

THE RISEN LORD CONCEALED

Luke 24:13-24

Intro: It's Easter Sunday morning---but it's too late for an Easter Sunrise Service.

- Both the sun---and the Son---have risen.
- So we're going to look at something that happened later in the day on that first Easter.
- We're going to turn to one of the most beloved of all post-resurrection stories---the account of what took place on the road to Emmaus.
- You may have seen the classic picture of two men and Jesus ---walking down a tree-lined road.
- And while it is a beautiful picture---it pales in comparison to the picture Luke paints for us.
- Mark mentions it in passing---but Luke goes into surprising detail---and that has led some to suggest that he might be one of the men on the road with Jesus.
- But as we'll later see---that's not likely.
- He does---however---probably get his account from one of the two.
- The details---and the emotions expressed---certainly make it feel like a firsthand account.
- And there is so much in this account that we can't do it justice in one message---so we're going to divide into two.
- This week we're going to take a look at the risen Lord concealed---and next week we'll see the risen Lord revealed.

- The account is found in Luke 24---and it begins with a picture of the risen Lord concealed by something we might call spiritual blindness.

I. BY SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS

Luke 24:13-16

- “And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem.
- And they were conversing with each other about all these things which had taken place.
- And it came about that while they were conversing and discussing, Jesus Himself approached, and began traveling with them.
- But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him.”
- The first question this account raises is quite simply---who are these two?
- Luke merely identifies them as “two of them.”
- Two of whom?
- The “them” in verse 11 refers to the apostles---and that's our nearest antecedent---so that's our first thought.
- But when we get to verse 18 we'll find one of them named---and he's not an apostle.
- If we go back a bit further in the account we find that the women returned from the tomb and reported all they had seen and heard to the eleven---and to all the rest.
- So these two were probably part of “all the rest.”

- They were followers of Jesus.
- They weren't apostles---but they were disciples of Jesus.
- And they had heard the women's report.
- But like the apostles---they didn't believe them.
- Apparently they too believed it to be nonsense---it just didn't make sense.
- How could anyone who had been crucified by the Romans---and certified as being dead---come back to life?
- It's now late Sunday afternoon---and they are most likely heading home.
- To Emmaus---a village about seven miles from Jerusalem.
- As they are walking---they are conversing.
- They are talking---discussing the events of the past three days.
- No doubt trying to make sense of everything that had happened.
- And as they are walking along---talking---Jesus joins them on the road.
- The resurrected Lord starts walking with them!
- Whether He overtook them---or met them at a fork in the road---we aren't told.
- All we're told is that Jesus Himself approached---and began traveling with them.
- Now we've already established that these two were disciples of Jesus---so they knew Him.
- They had no doubt traveled with Him before.
- But now they don't recognize Him.
- At first---that really seems strange.
- But then we remember that Mary Magdalene---who we know knew Jesus very well---didn't recognize Him when He appeared to her either.
- After Peter and John left her at the empty tomb---weeping---angels spoke to her.
- They asked her why she was weeping---and she told them it was because someone had taken the body of Jesus---and she didn't know where He was.
- Then---when she turned around---she saw Jesus standing there.
- But she thought He was the gardener.
- It wasn't until He spoke her name that she recognized Him---and embraced Him.
- Why didn't she recognize Him at first?
- It may have been because her eyes were filled with tears.
- Likewise---Luke tells us the eyes of the two on the road to Emmaus were prevented from recognizing Jesus.
- Perhaps their eyes were filled with tears too.
- On second thought---that can't be true.
- Real men don't cry.

- Maybe they were walking into the sunset---and the sun was in their eyes.
- Maybe they were just so caught up in their discussion that they gave no thought as to the identity of the one who had joined them.
- Maybe Christ's resurrected body looked different---and Mark does say He appeared to them in a different form.
- Or maybe "their eyes were prevented"---or as it literally says---"their eyes were being prevented"---indicates divine activity.
- Maybe God---or Jesus Himself---was intentionally keeping them from recognizing who He was.
- Maybe He knew they would get too emotional---and start clinging to Him as did Mary---if they recognized Him before He had the opportunity to help them understand what had happened---and why.
- But then again---men never get that emotional.
- Whatever the reason---we learn something very important here.
- It's possible to be blinded to the presence of Jesus---even when He is in our midst.
- We might even be talking about Jesus---discussing Him.
- We might be in Bible study---and not see Him.
- And while not in the same form in which He joined the men on the road to Emmaus---whatever form that might have been---He does join with us today.
- Now I'm not suggesting that He mystically comes into our midst in worship.
- That if our worship is what it ought to be---He'll join us.
- The context in which He said---"For where two or three have gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst" is decision making---not worship. (Matthew 18:18-29)
- He was promising to be with us when we prayerfully make hard decisions together.
- That's not to suggest He's not with us when we worship.
- He is certainly with us when we meet together---because He indwells each of us through His Spirit.
- Those who have prepared their heart for His habitation by being cleansed of their sin---and have welcomed Him into their life---have Jesus within them.
- So when we gather together to worship---He is present.
- He's here because we bring Him into worship with us.
- And we should see Jesus in each other.
- We should see Him in our brothers and sisters as we worship together.
- His presence in our lives---however---is not limited to times of worship.
- His presence should be visible---and recognizable---all the time---in everything we do.
- We should even see Him in the world at large---because He created it---and He sustains it.

- And we should obviously see Him in His Word---because He embodies it.
- The resurrected Christ dwells in our midst---but we often fail to see Him.
- Why? Why are we so blind to His presence?
- Could it simply be that we're not looking for Him.
- That we don't expect to see Him.
- The men on the road to Emmaus didn't expect Jesus to join them.
- They were talking about Him---but they surely didn't expect the risen Lord to begin walking with them.
- May we never get so caught up conversing with each other about Jesus---that we fail to look for Him in our midst.
- Indeed---our lack of expectation can lead to spiritual blindness.
- But the risen Lord can also be concealed...

II. BY DISILLUSIONMENT Luke 24:17-21a

- “And He said to them, ‘What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?’ And they stood still, looking sad.
- And one of them, named Cleopas, answered and said to Him, ‘Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?’

- And He said to them, ‘What things?’ And they said to Him, ‘The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people,
- and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him up to the sentence of death, and crucified Him.
- ‘But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel.’”
- When Jesus joined them---and asked them what they were talking about---they stopped walking.
- They stood still---and it became obvious they were sad about something.
- Cleopas---the only one named---spoke up.
- Speaking for both of them---he asked---“Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?”
- They couldn't believe Jesus didn't know what they had been talking about.
- Everyone in Jerusalem was talking about the same thing.
- When Jesus asked---“What things?”---their answer not only revealed what they had been talking about.
- It revealed why they were so sad.
- They told Him they had been talking about Jesus the Nazarene.
- A prophet who had done and said some mighty things.
- They also told how the chief priests---and their rulers---had delivered Him up to the sentence of death and crucified Him.

- Referring to the rulers as “our rulers”---is probably a reference to Jewish rulers.
- If that’s the case---it gives evidence that Luke was not one of the two---because he was a Gentile.
- Be that as it may---Cleopas continued---“But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel.”
- They thought of Jesus as a mighty prophet---and had hoped He would prove to be the Messiah.
- And of course they expected the Messiah to free the Jewish nation from Roman domination.
- They certainly didn’t expect the Messiah to be crucified.
- Now their hope was gone.
- Jesus had failed to meet their expectations.
- They were disillusioned.
- And their disillusionment may have kept them from seeing Jesus in their midst.
- The same thing can happen to us today.
- We all have expectations of what Jesus should---and should not do.
- And it’s easy for us to think He’s not here---when our expectations aren’t met.
- We don’t get what we pray for.
- Our life falls apart.

- A loved one dies unexpectedly---and from our perspective---prematurely.
- A faithful preacher and his wife both die in a pandemic.
- Something happens that we don’t think should happen---not if Jesus were here.
- So we decide He’s not here---and we don’t see Him.
- When our expectations are built upon the way we think things ought to be---or upon our desires---instead of the way things really are---and what God has actually promised---we inevitably find ourselves disillusioned.
- And when we are disillusioned---it’s very hard to see Jesus in our life---or in our midst.
- The risen Lord is also concealed by simple unbelief.

III. BY UNBELIEF Luke 24:21b-24

- “Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened.
- ‘But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning,
- and did not find His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, who said that He was alive.
- ‘And some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said; but Him they did not see.’”

- Cleopas continued---“Jesus was crucified three days ago---but this morning some women came with quite an amazing story.
- They had gone looking for Jesus’ body---and when they couldn’t find it---they had a vision of angels.
- And the angels---in their vision---told them He was alive.”
- You can almost hear the unbelief in his voice.
- “The women had a *vision*.”
- They didn’t have a vision of angels---they actually saw angels.
- They saw two men---two angels---in dazzling apparel---and they were terrified.
- But Cleopas---like the apostles---apparently dismissed their report as nonsense.
- He went on to say that some of them had actually gone to the tomb.
- And---just as the women had said---Jesus was gone.
- No one saw Him.
- They didn’t see His body.
- And they certainly didn’t see Him alive.
- Truth be known---by then the risen Lord had been seen.
- He had been seen by Mary Magdalene---the rest of the women---and Peter.
- But the men on the road to Emmaus didn’t know that.
- And even if they had been told that Jesus had appeared to some---they probably wouldn’t have believed it.
- In fact---when some of the disciples heard from Mary herself that she had seen Jesus alive---they refused to believe her.
- Some things are really hard to believe.
- And believing that someone who has been dead three days---is now alive---is one of them.
- In truth---however---it should have been easy for them to believe it.
- Lazarus had been dead four days---when Jesus raised him from the dead.
- Still---they refused to believe that Jesus was alive.
- In spite of the eyewitness accounts---and their own past experiences with Jesus---they found it just too hard to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead.
- Even when the resurrected Christ was walking with them---and talking to them---they didn’t believe He was alive.
- Indeed---simple unbelief can blind us to Christ’s presence in the world---in the church---in the lives of our brothers and sisters---and even in our own life.
- And we all struggle with unbelief.
- What you may not realize---however---is that the unbelief that we all struggle with actually doesn’t come from us.
- It comes from a spiritual enemy who is actively seeking to keep us spiritually blind.

- The Apostle Paul made that clear when he told us the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving---so they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ. (II Corinthians 4:4)
- Before we became believers---Satan had blinded us to spiritual realities.
- And he did everything he could to keep us in spiritual darkness.
- By God's grace---however---the light of the gospel broke through our blindness.
- We came to understand who Jesus is---and why He had to die---and rise again.
- Through eyes of faith we could then see Him at work.
- In our life---in the church---and even in a fallen world.
- But the devil never gives up.
- In fact he works even harder to put out the light---than he did to blind us in the first place.
- It's quite possible that he's the one who prevented the eyes of Jesus' own disciples from recognizing Him on the road to Emmaus.
- No doubt he had a hand in their false expectations---their disillusionment---and their unbelief.
- He can do the same thing to us.
- He can blind us to the presence of Christ---if we let down our guard---and drop our shield of faith.
- And we must keep our helmet of salvation securely fastened.
- We must not let the enemy get into our head---and conceal the risen Lord through unrealistic expectations---disillusionment---or simple unbelief.
- And if you're here just because it's Easter---don't let an occasional visit to church inoculate you against a life-changing encounter with the living God.
- May our eyes be opened to the presence of the risen Lord.
- And may our eyes be kept open.
- May we never lose sight of the fact that He lives!