

Series: So All May Know	Reference: Luke 24:13-35	Title: Fear or Hope?	Date: 11.28.2021
Website Writeup: As believers, we'll have times when we're at odds with the world when we must choose between fear or hope. Just as the two disciples ran to encourage the Eleven in the story we read today, we should be ready to do the same for those sitting in fear or grief when their faith's been shaken, or when simple misconception holds them back from Jesus.			

COLOR CHANGES IN TEXT INDICATE SLIDE CHANGES

We've all wanted to be a fly on the wall to hear what people have to say when we're not around. **In the show, *Undercover Boss* (2010, CBS), corporate executives pose as employees to experience difficult positions within their company & what employees have to say about them. The goal's not to be identified, with a big reveal at the end. Jesus did something similar with two of His followers on the road to Emmaus.**

As believers, we'll have times when we're at odds with the world when we must choose between fear or hope. Just as the two disciples ran to encourage the Eleven in the story we read today, we should be ready to do the same for those sitting in fear or grief when their faith's been shaken, or when simple misconception holds them back from Jesus.

Open your pew Bibles to Luke 24:13-35 on p722. Leave it open as we march through this passage together. It begins...*Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. ¹⁵As they talked & discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up & walked along with them; ¹⁶but they were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?" They stood still, their faces downcast.*

We have to imagine their despair after putting all hope in Jesus before the crucifixion, drawn in by His words. Changed. Their focus, relationships & desires all transformed. Maybe they'd left employment to follow Him, who knows. They'd witnessed the freedom, joy, salvation, future hope & power of God's kingdom. Seen healings & miracles! Finally they had meaning & purpose, no longer just survival in meaningless ritual...but then Jesus is handed over, the hammer blows come, He's lifted up & not long after...hope dies.

This would be like one of our prisoners with a life sentence we minister to in the Prison Fellowship, having someone say, "You're gettin' outta here. I'm paying the price, the government's agreed to release you to my care. I've prepared a beautiful home with other former prisoners where you can live free, never in want or judgment!"

But then they get word, that guy was murdered before he could sign all the necessary papers. Wouldn't the prison walls look even darker & more claustrophobic? Wouldn't fellow prisoners look even more angry & violent? Wouldn't the daily routine be even more oppressive!

These guys probably stood on the road to Emmaus, looking back at Jerusalem before continuing on, thinking, “That’s all we have now...empty routine, strife, ritual, then death.” The world their enemy, not only Rome, but fellow Jews as well, since you’ve identified yourself with this dead powerless carpenter.

It continues in v18...¹⁸*One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, “Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?”* ¹⁹*“What things?” he asked.*

Jesus has graciously walked along, listening to their intense conversation. They’re unable to make sense of it all. Why’d He have to die? What exactly did He say? What’s our future hold now? Then Jesus asks, “What things?” Somewhat comical since He’d been the center of it all! Truth is, Jesus listens to our telling Him what He already knows (Rom. 8:34). The essence of prayer, revealing, it’s much more to our benefit than His! Graciously allowing us to process, and as we do, ignorance is revealed where correction need to be made. He’s patient to listen, and due to His nature & work on that cross, we’re able to freely come to His throne, pouring out our hearts to gain His help (Ps. 62:8; Heb. 4:16).

It continues in v19b...*“About Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “He was a prophet, powerful in word & deed before God & all the people. ²⁰The chief priests & our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; ²¹but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. ²²In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning ²³but didn’t find his body. They came & told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. ²⁴Then some of our companions went to the tomb & found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.”*

These guys are struggling to believe their friends. I would! I’m much more of a doubting Thomas myself, gotta see it to believe it! But why doubt people you’ve long since known to be accurate & honest? The longer Cleopas talked, the more he indicted himself & his friend for their unbelief. What more evidence could they want? Trustworthy witnesses had seen the tomb empty. Angels had announced Jesus was alive. The proof was there!¹

This reminds me of a conversation on the phone with my brother Joe 35 years ago when he shared from Isaiah 53 & other passages talking about Jesus in the Old Testament. His words struck me that night. Joe had always been honest. I respected him. He needed to be heard. Do you have that rapport with others? Would they listen to you? If you invite them to the the Alpha course & sit next to them, and they lean in & say, “You believe this?” Will you say yes, and will it mean something to them?

Remember the scene in *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*, after Lucy had discovered the forest inside the wardrobe she had told her two oldest siblings, but they

¹ Warren W. Wiersbe, [The Bible Exposition Commentary](#), vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 279.

didn't believe her. Her brother Edmund too had seen it but denied the experience. So the two older siblings went to their caretaker Digory Kirke, an old wise trustworthy man. Digory, obviously believes Lucy, and asks why they don't, since she'd always been truthful. They answer, "It's not logical!" They pointed out Edmund said she was lying, although Edmund had seen the forest himself, but threw Lucy under the bus!

Digory responds, "Goodness, what are they teaching in schools these days!" He then turns their 'logic' around on them by saying sarcastically, "And Edmund's honest?" Which they know he wan't, then states, "Well if you don't think Lucy's crazy, and she's always been honest, logically you'd believe her!"

Same scenario! Why not trust these women & others with whom they'd walked through life for a great deal of time? Why would these people lie about something so monumental & verifiable? Sometimes we negate the mysterious, depriving ourselves of something wonderful only because it doesn't seem logical.

Maybe someone just needs to say, "You can trust this." Maybe there's someone in our lives who struggle to accept the Gospel. We also can walk with them, listen to their concerns & ask, "Do you think I'm crazy or dishonest? Have I ever lied to you? Why would I start now?" Maybe they need a witness. Which is exactly the purpose of Alpha, to create an open honest atmosphere where your friends can come, break bread, ask questions, revealing misconceptions & find answers among trustworthy people!

It continues in v25...²⁵*He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things & then enter his glory?"*

Rather than rebuking the two for their lack of faith straightaway, Jesus gave them opportunity to express concern. Only after they explained who they thought Jesus was to be & do did He correct them.

What was their basic problem? They didn't believe all the prophets had written about the Messiah. The problem was that most Jews of the day saw Messiah as Conquering Redeemer, not as Suffering Servant. As they read the Old Testament, they saw glory, not suffering. The crown, not the cross. They're not unlike health & wealth preachers today, blind to the *full* message of the Bible.² Wanting all the glory, but none of the suffering! By allowing them to give voice to their fear & doubt, Jesus was able to instruct them point by point. And we notice next, how He used Scripture to encourage & teach in v27...²⁷*And beginning with Moses & all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.*

When someone first comes to faith, they may know very little of Scripture. Sometimes they come with twisted uninformed views, drawing conclusions without reading themselves. They may need someone to break it down. If they do come to faith, they

² Warren W. Wiersbe, [The Bible Exposition Commentary](#), vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 279.

begin also to grow. But again, the same happens, they tend to stop reading, and take on cultural misconceptions - if Satan can't have your soul, he at least can hinder your walk of joy in Christ through lies & deception which often come in subtle ways. But if one pushes through the misconceptions, viewing the Scripture as final authority in life & faith, ingesting it responsibly on their own, they begin to see wonderful threads of Jesus & His purposes for them woven all throughout!

Nikki shared her testimony in Community Group last week about how she'd grown up in a South African home where certain negative & errant beliefs towards blacks were arrived at through a faulty interpretation of the Scriptures. It wasn't until the Holy Spirit led Nikki to read the whole Bible in a year that she realized their falsehood. She had to confess & turn from her sin of racism! Praise God she did the work! Bill also shared about how the Scripture convicted him of sin & brought him to faith - praise God he did the work! Charles & Christy will also tell of their life in the Catholic Church & how they believed faulty things which were not of Christ. That misinformation stood in the way of their salvation - but as soon as they began to read the Bible for themselves, they met the resurrected Christ, repented & came to faith! Praise God they did the work!

Romans 10:17 says...*“Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* This explains why Jesus opened the Word to these two men as the three walked to Emmaus. Their real problem wasn't in their heads, but in their hearts (see Luke 24:25 & 32, and note v. 38). They could have discussed the subject for days and never arrived at an answer. What they needed was a fresh understanding of God's Word. Jesus gave it to them. He opened the Scriptures, then opened their eyes, and they realized He wasn't only alive, *but with them!*

Perhaps He started at Genesis 3:15, the first promise of the Redeemer, and traced that promise through the Scriptures; lingering at Genesis 22 where Abraham placed his only beloved son on the altar; passover, the levitical sacrifices, the tabernacle ceremonies, the Day of Atonement, the serpent in the wilderness, the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53, and the prophetic messages of Psalms 22 & 69. *The key to understanding the Bible is to see Jesus Christ on every page.* He didn't teach them only doctrine or prophecy; He taught *“the things concerning Himself”* (Luke 24:27).³

But He didn't stop there, He continued into the village & broke bread with the two before being recognized & disappearing as it says beginning in v28...²⁸*As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. ²⁹But they urged him strongly, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it & began to give it to them. ³¹Then their eyes were opened & they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. ³²They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road & opened the Scriptures to us?”*

³ Warren W. Wiersbe, [The Bible Exposition Commentary](#), vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 279.

I'd remind us, Alpha strongly urges dinner to be served during the sessions. For some reason, eating together opens the heart & defenses come down. Jesus is often revealed during the intimate moments of sharing a meal!

“These men had talked with & listened to Jesus, then invited Him to their home. *They'd been won by the Word of God*, and they didn't even know who the Stranger was. All they knew was their hearts were burning within them; they wanted that blessing to last.

The more we receive the Word of God, the more we'll want to fellowship with the God of the Word. As an old hymn says, “Beyond the sacred page/I seek Thee, Lord.” Understanding Bible knowledge can lead to a big head, as 1 Cor. 8:1 says, “*knowledge puffs up, while love builds up.*” But receiving Biblical Truth while walking with the Savior leads to a burning heart.

Jesus opened the Scriptures to them, then He opened their eyes to recognize Him. Now they knew for themselves He was alive. They had evidence of the empty tomb, the angels, the witnesses, the Scriptures & now their own personal experience with Him.”⁴

It continues in v33...³³They got up & returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven & those with them, assembled together ³⁴and saying, “It is true! The Lord has risen & has appeared to Simon.” ³⁵Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

“The best evidence we've understood the Bible & met the living Christ is that we have something exciting to share with others. The two men immediately left Emmaus & returned to Jerusalem to tell the believers they'd met Jesus. But when they arrived, the Apostles & the others *told them* Jesus was alive & had appeared to Peter! What if we all came every Sunday to tell about meeting the living Christ because we've all been walking with the living Savior!?!”⁵

Their sorrow forgotten & overcome with joy, the two disciples wasted no time in going the seven miles back to Jerusalem that very night in order to tell the other disciples they too had seen Jesus (vv. 33–35). They wanted to tell those men who'd been hiding for their lives behind locked doors in Jerusalem. Whose teacher had been murdered in the cruelest way imaginable, believing His murderers were coming for them next.

Remember, not long before these same men had been sent out in pairs by Jesus & had been given authority over unclean spirits & illness (Mark 6:5b-13). They'd been warned by Jesus, persecution was coming & had been given specific instruction on what to do when it did (Matthew 10:16-23), but when that time came, they chose fear.

In John 20:19-29 we see Jesus had to come to them through locked doors, not once but twice - first on the day of His resurrection & then again eight days later. And even then it

⁴ Warren W. Wiersbe, [The Bible Exposition Commentary](#), vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 279.

⁵ Warren W. Wiersbe, [The Bible Exposition Commentary](#), vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 279.

took time for them to develop the boldness to share the gospel in Jerusalem, Judea & onto the nations as was their calling, and ours.

Fear & doubt are natural reactions when life hits with the unexpected. Sometimes we need to grieve the loss of a loved one, a relationship, or a dream. It's also a natural response to want to hide fear & doubt away from others & from ourselves because we can't bear to look at it head-on. But when Christ enters into fear & doubt either through invitation, or by breaking through our locked doors, grief's turned on its head, and we find ourselves celebrating Jesus once again.

Resurrection Sunday marked Christ's victory over sin & death, but it wasn't the end of His ministry, nor of our salvation. It's the beginning! We're continually welcomed into this transforming story of the resurrection. As Christ followers, we bear witness to the transformative work of God's immeasurable mercy & grace in Christ.

As believers, we'll have times when we're at odds with the world, when we choose to respond in either fear or hope. Just as these two disciples ran to encourage the Eleven, we should be ready to run to the side of those sitting in fear or grief when their faith's been shaken, or when misconception stands in the way of their sight of Christ.

After 2 years of craziness in this country, with the breakdown of so much hope & stability, the fields may just be ripe for harvest! **Be praying for those who need to be at Alpha. Invite them. Sit with them over dinner for 12 weeks to see the undercover Jesus breakthrough! Or, maybe you shudder in doubt, having believed lies. Jesus wants to break through via this community & the Word of God in order to encounter the God of the Word!**