



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Luke 24:13-35

“The Word of the Risen Christ, the Unfailing Remedy for Despair”

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Today is Easter Sunday morning. This is the day that Christians recognize as the day in which they especially remember the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Easter Sunday is the first Sunday. It's a date really that dances along the calendar according to the date of the first full moon that occurs on or after the Vernal equinox. And one of the reasons, I presume, that most of us who are Christians have a hard time figuring out what Easter is, or what day it shall be is that. It's rather interesting to me that the Christian church has chosen this as the day to celebrate the resurrection of the Lord Jesus when of course every week that Sunday, that first day of the week, comes around it is a reminder of the fact that he rose again from the dead. But this is the special day in the Christian calendar, and we recognize it as such. And today we are turning to Luke chapter 24 for the Scripture reading, remembering however that the resurrection of the Lord Jesus is something that we really celebrate every Sunday that we meet in his name. Luke chapter 24 verse 13 through verse 35 and we read here,

“And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. (That is it's about seven and a half miles) And

they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned.”

You can imagine them having conversation in which they discuss the great events of the last few days that were so disappointing to them, and also ask one another questions and answered them. “Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not recognize him. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?”

Now some of the versions that are translations of another text have instead of “As ye walk and are sad,” “They stood still looking sad,” and it is probable that that text is to be preferred. And so when Jesus asked the question they stopped, looked at the stranger, but with crest fallen countenances.

“And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What sort of things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we hoped that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel. (Incidentally, when they expressed this, “Redeemed Israel,” it is clear that they have political connotations in mind primarily, and not spiritual ones.) But we hoped that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company amazed us, who were early at the sepulchre; And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them who were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it

even as the women had said: but him they saw not. Then he said unto them, O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Messiah to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?”

This is one of the many evidences in the Bible that it was to be expected that the Old Testament believers recognized the sufferings and the glory of the Lord Jesus before he came and died.

“And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew near unto the village, to which they went: and he made as though he would have gone farther. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat eating with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and broke, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened.”

It’s interesting, I think, to note that three times in this particular chapter we have the word open. We have it here in verse 31, “And their eyes were opened and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.” And then in verse 32 we read, “And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us along the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?” And then again in verse 45, “Then opened he their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures.” So, their eyes were opened. The Scriptures were opened, and their mind was opened in order to understand. And in verse 44 we read,

“And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and those that were with them, Saying, The Lord is risen

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indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.”

Now one comment in verse 34 when we read, “Saying the Lord is risen indeed,” in some of the versions it appears as if it were the disciples who walked with him Emmaus road who say this, but it is the eleven who are gathered and so when they come into that company in Jerusalem with their report of being with the Lord on the way it is confirmation, not announcement of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. May the Lord bless this reading of his word.

[prayer removed from audio]

[Message] Our subject for today is “The Word of the Risen Christ, the Unfailing Remedy for Despair.” It cannot be denied that the infant science of psychology if it is a science has become a major force in 20th Century society. From the school house a vibrant psychological center today to the grave we live within easy reach of the couch. Our society has been recently called by a man who has written a book concerning the subject, “The most anxious, emotionally insecure, and analyzed population in the history of man.” We have been called the psychological society. Our age has been called many times the “Age of Anxiety” and just over the past week or so in the *Wall Street Journal* again there has been a series of articles entitled “The Age of Anxiety.” Everyone wants to be normal, but no one knows exactly what normality is.

In fact Freud commented, “Now every normal person is only approximately normal. Well that’s what I always thought. Everybody else is only approximately normal. [Laughter] Normality seems to be unattainable. We’re all sick. It’s a theory of universal madness and it reminds us of the fact that there is a biblical teaching of total depravity, a teaching very unpopular today, crucified by the doctrine of the perfectibility held by so

many modern thinkers. There is some extremism in the forgoing comments. I want to admit, but it's nevertheless impossible to deny that today it's in to be out.

Some years ago, I think it was about ten, there was an article that appeared in one of our national magazines in which the question of normality was discussed. And in the course of the article there were some comments concerning the numbers of psychologists and psychiatrists that were in practice in the various important nations of the world. And some of the figures were in Great Britain there was one psychologist or psychiatrist for every twenty-two thousand people. In France, there was one for every thirty-two thousand. In West Germany there was one for every forty-three thousand. And in Japan there was one for every fifty-two thousand. In Italy there was one for only every three-hundred and thirty-three thousand which may be a vote for spaghetti. I don't know.

[Laughter]

But at any rate we are living in a psychological society, and everyone is interested in it. We are reading books like *Understanding Yourself*, *Exploring Your Personality*, *Growing Up Emotionally*, *Making the Grade as Dad*, and so on. And the ultimate cure is psycho therapy in a multitude of different forms from Gestalt therapy to even nude marathons. It's probably correct to say that the majority of Christians whether rightly or wrongly are somewhat amused by the state of things. And yet at the same time many of them are a little bit fearful because they recognize, or at least fear, that it might be very easy for the state ultimately since they are not of the world though in the world, as Jesus said, to put them away. But in spite of this we cannot be amused by the unhappy believers who are defeated and fruitless in the abounding life that a risen Christ has promised. Neglecting Paul and Jesus, and devouring Tourneau and Naramore, literature which is to the Bible as the star of *As the World Turns* to an Olivier and Bergman, it's not surprising that they are cracking up. We're not contending when we speak about the remedy through the Bible for an instant mental health, but we do contend that the Bible promises to believer's joy amid the trials and struggles and tragedies of everyday life.

Why are Christians depressed? Because many of them are depressed, even in the city of Dallas there is a great business for psychologists and psychiatrists among the Christians and among the Christians of evangelical churches. Yes, among Christians where the Bible is preached. Why are Christians depressed? Well one of the reasons the Bible says that Christians may become depressed is simply false doctrine. For example, the apostle preached the gospel of the grace of God to the Galatians. The false teachers came in with their doctrine of legalism, and the apostle wrote to them in chapter 4 and verse 15 of the Epistle to the Galatians, “Where is the blessedness that you formally had? For when I came into your midst and preached the gospel to you, you would have plucked out your eyes and you would have given them to me.” But in the mean time, false doctrine has come, and as a result of that the believers are disturbed and depressed, and the blessedness that they had enjoyed is gone. And so far as the Epistle to the Galatians is concerned the only change had been they had now imbibed instead of the apostolic doctrine of the sovereign grace of God they had imbibed the doctrines of legalism.

Now we know also that the Bible speaks of discipline as causing depression among the saints. We also know that discouragement causes troubles among the saints. Ultimately the reason that the saints suffer from depression is unbelief. The Emmaus travelers that we have just been reading about had the worst form of discouragement possible. They were disappointed in Jesus Christ. It is, of course, a real source of discouragement and defeat to be under the discipline of God if we are not careful and do not respond by being exercised by the discipline to which God puts us. But the worst form of discouragement is surely disappointment in Jesus Christ. All of the promises of the word of God seem to offer us so much and then when it seems as if we are unable to experience the things that the Bible speaks about and discouragement and defeat comes, it is discouragement and disappointment with our Lord Jesus Christ himself. The things that he said would come to pass do not seem to come to pass and so we are disappointed

and disappointed and discouraged by Jesus Christ himself. What is the remedy? Well the remedy is the same remedy that the disciples on the Emmaus road found. It is the word of the risen Christ.

Now I want you to notice as we look through this account that there are several movements and the first of the movements is from doubt to confession. Luke's style which is always beautiful is at its loveliest in this account of the encounter of the Lord Jesus with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. It is a unique and convincingly authentic narrative. I would imagine that if we are to capture the spirit of the first day of the week, that Sunday morning of the resurrection, we could best capture it from meditating upon the things that Luke writes us here in chapter 24.

Now the two were evidently not of the eleven for they joined the eleven later on. Two disciples, one of them is unknown. We know the name of one. His name was Cleopas. We do not know the name of the other. Some have suggested it was his wife. That may well have been. We do not know. At any rate, it was the first day of the week, the Sunday morning. They had awakened very early. They had stayed in Jerusalem only long enough to hear some very astonishing reports. Some women had been out to the sepulcher, and they had found that the body was gone. And they had come saying that they had seen a vision of angels and that he was alive. And some of the men who were in doubt about it evidently made their way out to the tomb.

We know from other gospel records that Peter and John raced out to the tomb when the news came to them, and they found it just as the women had said. Some wit has said that the greatest miracle in chapter 24 is not the resurrection it's that they found it exactly like the women had said it was. [Laughter] But nevertheless, in spite of the fact that they found it exactly as the women had said, these two strangers, Cleopas and his companion made their way off toward Emmaus.

So it is clear that while they had heard these remarkable reports of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, they were unbelieving. And because they were unbelieving they were

miserable. And they were miserable because their hope in the Lord Jesus Christ was gone. They had heard him evidently proclaim the victories of faith in him. They had expected him clearly to survive the onslaught of the Romans and the Pharisees and the Sadducees. They had not expected him to be crucified. And when finally he was put to death and his body thrown into the sepulcher, it was as if all of their world had collapsed. They had expected finally to receive the promises of the Old Testament as they interpreted them that they would overcome politically the Romans and become again the great power that they had become in the glorious halcyon days of Solomon and David. And now they were making their way back home eight miles away from the city of Jerusalem to the little village of Emmaus. They were unaware that the key to Doubting Castle was standing right by them as they made their way.

One of the greatest of the stories of John Bunyan is the story of how the companions, Christian and his companions were making their way toward the Celestial City and they went into By Path Meadow. And after they were in By Path Meadow they fell into the hands of Giant Despair in Doubting Castle. And then Christian discovered a key which was in his breast called the Key of the Promises. And he found that the Key of the Promise of God opened every door in Doubting Castle and they managed to escape from the hands of Giant Despair by the Key of the Promise and regain the Kings Highway. Well here were two disciples who were passing through the same experience and the Lord Jesus who was walking with them would soon sweep the midnight from their soul.

They were discussing the things that had happened. They were communing together. It must have been a very discouraging conversation. It would not have been one I would have liked to listen to. We read, “And they walked together and they were talking of the things that had happened. And it came to pass that while they communed together and reasoned,” you can imagine questions that were asked. Weren't you hopeful that he might be able to overcome? Did you not think that it was possible that he was the Messiah? I thought that it was even possible that he might be a divine Messiah. But now,

what hope is there and what about Peter and John who have risked so much because of their acquaintance with him and their trust in him? And the stranger drew by as they were discussing these things and began to listen to their conversation. They must have taken a quick look at him, but they could not understand who he was because their eyes were “holden.” Their eyes were held the Scriptures said in such a way that they were unable to clearly see who he was. They saw the figure but they did not really see that it was Jesus of Nazareth.

Now the Lord Jesus like a good teacher asks them some questions. “What manner of communications are these that ye have one with another as ye walk?” And they stood still looking sad. You can see them turn, stop, look at the stranger. Their faces slack from the desperate thoughts that were passing through their mind. One of them, Cleopas spoke up, “Art Thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and you’ve not known the things which have come to pass there in these days?” Can you imagine, our Lord must have smiled inwardly at that? Art Thou only a stranger in Jerusalem? Why he was the central figure over the weekend. He was the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, the Passover lamb. And they were saying to him, “Are you only a stranger?” Oh, the irony of the account that these who trust in the Passover lamb have the lamb standing by them and they still do not understand who he is. He said to them, what sort of things? He wants to hear them, hear them out fully. And they said, “The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, he was a prophet.” Notice, it’s prophet. It’s not God-man. “A prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. And we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel.” Rudely awakened at Calvary, their confidence in him fleeing, this haunting past tense. “We hoped, we trusted, enshrines an agony of disillusionment. It’s not we trust, “We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel.”

It reminds us of the feeling that many Christians get. We all have had this. We thought that he might be a prayer answering God. We trusted that he might remember us when we got down upon our knees and we pled with him to answer our prayers. “We trusted that it had been he who should have redeemed Israel.” But now, it’s three days since--oh it’s true some women have gone out to the sepulchre and they brought strange reports. They amazed us and some of the men have gone out and they’ve found it just like the women had said, but they didn’t see him. They didn’t believe, they turned and they left. You would think that reports of a resurrection such as that would have stopped them, and they would have stayed in Jerusalem to search out the basis for the reports that he was not in the tomb.

Now then we come to the second movement, from rebuke to exposition. And finally the Lord had heard enough, and he said, “O fools, and slow of heart,” isn’t that interesting, “O fools, your intellect,” that’s the force behind that word, “Your intellect is deficient.” You have not studied the Scriptures sufficient. “O fools,” and not only have you not studied the Scriptures sufficiently, but your will is in rebellion. “O fools, and slow of heart, to believe all that the prophets have written: Ought not Messiah to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?” Sufferings and glory, if you have read the Old Testament properly you would have understood that he should have suffered. You would have understood that he would also enter into his glory. Do you not see that the heart of your lost hope, your miserable disappointment and discouragement is traced simply to the fact that you have not read the Scriptures, and you have not pondered them?

“O fools and slow of heart,” my dear Christian friend, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ addressing us all, “O fools and slow of heart,” we are to pay so little attention to the word of God. No wonder we are troubled and depressed and disturbed and upset. And our families are in turmoil; and our relationships with others in our business and in our neighborhood are in turmoil. We are not turning to the word of God and paying attention to it, foolish, slow of heart to believe the remedies that are found in the word of

God, remedies for the mind, remedies for the heart in the word of God, the sufferings and the glory. Incidentally this exposes the nakedness of all theories of the atonement that do not stress the fact that the Lord Jesus must shed his blood for the remission of sins, exemplary theories, all Albaladian theories, all governmental theories of the atonement, all theories that do not lay great stress upon our Lord Jesus paying the penalty for sin are over thrown by the words, “Ought not Messiah to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?”

And now begins the greatest sermon perhaps that was ever preached. “And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.” I think of the expositions of the word of God that I would have wanted to hear, I think that this is perhaps the preeminent sermon that I would have liked to have heard. The Lord Jesus taking the Old Testament Scriptures and under his magic touch the whole past of the nation Israel, the whole past of these men with whom he was walking stirred and awoke to life. And isn't it fitting that the one who has the nail prints in his hand is the one who untangles the riddle of the history and life of the Old Testament record. How fitting it is that the one who is the climax of all of that revelation is the one who turns its pages and explains to them the things that are contained within it. He's the text. He's the preacher, and he's the sermon.

“And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning him.” Can you not imagine him expounding Genesis chapter 3 and pointing out how that God promised a seed of the woman who should crush the serpent's head? He promised also the seed of Shem and that that seed of the woman would come from that line. He spoke of the seed of Abraham. He also expounded the significance of the offering up of Isaac by Abraham. He moved on through the Book of Genesis on into the Book of Exodus and spoke about the tabernacle, the experiences of the children of Israel, the Passover service, the priesthood and all that that signified. Then moving on into the Psalms, he expounded unto them those great

Messianic Psalms that spoke of the coming one who would suffer and who would reign from one end of the earth to the other. Moving into the prophets, and particularly hesitating there, expounding the passages that have to do with the Messianic glories.

Some writer has said he pointed out that, “He was David's King, ‘fairer than the children of men,’ in the days of Solomon's well-doing, He was ‘the altogether lovely.’ He was Isaiah's Child-King with a shoulder strong enough to bear the government; and the name Emanuel, gathering within itself all the excellencies. He was Jeremiah's ‘Branch of Righteousness, executing justice and righteousness in the land.’ He was Ezekiel's ‘Plant of renown,’ giving shade and shedding fragrance. He was Daniel's stone cut without hands, smiting the image, becoming a mountain and filling the whole earth. He was the ideal Israel of Hosea, “growing as the lily,” “casting out His roots as Lebanon.” To Joel, the Hope of the people, and the Strength of the children of Israel, the Usherer in of the vision of Amos, of the “Plowman overtaking the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed;” and of Obadiah the “Deliverance upon Mount Zion and holiness,” the fulfillment of that of which Jonah was but a sign, the “turning again” to God, of which Micah spoke, the one whom Nahum saw upon the mountains publishing peace, the Anointed of Whom Habakkuk sang as “going forth for salvation.” He who brought to the people the pure language of Zephaniah's message, the true Zerubbabel of Haggai's word, forever rebuilding the house in the city of God; Himself the dawn of the day when “Holiness unto the Lord shall be upon the bells of the horses,” as Zechariah foretold; He the “Refiner,” fire, the fuller's soap, “the Sun of Righteousness” of Malachi's vision.”

What a magnificent sermon that must have been. I doubt that seven miles ever seemed so short to two men. And incidentally if you look at this account carefully you will see that they began early in the morning because the gathering reports of the resurrection had not yet taken place, only those first two, but they did not arrive in Emmaus, seven miles away, until sundown. And so evidently they had stopped along the way and as the Lord Jesus unfolded the Scriptures to them they were amazed at what they

heard. They listened as people who were in one long Bible conference. I can imagine that they punched each other and said, “Have you ever heard anything like this in all of your life?” They stopped. They listened, and they were inside, things were happening. As they later explained, their heart became warm. They began to burn within themselves as this stranger opened the word of God. And finally at sundown the sunlight had come into their hearts. So he had charmed the gloom away by Christ in the Old Testament. That’s how. Discouraged, defeated, depressed Christians now are Christians burning with the desire to make him known by Christ in the Old Testament. Why there are many evangelical Christians sitting our congregations of the saints that don't even know the order of the books of the Old Testament. It’s no wonder that we are depressed and defeated, and so the Lord Jesus Christ in the Old Testament.

Arthur T. Pierson once said that he thought that perhaps the Epistle to the Hebrews was the sermon that the Lord Jesus preached on the Emmaus road. That’s highly unlikely, but I’m sure it must have been as great an effort as that great effort in the Epistle to the Hebrews. And I think it’s rather startling too to realize that it is Christ in the Old Testament. Mr. Spurgeon used to say wherever I open the Bible; I head straight across country to Jesus Christ. Well that’s what he did. It’s no wonder that the devil hates the Old Testament so. And it’s no wonder that it is part of the major attack of the critics of the word of God today to attack the Old Testament, for it has to do with our Lord Jesus Christ. So, “Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.”

Now, the third movement follows, and the third movement is a movement from faith to knowledge. It’s a lovely picture, incidentally, of Jesus’ longing for us. As he finished his exposition it was near sundown. They drew near to the village of Emmaus, and the Lord Jesus fainted as if he were going to leave them at this point. “He made as though he would have gone farther.” It was really no mere faint. It was a kind of invitation. He longs to be loved freely. He longs for us to love him freely. Now we

know of course that all love for the Lord Jesus is love implanted in our hearts by him. We love him because he first loved us. But he loves the expression of response. And so he gave these two disciples the opportunity to respond. “He made as though he would have gone farther. They constrained him. They said, Abide with us.” “O come to my heart, Lord Jesus there is room in my heart for Thee,” we should pray.

Now, they sat down for a meal, and if Cleopas’ wife was there, let’s assume she fixed the meal. It came to pass as they sat down to eat, the Lord Jesus took the bread and he blessed it and he broke it, and as he gave the bread to them their eyes were opened. I wonder what it was that caused them to see. Well we know it was a divine operation. Their eyes were opened. They were opened by God. Was it some familiar gesture that they recognized? Was it the word of grace that he said? Was there something about the blessing that he uttered? Was it perhaps that they did catch a glimpse of the nail prints in his hands, if they are there? What was it we do not know, but we know this, we know that when he went through the motions of giving thanks and giving to them, it was like a symbol to them. John Omen used to say that a symbol was an interpretation to the heart. Well this opened things for them, and they were able to understand who he was. They also evidently had further understanding of the sacrifice that he offered and of the salvation gift. So as he took the bread, as we so often do Sunday night here, which reminds us of him, and he gave thanks for it because of what it meant, the sacrifice, he gave it to them in token of the fact that it is a gift of God, this great salvation which he has procured for us. Their eyes were opened, and they saw him, and immediately his supernaturally vanished out of sight. We read, “They recognized him and he vanished from their sight,” and the adjective that is used there is one that is used only of supernatural vanishing. Well it was the apprenticeship of faith for the new age. It was our Lord’s appearance to them, his bringing them back to a trust in him, and then his leaving of them was to acquaint them with the fact that in the days that follow, they would be by themselves.

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Now, then we read in verse 32, “After their eyes were opened they turned to each other and they said, “Why do you know that I have a great new understanding of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body.” Now, no, of course they did not say that. They did not say, “I’ve always wondered exactly what the resurrection body would be like,” and speak about it. No their response is something even overriding all of these other questions that we might have. “They said one to another, ‘Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us along the way’.”

Many years ago P.T. Forsyth made a very striking statement to me. He said the doctrine of the deity of Christ is the theological expression of evangelical conversion. What he meant to say by that was the fact that we believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God is not simply because we see it in the word of God, though that’s the fundamental reason, and sufficient reason, but we also believe in the doctrine of the deity of Christ because by his grace we have come to be saved. We have rested in his word and we have come to the experience of new life. We have come to know that our sins are forgiven. We have come to sense that we have been justified by faith. And so the doctrine of the deity of Christ is the theological expression of evangelical conversion. We know that only a God-man can save us, not another man.

Well we’re having a lot of discussion today about the doctrine of the inspiration of the Scriptures. I’m very much interested in it. I think I’ve made a special study of that, and I think that there are some things that I have done that very few have done in the study of the use of the Scriptures of the Old Testament in the New Testament. I have come to appreciate the significance of the inspiration of the Scriptures. And anyone who has studied theology may give you a working definition of the doctrine of the inspiration of the Scriptures, and I’m not discounting the significance of that at all, but I want to say to you that the doctrine of the inspiration of the Scriptures is the theological expression of the experience of the burning heart. It’s the man who has read the Scriptures and has come to understand something of them, has had them become part of him through the

illumination of the Holy Spirit, and who has experienced the burning heart that comes from seeing Christ in them, who recognizes that the Scriptures are of God. It is the theological expression of the experience of the burning heart. And I hope above all else that that's what you've had through the reading of the word of God.

Blaise Pascal must have been somewhere in the Emmaus latitudes on that memorable night of November 23rd sixteen hundred and fifty-four when he wrote in his journal the one word, “Fire.” And that was to record his most memorable spiritual experience. Then he followed it with these jottings, after he put fire there, he said, “Joy, joy, joy, tears of joy,” and then “Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ.” He had come to an experience like the experience of the burning heart. One of the great needs of evangelicalism today in my opinion is the passion that comes from the burning heart produced by the study of the Scriptures. Oh how superficial evangelicalism is today. How they are bound up in seminars and discussions and movements and all kinds of things that do not dig more than skin deep into the word of God. We need a re-birth of the study of the Scriptures. We need a renewed commitment to the word of God in order that the burning heart may be the experience of more Christians. In some ways we probably have more understanding than any other age, but the passion produced by involvement in the word of God is largely gone.

I know that there are people who say, “Ah the burning heart, that's emotionalism. Is it not? We're not supposed to be emotional. In fact if we get too emotional somebody will call us fanatics. Well emotion is part of our human nature. The only body that is not supposed to be emotional is the body over which a sheet has been pulled. Emotionalism in the word of God is there. It is there in Christian experience, but it's the emotionalism not produced by painted fire. Painted fire does not warm anyone. That's what we have in evangelicalism. We have painted fire. What we need is the emotionalism produced by the deep acquaintance with Jesus Christ and it only comes through the word of God. Be assured of that. It's through the word that we get acquainted with him.

There’s an old story which I like. I think it expresses a truth, whether it’s true or not, but there is a story that there was an American who came to Great Brittan to hear a great preacher. I can understand that. I love great preaching. I love to hear great preachers. I can imagine how someone would make the trip across the Atlantic to hear a great preacher, and he heard the great preacher. He heard him speak in the morning. He heard him speak in the afternoon. And he heard him speak at night, but he was disappointed. There was something about the great preacher that did not ring all together true, and his heart was not touched. Going back to his hotel that night, he was attracted by a crowd out in a part. He walked over and there was a young man preaching. And he was preaching in the power of the Holy Spirit and he was gripped by what he heard, and he only remembered one thing that the young man said later on. But that one sentence especially touched him. He heard the man say, “Friends I’ve never been to college, but I’ve been to Calvary.” It was an expression of a relationship to the Lord Jesus that was signal and significant.

Now they heard our Lord and they said, “Our hearts burned within us while he talked with us along the way.” When I was going through seminary there was an evangelist who came to the seminary to preach. He was a very popular evangelist. So just about the time that Billy Graham became popular, this young man is still preaching, but is not a young man any longer, but he came and he walked in the platform at the seminary, and here was the faculty gathered there, and rather conservative clothes generally speaking. He walked onto the platform and he had a long sport coat with flashy colors in days before that was very popular. And he was dressed according to the latest fashion.

And in the course of his sermon he began to attack the kinds of theological education that occurred in some of the seminaries. Well we were enjoying it because he was stepping on the toes of a lot of the faculty members, [Laughter] and I was just a young faculty member at the time, and I can remember him saying, “Now one of the

troubles with the Christian church is that we don't dress right. We walk into the pulpit and we have a black suit on.” I’ve got it on this morning, just in order to tell this story properly, “A black suit, a black tie, black shoes and black socks.” And then I remember him saying, “Another trouble is that we’re playing solitaire with the prospect cards.” He was accusing all of being lazy, which was probably true. And then he made his climatic statement and his appeal was, “What we need is to get our shirt tails set on fire.” It’s a great theological thought. [Laughter] But that was his thought.

Well I knew my Homiletics Professor was a very conservative Australian, Presbyterian, and he believed that on Sunday you should dress in a dark suit with a dark tie and dark socks. I rebelled against the dark socks and wore argyle socks for six, ten years in conscious rebellion against that. [Laughter] Well I knew that he was fuming over this because it was obvious this young man hadn't thought very deeply, and so it was about six months before he responded, which was probably about par form him. It came time for him to speak in chapel, and so he got up and he said, “My subject for this morning is, ‘The Emmaus Disciples: or the Burning Heart versus the Flaming Shirrtail.’” [Laughter] And he proceeded to point out to us that it was not the flaming shirrtail that we needed it was the burning heart that we needed through the study of the Scriptures, and of course he was right. The evangelist was wrong. The flaming shirrtail comes from the burning heart. That’s the real problem.

Now then the fourth movement is just as the others. We read, “And they rose up the same hour and returned to Jerusalem and found the eleven gathered together and those who were with them and the eleven were saying, ‘The Lord’s risen, and he’s appeared to Simon.’” And then these disciples speak and told what things were done along the way and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread. Now isn't that interesting? They had arrived in Emmaus in the late afternoon. It was getting dark, and they said it’s dangerous to get out on the road after dark. So won't you come in and abide with us. And the Lord Jesus came in and abode with them, but now that their

hearts are burning with the word of God within them, and now that they know that they know that Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead, they've seen him, why it doesn't make a bit of difference what time of the day it is, they start out for Jerusalem that night. And they reach the company of the eleven. They open the doors. They're greeted by the eleven saying to them, “The Lord's risen, he's appeared to Simon.” And they said, “We've got a story to tell you too.” And they told of how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread and how their hearts burned while he talked with them. So for the depression of discouragement from unbelief, the remedy is the key of the promises.

Just as Christian found in Doubting Castle in the clutches of Giant Despair, the key of the Promises unlocks all the locks of Doubting Castle and leads to clarity of vision of God's purpose in the presence of the risen Christ. As a matter of fact all of life is simply one long journey to Emmaus with the risen Christ by our side, the key to the depression that often so grips us is that one who is by our side, the risen Christ, with the word, the word of the promises of the word of God.

And by the way I close with this. Did you notice that they said, “Did not our hearts burn within us while we talked with him?” No, not “We talked with him.” So many people think it's prayer. That's the solution. “While we talk about him?” no, “While he talked with us along the way,” I know that people say, “Oh but in the 20th century we cannot, we just simply cannot talk to him.” No the problem with the 20th century is that we will not wait to have him talk to us. “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us along the way?” My dear Christian friend, listen to him. Listen to him in the Scriptures. Give yourself to the study of the word of God. Do not be satisfied until your hearts burn within you from the Scriptures. Do not be satisfied with anything superficial, long for the experience, and you'll have it, and the result will be urgent, joyous sharing of the excitement of the knowledge of Christ. These insignificant persons for they weren't even among the eleven. These insignificant persons had the burning heart that led to the blazing vision and the desire to make him known.

“The Word of the Risen Christ, the Unfailing Remedy for Despair” by S. Lewis Johnson
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If you're here this morning and you have never believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, your need is to trust in the redeemer who shed his blood for the forgiveness of sins. May God bring you to Christ. Only God can bring you. You're lost and undone, under divine condemnation. Come to him; receive as a free gift the forgiveness of sins, acknowledging your own sin and condemnation. Receive him and come to know him and do not be satisfied until you have the experience of the burning heart. It's the key to deliverance from the depressions of life. May we stand for the benediction?

[Prayer] We are so grateful to Thee, Lord, for the word of God and for the remedy that it is to the problems of life. We thank Thee for the sufficiency of the word of God and the sufficiency of our Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, God if there are some in this audience who have not come to Christ, give them no rest until they rest in him. And for those of us, Lord, who do know...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]