

Fellowship of the Burning Hearts

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Luke 24:13–32 (NKJV) “Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And they talked together of all these things which had happened. ¹⁵ So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him. ¹⁷ And He said to them, ‘What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?’ ¹⁸ Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, ‘Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?’ ¹⁹ And He said to them, ‘What things?’ So they said to Him, ‘The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰ and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. ²¹ But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. ²² Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. ²³ When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. ²⁴ And certain of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but Him they did not see.’ ²⁵ Then He said to them, ‘O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?’ ²⁷ And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. ²⁸ Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He 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?’”

On the same day as Jesus’ resurrection, two followers of Jesus were traveling on a seven mile journey from Jerusalem to the village called Emmaus. It was about a seven mile journey. One of their names was Cleopas. They were talking about the events that had just taken place during the previous three days. As they walked and talked together, Jesus came alongside them and traveled with them. They did not recognize Jesus. Why? Mark 16:12 says that He had appeared in another form.

When Jesus came near He asked them what they were discussing. The men were amazed that this Man had not heard about the events that had taken place and said, “Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?” Jesus answered, “What things?” What follows is their account of these things.

Hope is foundational to faith. Without hope there can be no faith. Hope is often shaken which robs of our faith. First these followers shared their prior hopes. They and others regarded Jesus of Nazareth as a Prophet. He was mighty in deed and word before God and the people. His followers were hoping that He would be the One to redeem Israel.

Next they shared how their hope seemed lost. Nothing they had hoped for came to pass. Instead, the opposite was reality. The chief priests and rulers delivered Jesus to be unjustly condemned to death. Jesus was then crucified and died. He was buried in a tomb. He had now been in the grave for three days.

In the midst of what seemed to be hopelessness, there was a glimmer of hope against all hope. They shared how certain women who followed Jesus reported to the disciples that the tomb was empty. They said that they had seen a vision of angels who said that Jesus was alive. Some of the disciples had gone to the tomb and found it empty just as the women had said. However, they did not see Jesus. What did these things mean? Was there reason for hope against hope? Jesus rebuked these two followers for their slowness to believe the Scriptures. Jesus affirmed that the Scriptures taught that Christ was to suffer as He did and afterward to enter into His glory. Jesus went through the Law and the Prophets (Old Testament) and revealed everything concerning Himself.

What was the result? Hope in the hearts of these two followers was rekindled. Although they had not recognized Jesus, they were beginning to have their hope restored. The Scriptures give us the basis of hope regardless of what we see or hear otherwise.

When the two disciples arrived at their destination, they compelled Jesus to stay with them although they did not recognize Him. As He sat at the table with them, He took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them. This act of breaking the bread brought a spiritual revelation. At that moment their eyes were opened so that they recognized Him as the resurrection Lord Jesus. Suddenly they understood the purpose of His death as revealed in the breaking of the bread. Jesus was the LORD's Passover. He had indeed come to redeem Israel! Immediately after they recognized Him, He vanished from their sight.

Suddenly hope was aflame again! Once they recognized Him they recalled the hope that was being rekindled as Jesus spoke to them on the way. They said, *"Did not our hearts burn within us as we talked with Him on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?"* With hope aflame they rose that very hour and went back to report that the Lord was risen indeed!

The true followers of Jesus could be labeled "The Fellowship of the Burning Hearts". This fellowship is made up of those whose hearts are set on fire by the Lord just as these two disciples whose hearts burned within them at the presence of Christ and at the hearing of His Word. Indeed, the word of God is like a fire. Consider the following passages:

Deuteronomy 33:2 (NKJV) *"And he said: 'The LORD came from Sinai, and dawned on them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran, and He came with ten thousands of saints; from His right hand came a fiery law for them.'"*

Jeremiah 5:14 (NKJV) declares, *"Therefore thus says the LORD God of hosts: 'Because you speak this word, behold, I will make My words in your mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall devour them.'"*

Jeremiah 20:9 (NKJV) *"Then I said, 'I will not make mention of Him, nor speak anymore in His name.' But His word was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, and I could not.'"*

Jeremiah 23:29 (NKJV) *"'Is not My word like a fire?'" says the LORD, 'and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?'"*

God's word gives us hope. God's word ignites a fire of hope. No matter what may be going on at the moment, there is hope because Jesus is alive! It may seem that all hope is lost. But today the word of God is burning in your heart. Through His Word Christ is revealing Himself to you. God will do what He said. It is time to realize that pain has a purpose. It is time to realize that it is not over until it is over, and it is not over! Jesus is alive; therefore hope is still alive! It is time to realize that Jesus has been walking and talking with you. It is time to believe again! It is time to live for God again! It is time to let go of double-mindedness and to make a quality decision to follow Christ. It is time to become a member of the fellowship of the burning hearts!

A.W. Tozer once said, "I am looking for the fellowship of the burning heart—for men and women of all generations everywhere who love the Savior until adoration becomes the music of their soul until they don't have to be fooled with and entertained and amused. Jesus Christ is everything, all-in-all." I too want to be among the fellowship of the burning hearts!