is alive with us right now!

***9-10 Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and some other women were the ones who had gone to the tomb. When they returned, they told the eleven apostles and the others what had happened. 11 The apostles thought it was all nonsense, and they would not believe.***

***12 But Peter ran to the tomb. And when he stooped down and looked in, he saw only the burial clothes. Then he returned, wondering what had happened.***

When the ladies gave the report to the guys these men thought they were getting too emotional, carried away, nonsense. Now we Ranui blokes would never think like that of our wives!

They think about it for a while then Peter, and the other gospels tell us that John, run to the tomb. John in his gospel says he got there first, he won the race, after all Peter was a huge burly guy, but it seems that when John got to the tomb he took a moment to think and to reflect before going into the tomb, when big Pete gets there, no pause, no slowing down in his pace, just straight into the tomb first – which sounds just like Peter doesn't it.

You know who I like most about this part of the disciples story? John! You see Peter has stuffed up big time as a Christian, cursed Jesus, and denied Jesus 3 times. As a Christian at this stage big Pete was a total failure. But when the news comes from the girls that Jesus has risen, where is John?? Here's right there by his mate who totally blew it as a Christian. I suppose that John corrected him and counselled him but the bottom line is although Peter's behaviour was appallingly sinful where do we find John just three days later? With big Pete. That says a lot for John's understanding of grace doesn't it.

### **JESUS APPEARS TO TWO MEN ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS VS 13-35**

What we are about to read will give you and I some deep insights into how much the Lord just loves our company and wants to walk with us daily.

***13 That same day two of Jesus' disciples were going to the village of Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. 14 As they were talking and thinking about what had happened, 15 Jesus came near and started walking along beside them. 16 But they did not know who he was.***

***17 Jesus asked them, "What were you talking about as you walked along?"***

***The two of them stood there looking sad and gloomy. 18 Then the one named Cleopas asked Jesus, "Are you the only person from Jerusalem who didn't know what was happening there these last few days?"***

***19 "What do you mean?" Jesus asked.***

These two guys are walking along the road feeling really down. You can picture them as we read;

heads hung low, just trudging along. Jesus didn't do what we thought he was going to do – now we are discouraged and disappointed, they may have been going home to mum. And Jesus comes alongside them and walks with them, they don't recognise Him and they certainly weren't expecting to see a dead guy and they say to Jesus where have you been, aren't you aware of what has been going on over the weekend? Now Jesus who knows everything! And certainly knows a lot more detail than they do about what has been going on asks “what do you mean?”  
Why does he do that? He already knows everything!

Have you ever felt, ah why pray about that problem or this feeling I have. God already knows what I am going to say so why bother?  
Here's why?

### **JESUS LOVES TO LISTEN TO YOU**

He knows everything and yet he says tell me about it guys. Why? The Lord just loves to be alongside us in life. He just loves us to share our days, what is concerning us and what is exciting us with Him even though he already knows all the details. You can't bore Jesus with what is happening in your life because he is really interested and he wants to listen to your story. Don't ever think that this is too trivial or I shouldn't bother God with that. He knows already but he likes to listen to you and walk with you daily.

When my children were little two of the three had a favourite video. My daughter loved “My little mermaid” and one of my sons loved The Big Friendly Giant (The BFG). These two watched their Video's so many times. Juliette and I could quote most of the videos. And yet as they watched them they would share with us their excitement about what was just about to come up or a funny thing the BFG just said and we listened to their joy and what was important to them. It was great to share in their excitement even though we already knew all the details, we wanted to hear their take on them and see their enjoyment and so we listened, many, many times over. And we loved it. Personally I have always found that if I tell Jesus things that are confusing me or frustrating me or disappointing me like the Psalmist often did, in that process of sharing where I am at with God I begin to see what I was missing and where he is at work.

Hey, what's been happening boys, tell me about it says Jesus; I want to hear about what is getting you down?

#### ***They answered:***

***Those things that happened to Jesus from Nazareth. By what he did and said he showed that he was a powerful prophet, who pleased God and all the people. 20Then the chief priests and our leaders had him arrested and sentenced to die on a cross. 21We had hoped that he would be the one to set Israel free! But it has already been three days since all this happened.***

***22Some women in our group surprised us. They had gone to the tomb early in the morning, 23but did not find the body of Jesus. They came back, saying that they had seen a vision of angels who told them that he is alive. 24Some men from our group went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said. But they didn't see Jesus either.***

Man the tomb is empty, the girls said so and some of the men said so and the ladies had seen angels. Listen to what you are saying guys, you should be getting excited.

***25Then Jesus asked the two disciples, "Why can't you understand? How can you be so slow to***

***believe all that the prophets said? 26Didn't you know that the Messiah would have to suffer before he was given his glory?" 27Jesus then explained everything written about himself in the Scriptures, beginning with the Law of Moses and the Books of the Prophets.***

Wouldn't you just love to know the Word so well that you could present the message of the whole bible accurately quoting chapters and verses as you go. As Jesus explained book after book he wasn't reading from a huge stack of scrolls, he was recalling what was in his head and in his heart from memory.

***28When the two of them came near the village where they were going, Jesus seemed to be going farther. 29They begged him, "Stay with us! It's already late, and the sun is going down." So Jesus went into the house to stay with them.***

Jesus was always the perfect gentleman, never forcing himself on anyone. He didn't ask for hospitality or presume that they would give it but when he was invited he went into their house to stay with them. This what God always does, he doesn't force us to believe, he doesn't make us do things, daily he knocks at the door of Christian hearts the book of Revelation tells us and says to us, hey, I would like to come in and spend time with you, can I come in?

***30After Jesus sat down to eat, he took some bread. He blessed it and broke it. Then he gave it to them. 31At once they knew who he was, but he disappeared. 32They said to each other, "When he talked with us along the road and explained the Scriptures to us, didn't it warm our hearts?" 33So they got right up and returned to Jerusalem.***

Before talking to Jesus they were down in the dumps and dragging their feet, now after talking to him, their perspective has changed, they feel better and they can see the big picture more clearly. They have had new revelation and so having just got to Emmaus slowly they take off to go back to the disciples with excitement and passion.

***The two disciples found the eleven apostles and the others gathered together. 34And they learned from the group that the Lord was really alive and had appeared to Peter.***

Hey guys I have amazing news to tell you, yeh and we have amazing news to share with you, then they both find out that it's the same news. Jesus is alive and he has appeared first to Peter. 1 Corinthians 15 talks about this too. When Jesus arose from the grave the first person he went to see personally was Peter. Peter was the guy who had really fallen off the rails, sinned the worse, really stuffed up and Jesus goes first to Peter. I wonder, because Jesus is here now, He is here in our midst, He loves us all but ... I wonder who He wants to seek out and welcome home first. I wonder who He would go to first tonight. The lost sheep: the prodigal son? Maybe it's you?

#### **JESUS APPEARS TO THE WHOLE GROUP OF DISCIPLES VS36-53**

***35Then the disciples from Emmaus told what happened on the road and how they knew he was the Lord when he broke the bread.***

***36While Jesus' disciples were talking about what had happened, Jesus appeared and greeted them. 37They were frightened and terrified because they thought they were seeing a ghost.***

***38But Jesus said, "Why are you so frightened? Why do you doubt? 39Look at my hands and my feet and see who I am! Touch me and find out for yourselves. Ghosts don't have flesh and bones as you see I have."***

***40After Jesus said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. 41The disciples were so glad and***

*amazed that they could not believe it. Jesus then asked them, "Do you have something to eat?" 42They gave him a piece of baked fish. 43He took it and ate it as they watched.*

*44Jesus said to them, "While I was still with you, I told you that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the Books of the Prophets, and in the Psalms had to happen." 45Then he helped them understand the Scriptures. 46He told them:*

*The Scriptures say that the Messiah must suffer, then three days later he will rise from death. 47They also say that all people of every nation must be told in my name to turn to God, in order to be forgiven. So beginning in Jerusalem, 48you must tell everything that has happened. 49I will send you the one my Father has promised, but you must stay in the city until you are given power from heaven.*

**WHEN WE GET TO HEAVEN ONE DAY THE ONLY MAN MADE THINGS THAT WILL BE THERE WILL BE THE SCARS IN HIS HANDS, FEET AND SIDE.**

The group are so excited but they struggle to believe what they are seeing and hearing and touching and so Jesus says "Can I have a burger?" or something to eat. Hey team, I am real, I am with you. I am relatable. I want to share with you. This is really happening. Can I have a burger? He goes onto explain bible prophecy again regarding his death and resurrection.

#### **HE GIVES THEM TWO INSTRUCTIONS**

**A) TELL PEOPLE WHAT YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED**

**B) WAIT FOR POWER FROM HEAVEN**

Tell people what you have experienced, what has happened, what you have seen and heard and touched, just tell people. Friends I believe that this is one of the greatest keys to witnessing. With someone who is a pre-christian you shouldn't aim to preach at them or come down on them with huge arguments and all your evidence. By all means be prepared to give an explanation for your faith but usually when we get in people's faces they get their backs up and put walls up to us. However if we just tell them what has been happening this week, a new revelation, an answered prayer, the presence of God, some guidance you have received. If you just tell them what you have experienced very few people will ever argue with that and many will be willing as a consequence to come to a service or to hear you out further. Just tell people about what has happened, what you have seen and experienced this week and you will find that is the most powerful form of witnessing and we can all do it. Its a joy to be a witness for the Lord if we are just telling honestly and respectfully our experiences.

Secondly wait for power. You cannot live a normal Christian life unless you have received power from on high upon your life. I am not talking faith in Jesus in your heart I am talking power on your life. God is always with us, he wants to come into us but at Pentecost and when we receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit he comes on us so that we can speak I a new prayer language so that we can hear his voice more easily and move with greater gifting and faith.

*50Jesus led his disciples out to Bethany, where he raised his hands and blessed them. 51As he was doing this, he left and was taken up to heaven. [f] 52After his disciples had worshiped him, they returned to Jerusalem and were very happy. 53They spent their time in the temple, praising God.*

Jesus' last act before his ascension back into heaven was to bless the people. He is for them and for

us and not against us. His plans for us are for good. He will work things together for our good. His heart's desire is to bless us. And our response to His goodness should be as those first disciples were: to worship Him.

What would happen in our land if all Christians got up very early to start their days with Him? What would happen if we really knew that He is here with us right now and all the time when we are praying and believing and talking to people? What would change? What would happen if we just involved Jesus early in all the things that are happening to us – even though He already knows what we are going to say, He wants to walk with us. What would happen in our community if we just told people what Jesus is doing in our lives, we didn't argue, or push or bible bash them, just witnessed to what we have experienced? How would it affect our thoughts, or worship, our anxieties and our lives if we truly believed that all Gods plans for us are for our good to bless us? That he still desires to lift up His hands and bless us today.

For me as I look into this closing chapter of Luke I sense the Lord saying to us, see how much I want to share each day with you; I have been making a bee line straight for you this week. Would you walk with me; can we spend some time together?