

The Burning Heart **Luke 24:28–35**

Introduction. These two disciples are not searching for Jesus even though

- they've heard reports he's alive,
- women have seen angels and
- Peter and John have seen the empty tomb.

Even so, they are not staying in Jerusalem waiting to see what happens next. They are leaving town. Jerusalem and headed toward a small town.

Now,

- they've listened to Jesus correct their misunderstanding about a suffering Savior but
- they've not yet returned to Jerusalem.
- They've got the facts.
- They just have no feeling.
- That should get our attention.

Because it means: **You can know the facts about Jesus and still not know Jesus.**

So, what does it take to move from us from information to recognition and from recognition to submission? That's the big question this text hopes to answer. This text answers that.

First: You Can Be Close to Jesus and Still Miss Him (vv. 28–29)

So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther; ²⁹ but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them.

- Jesus has been with them walking and teaching.
- He's shown them how the Messiah was destined to suffer.
- Now He acts as though He will go on.
- They urge Him to stay but they still don't know who He is.

IMP: They are *with* Him—and they understand the Messiah must suffer but they are still blind.

- This is not ignorance.
- They are coming to the truth.
- This is partial understanding without true sight.

There are people in the church and around the things of God but Jesus is not real to them.

APP: Proximity is not the same as conversion and it's also not the same as discipleship. One reason we have identified the disciplines of a disciple is to help people come to know Jesus.

Inward & Upward

- Scripture
- Prayer

Around:

- Community Groups
- Sunday morning gathering
- Mentoring
- Giving
- Service

Outward:

- Giving
- Service
- Evangelism

Of course, there are others but practicing these disciplines let us see Jesus and follow him in his lifestyle.

Second: Jesus Must Make Himself Known (vv. 30–31)

When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. ³¹ And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight.

Notice what Jesus does. He takes bread. He Blesses it. He breaks it. He gives it to them.

And then: *“Their eyes were opened.”*

IMP: That is the hinge of the passage. It is not that they figured it out, that they remembered some key piece of information that changed everything or connected the dots. Instead, God acted.

Knowing Jesus is not something you achieve. Loving Jesus is not something you produce. It is something God gives.

You don't come to Christ because

- you got smarter or
- reasoned better or
- felt something more deeply than others.

You became a Christian because God opened your eyes.

- What just happened at that table is not just the story of these two disciples.
- It is the story of every Christian. Because the Bible is clear:
- We do not come to Christ by discovering him.
- We come to Christ by the Holy Spirit enabling us to see him and changing our minds and hearts about him.

a) God Must Open Our Blind Eyes

These men were not ignorant. They had information. But they could not see. And the Bible says the same is true of every one of us.

1 Corinthians 2:14 - The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God... he is not able to understand them

2 Corinthians 4:4 - The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers.
So what must happen?

2 Corinthians 4:6 - God... has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ

APP: Salvation is when God does in your heart what He did in creation—He says, “Let there be light.”

b) God Must Give Us A New Heart

The problem is not just what we see. It is what we love. We don't naturally love Christ. We don't naturally choose Him.

So God does something deeper.

Ezekiel 36:36 - I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you

The Holy Spirit changed our heart and made us fall in love with Jesus.

c) Then God gives us faith

Even the act of believing is not something we produce.

Ephesians 2:8-9 - By grace you have been saved through faith... it is the gift of God.

Philippians 1:29 - It has been granted to you... to believe in Him

Faith is not your contribution. It is God's gift.

d) Sanctification Follows the Same Pattern

And here's what matters for this text. The way you are saved is the way you grow.

You don't begin by grace and continue by effort.

Galatians 3:3 - *Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?*

No. This is how it works...

Philippians 2:13 - *It is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.*

The same God who opened your eyes to Jesus, gave you a new heart and faith, must continue to shape your heart after the heart of Jesus.

ILL: Lazarus in John 11 is the perfect example off this:

1 – **Ephesians 2:1 - *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins***

2 – **Ephesians 2:5 - *Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ,***

Think about Lazarus dead in the grave. Jesus called specifically to him and only Lazarus came out. That's salvation. Then, Jesus had to instruct him be loosed from the linen cloths that bound him. That's sanctification.

Back to the Text: So when you read 16 - *But their eyes were kept from recognizing him* and 31 - *...their eyes were opened, and they recognized him* - That is not just a small detail. That is a declaration.

This is why prayer is so important –

- **A Prayer – John 11:1-3 - *Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ² It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. ³ So the sisters sent to him, saying, “Lord, he whom you love is ill.”***
- **A Model – v 4 - *But when Jesus heard it he said, “This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.”***
- **A Resurrection – vs 43-44a - *“Lazarus, come out.” The man who had died came out***
- **A Loosing – v 11:44b - *... his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”***

IMP: This is important because it reminds us of the importance of prayer and places us in a persistent posture of prayer.

ILL: The Apostle Paul in **Acts 9** is also a good example:

1 – Unconverted Saul - *But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest² and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.*

2 – God arrested him - *³ Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. ⁴ And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” ⁵ And he said, “Who are you, Lord?” And he said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ⁶ But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.” ⁷ The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one.*

3 – God blinded him - *⁸ Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. ⁹ And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.*

4 – God speaks to him - *¹⁰ Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” And he said, “Here I am, Lord.” ¹¹ And the Lord said to him, “Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, ¹² and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.” ¹³ But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name.” ¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. ¹⁶ For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.”*

5 – God gave him his sight - *¹⁷ So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” ¹⁸ And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; ¹⁹ and taking food, he was strengthened. For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus.*

6 – Saul evangelizes - *²⁰ And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.” ²¹ And all who heard him were amazed and said, “Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name? And has he not come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests?” ²² But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ.*

Saul had a crisis, spectacular moment salvation experience. The 11 did not. Nor did these two disciples.

- But God used Jesus’ words to open their hearts.
- And then he used the breaking of bread to give them sight.

This is what we're praying for: A head and heart transformation. Both are essential. You want both.

- You want to know Jesus.
- You want to love Jesus.
- You don't want to know about Jesus.
- You want a conversion experience that moves you to follow Jesus.

Third: The Word Burns In Our Hearts Before Our Eyes See Jesus (v. 32)

They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?"

After Jesus vanishes, they say: "*Did not our hearts burn within us... while He opened to us the Scriptures?*"

Before they saw Him something was already happening. Their hearts were being stirred, their assumptions were being dismantled and their understanding was shifting. The Word was doing its work.

APP: Jesus does not bypass the Scriptures. He reveals Himself through them.

Paul late adopted Jesus' philosophy – *Acts 28:23 - From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.*"

This is, of course, because this is how Jesus proved he he is. As far back as

John 5:39-40, he said - *You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.*

1 Peter 1:23 - *...you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God...*

- We want shortcuts.
- We want immediate clarity and instant recognition.
- But God works through the Word to give us sight.

2 Corinthians 3:15-18 -

- *Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts [the Jews].*
- *But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed.*
- *Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.*
- *And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.*

- *For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*

Fourth: When We See Jesus, Everything Changes (vv. 33–35)

And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, ³⁴ saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” ³⁵ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

These two disciples, who earlier in the day were confused and discouraged, now get up “*that same hour*” [that’s salvation!] and return to Jerusalem. It’s the same road but the opposite direction.

Everything reverses:

- from leaving to returning,
- from confusion to clarity,
- from depression to declaration.

APP: When you see Jesus in the Bible, everything changes.

You don’t need to manufacture your witness. When Christ is real, you don’t stay on the road away from Him.

If nothing has changed in your life. If there is no definite direction, no urgency to living and no witness to others, the issue isn’t knowledge, it’s seeing Jesus.

Conclusion: These disciples had all the information they needed but that wasn’t enough. They didn’t see Jesus in the Word.

Until Jesus opened the Bible, opened their eyes, and made himself known.

Some are still walking the road away from Jerusalem. You’ve heard it. You know it. You’ve been near it. But Christ is still distant. And the problem is not that Jesus is absent. The problem is that you don’t see him.

Because when you see him –

- your heart awakens
- your mind changes
- your direction reverses

(That’s Bible repentance!)



OBSERVE (What does the text say?)

1. What are the two disciples doing at the beginning of this passage, and where are they going?
2. According to verses 28–29, how do they respond when Jesus acts as if He will go farther?
3. What specific actions does Jesus take at the table in verses 30–31?
4. What happens immediately after Jesus breaks the bread?
5. In verse 32, what do the disciples say was happening in their hearts on the road?
6. What do the disciples do “that same hour” in verses 33–35?
7. How does their direction physically change in the passage?

INTERPRET (What does it mean?)

8. Why is it significant for us that the disciples were close to Jesus but did not recognize Him?
9. What does the phrase “their eyes were opened” teach us about how a person comes to truly know Jesus?
10. Why is it important that they did not figure it out on their own, but that God acted?
11. What is the relationship between the Word (v. 32) and seeing Jesus (v. 31)?
12. What does the “burning heart” suggest about what the Word of God was doing in them before they recognized Christ?
13. How does this passage challenge the idea that knowing facts about Jesus is the same as knowing Him?

14. Why does their immediate return to Jerusalem matter theologically and spiritually, not just narratively?

CORRELATE (Where else do we see this in the Bible?)

15. How do passages like *1 Corinthians 2:14* and *2 Corinthians 4:4–6* help explain why the disciples could not see Jesus at first?
16. How does *Ezekiel 36:26* connect to the idea that God must give a new heart?
17. In what way is this story similar to Paul’s conversion in *Acts 9*?
18. How does *John 5:39–40* reinforce the idea that the Bible points to Jesus but can still be misunderstood?

APPLY (What should we do?)

19. Where do you see the danger in your own life of being around Jesus but not truly seeing Him?
20. How does this passage reshape the way you think about conversion?
21. What role should prayer play in your life, in light of the truth that God must open eyes?
22. How should this passage change the way you approach reading the Bible this week?
23. In what ways might your life still be “walking away from Jerusalem” rather than toward Christ?
24. What would it look like, practically, for your life to show that you have truly “seen Jesus”?
25. Who is one person you should be praying for, that God would open their eyes as He did yours?



Monday – Close but Missing Christ (Luke 24:28–29)

Think. In this text, the disciples are near Jesus, speaking with Him, even learning from Him. Yet they don't recognize Him. This teaches us that proximity is not sight. You can be near the truth about Jesus and still miss the Person.

Reflect. Have you settled for being around the things of God rather than actually knowing Christ? Where has familiarity replaced faith?

Apply. Do not assume closeness equals conversion. Ask God today to expose any place where Christ is present but not precious to you.

Pray. Lord, keep me from mistaking nearness for knowledge. Make Christ real to me.

Tuesday – God Must Open Our Eyes (Luke 24:30–31)

Think. Their eyes were opened. Their sight is not improved or sharpened. So, God acted. This illustrates that seeing Christ is not the result of effort but of grace.

Reflect. Do you think of your faith as something you produced or something God gave? How would each perspective give you rest?

Apply. Think of your salvation as an act of God's mercy. Let humility and gratitude replace self-reliance.

Pray. Father, thank You for opening my eyes. Keep me dependent on You.

Wednesday – The Word Prepares the Heart (Luke 24:32)

Think. Before their eyes saw Him, their hearts were burning inside them. The Word was already at work. This shows us how Jesus reveals Himself through the Bible.

Reflect. Do you expect the Bible to lead you to Christ, or just to give you information?

Apply. Read the Bible today asking one question: “Lord, show me Christ.” Stay in the text until your heart engages.

Pray. Lord, open the Scriptures to me so that I may see You.

Thursday – Grace in Growth (Philippians 2:13)

Think. The same God who opens blind eyes continues to shape the human heart. Sanctification follows the same pattern as salvation: grace from beginning to end. Hallelujah!

Reflect. Where are you trying to grow in your own strength instead of depending on God to conform you to Jesus?

Apply. Name one area of personal struggle. Bring it to God not as a problem to fix, but as a place to depend on the Lord for his grace.

Pray. God, work in me both to will and to work for Your pleasure.

Friday – When You See Jesus, Everything Changes (Luke 24:33–35)

Think. They turned around “that same hour.” Seeing Jesus reversed their direction. Clarity about the Lord, seeing him, led to movement in their lives.

Reflect. What has actually changed in your life because of Jesus?

Apply. Take one concrete step of obedience today that reflects a changed direction.

Pray. Jesus, make Yourself so real to me that my life cannot stay the same.



Monday – Shared Proximity, Shared Blindness

Think. These disciples walked together, talked together, and still missed Jesus together. Spiritual blindness can exist in a community of believers.

Reflect. Where might your marriage be spiritually active but not spiritually alive?

Apply. Have an honest conversation: Where are we going through motions of Christianity rather than truly knowing Christ?

Pray. Lord, don't let us settle for a shared routine without a shared reality in the living Christ.

Tuesday – God Must Open Our Eyes Together

Think. Their eyes were opened by God. This reminds us that no spouse can produce spiritual life in the other.

Reflect. Are you trying to change your spouse instead of praying for God to work?

Apply. Commit to praying daily for God to open your spouse's eyes more fully to Christ.

Pray. Father, do in our hearts what we cannot do for each other.

Wednesday – The Word Shapes the Marriage

Think. Their hearts burned as Jesus opened the Bible and saw Jesus. This demonstrates that transformation began before they recognized Jesus.

Reflect. Is the Word central in your relationship to God or peripheral? When did you last read the Bible? How are you regularly reading the Bible?

Apply. Read a portion of Scripture together this week and ask: What does this show us about Jesus?

Pray. Lord, let Your Word shape our hearts and our home.

Thursday – Growing by Grace Together

Think. God works in us to will and to act. Growth in marriage is not self-powered but Spirit-produced. What an important concept.

Reflect. Where are you frustrated with slow or no growth in your spouse or yourself?

Apply. Replace your criticism with prayer and patience. Trust God's process as you do so.

Pray. God, form Christ in us together.

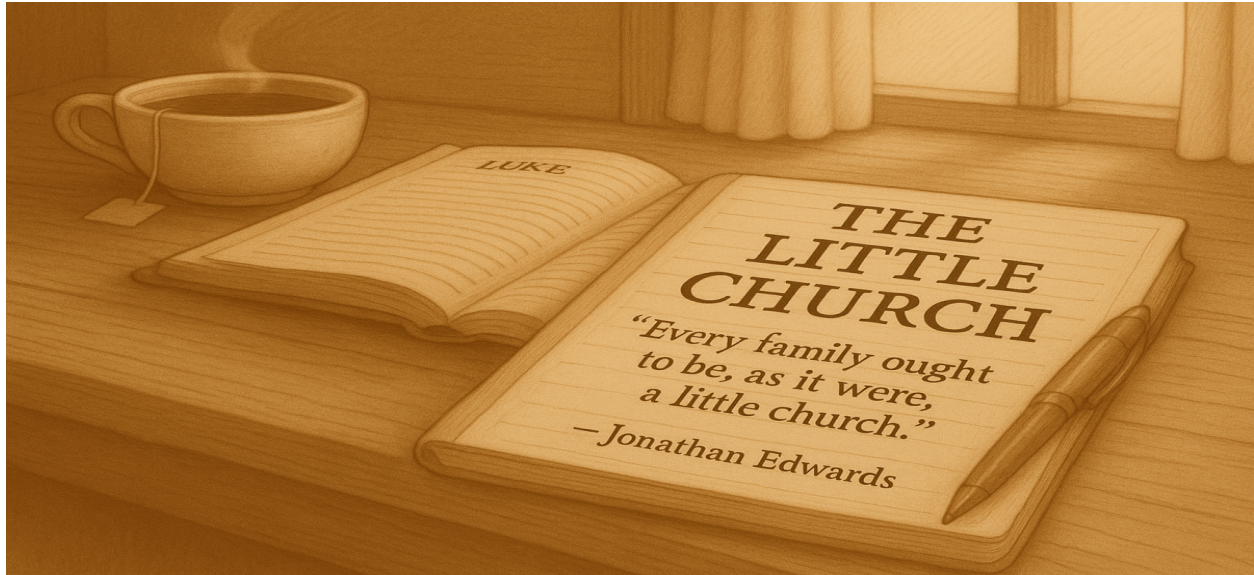
Friday – A Marriage That Moves Toward Christ

Think. When they saw Jesus, they moved immediately. True sight produces shared direction.

Reflect. What direction is your marriage currently moving? (What a great question).

Apply. Identify one step you will take together this week toward Christ (think about the Discipleship Wheel).

Pray. Jesus, reorient our lives so we move toward You together.



Monday – Being Near Jesus Isn't Enough

Think. In this passage, we see two men walking with Jesus, but they don't know it's Him. That means we can be around the church and still miss Jesus.

Reflect. Let's ask together: Are we just around Jesus, or do we really know and love Him?

Apply. This week, we won't just go through the motions. We will ask God to make Jesus real to us.

Pray. Lord, help our family truly know You, not just know about You.

Tuesday – God Helps Us See Jesus

Think. The Bible says their eyes were opened. God helped them see. That's how anyone becomes a Christian.

Reflect. We don't figure Jesus out on our own. God helps us.

Apply. Let's thank God today for opening our eyes to Jesus. Let's pray that.

Pray. God, thank You for helping us see and believe in Jesus.

Wednesday – The Bible Shows Us Jesus

Think. Before they saw Jesus, their hearts were already burning while He explained the Bible.

Reflect. That means when we read the Bible, God is helping us know Jesus.

Apply. As a family, let's read a passage and ask: What does this show us about Jesus?

Pray. Lord, help us see Jesus when we read the Bible.

Thursday – God Helps Us Grow

Think. The same God who saves us also helps us grow in grace.

Reflect. We don't become better Christians by trying harder alone. God enables us to live the Christian life.

Apply. When we struggle this week, we will ask God for help instead of just trying harder.

Pray. God, help our family grow to love and follow Jesus.

Friday – Seeing Jesus Changes Everything

Think. When the disciples saw Jesus, they turned around right away and went back to Jerusalem.

Reflect. When we really know Jesus, our lives change.

Apply. Let's think: What is one way our family can follow Jesus more closely this week? What is one way our family is changed because of Jesus?

Pray. Jesus, change our hearts and the way we live so that we follow You.