

## Recognizing Jesus, Part II

Luke 24:13-35

The Third Sunday of Easter, April 30, 2017

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Broadlands

Last Sunday we reviewed how to distinguish between the true Jesus and all of the false Jesuses out there. It would seem that Luke, in the final chapter of his Gospel, is also telling us how to recognize the real Jesus and thus giving us more ways to tell Him from all of the false Jesuses that are out there.

From John's Gospel and Luke's Gospel agrees the real Jesus rose from the dead. The real Jesus was crucified and died. The real Jesus sends out other people to speak on His behalf. The real Jesus is the One who gives you the Holy Spirit in His fullness.

A false Jesus is one who is not risen from the dead. A false Jesus is one who was not crucified and did not die. A false Jesus is a Jesus who speaks to you directly in your thoughts or feelings without any external word from someone else. That means that the true Jesus will speak to you in your thoughts and feelings, but it will never be divorced from the word that He brought to you through others whom He appointed to bring the Word to you. A false Jesus gives you the Holy Spirit in parts or fractions. A false Jesus does not give you all of the Holy Spirit all at once.

Luke adds a couple more criteria on determining whether or not you are dealing with the real Jesus or a false one. The real Jesus fulfills the Old Testament. In fact the Old Testament is entirely about Jesus.

Here is where the resurrection of Jesus is so critical. The resurrection of Jesus verifies His words. Jesus predicted that He would rise from the dead. When He made that prediction, He predicted the impossible. Because He predicted the impossible when He promises that He will rise from the dead His entire credibility is called into question. Only a lunatic would seriously make such a promise. Jesus was not joking around when He made the promise because in the same breath that He promised His resurrection, He also promised His torture and death. When His resurrection comes to pass it verifies the word of Jesus. If even His most outrageous promise came to pass, then all of His other lesser words will come to pass also. If He did something as hard as rising from the dead, the rest of the things which He promised which are easier will also come to pass. Therefore if Jesus said He would rise from the dead and He did rise from the dead, then when He says all of the Old Testament is really about Him, then all of the Old Testament is really about Him.

The Old Testament is therefore not a separate book from the New Testament. The New Testament is simply the end of the account. If you read the Old Testament by itself, you are left with a feeling that it is unfulfilled and still waiting for something in the future to happen. The New Testament tells you what the Old Testament is waiting for. They are one book. That is why they appear together in your Bibles.

When you begin to read through the Old Testament understanding what the Lord told you in Luke 24, that the entire Old Testament is really about Him, you begin to see Him everywhere in the Old Testament.

When God promises Abraham and Sarah a son that sounds like God promising Mary a son. With Abraham and Sarah God promised elderly barren people a son. With Mary God promised a virgin a son. It always seems that when Jesus comes along He takes the Old Testament up a notch.

When God sends Moses to save His people from their slavery to Pharaoh, that sounds like God sending Jesus to save His people from slavery to sin. When God saves His people from slavery in Egypt,

He saves them from death by Pharaoh's army. That sounds like Jesus saving us from death with His promise to us of resurrection keeping in mind that if He promised His own resurrection and it came to pass, then when He promises you your resurrection you know what is going to happen!

When God makes David king over Israel, it sounds a lot like God making Jesus king over Israel. When David suffers outside of Jerusalem, it sounds like Jesus suffering outside of Jerusalem. When Jeremiah predicts a righteous branch that will spring from David's line, that sounds like Jesus. When Isaiah predicts a servant of the Lord who will suffer under the punishment of His people's sins thereby bringing them peace, I don't know who else that could be except Jesus. Even when Balaam predicts a star that will come from Jacob, that is Jesus.

A person could go on for days demonstrating how the whole Old Testament is really about Jesus. Not even the New Testament lists all of the different ways in which our Lord fulfills the Old Testament. If it did the New Testament would be a lot longer. If you think it is intimidating to read the whole Bible now, what if the New Testament actually told you every last place where the Old Testament was talking about Jesus. And on a personal note, it is fun to read the Old Testament and look for the places where it is talking about Jesus that the New Testament has not told us about. It is kind of like hunting Easter eggs and finding a good one.

So the real Jesus goes with the Old Testament. A Jesus without the Old Testament is a false Jesus.

Furthermore the real Jesus makes the hearts of His disciples burn within them when He speaks to them. Such a burning may or may not physically manifest itself, but He will make your heart burn.

I would add here that we are not talking about the English phrase "heart burn" just in case any of you were wondering.

Jesus made the heart of the disciples on the road to Emmaus burn within them by telling them about the Christ and how the Christ was meant to suffer and to rise from the dead. He did this by telling them everywhere in the Old Testament where the Old Testament was talking about Him. He must have done it really fast or they walked really slow because I don't see how seven miles of walking would have given them enough time. And what if one of those disciples asked Him a question! Wow would that take some time to answer! I don't know how the ancient disciples were, but I have found that the contemporary disciples of Jesus ask a lot of questions! ☺

But what is Jesus doing when He does this? He is restoring their hope. They had hoped that Jesus was One to redeem Israel. Obviously as they walked along the road to Emmaus they no longer hoped that Jesus would redeem Israel. His death had dashed their hopes.

His death should not have dashed their hopes. They should have known from the Old Testament that the Christ was to die in the fashion in which He died. But apparently they did not believe that the Old Testament and Jesus went together. Their hopes were dashed when He died.

Rather than to raise their hopes by causing them to recognize Him right away so that they would know that He had risen from the dead, He Himself takes them to the Scriptures! That is remarkable. He could have simply opened their eyes so that they could recognize Him. He had opened the eyes of the blind, how much easier it would have been to have opened the eyes of people who already had their sight! But even though He could have opened their eyes so that they would recognize their risen Lord and raise their hopes, He takes them through the Scriptures.

Jesus explained to them how the Old Testament predicted that the Christ would suffer and die in this way. Therefore just because Jesus did suffer and die in this way does not mean that He is not the Christ. In fact because He did suffer and die in this way means that He is the Christ and the redeemer of Israel! Jesus is raising their hopes again! Their hopes were not misplaced when they put their hope in

Jesus to redeem Israel. He is demonstrating to them in book, chapter, and verse from the Old Testament how Jesus had redeemed Israel by His sacrificial death.

When He raises their hopes, their hearts burn. When He raises your hopes, your hearts burn. Some of you even tell me when your hopes have been raised and your hearts have burned within you. It was the real Jesus who did that.

A false Jesus is incapable of making your hearts burn within you. All a fake Jesus can do is try to imitate such an experience by working up an emotional power within you. He cannot give you an experience of hope raised because a false Jesus has no power to make you a promise that would give you hope. Since the real Jesus is risen from the dead, He has the power to raise hope within your heart and make them burn with the fire of His Spirit.

And finally for this Sunday, the real Jesus is recognized in the breaking of the bread.

Jesus could have revealed Himself to those Emmaus disciples any time He wanted to. When Mary Magdalene at the tomb did not immediately recognize Him, all He had to do was say her name and then she knew it was the Lord. He could have done something similar to these two disciples. He could have said to the one, "Cleopas" and by doing so caused Cleopas to recognize Him. Jesus does not do that.

Jesus could have caused them to recognize Him when He pointed out to them how all of the Old Testament is fulfilled in Him. It would have been easy. There are numerous times in the Old Testament where His resurrection is predicted! Any one of those times would have been a good time to show them His hands and His side and show them that He was the resurrected Jesus! Jesus did not do this. He lets their hearts burn and in spite of the fact that their hearts did burn as hope rose in their hearts, He still did not reveal Himself.

Instead our Lord waits until they get to the house where the disciples are going. That also would have been an opportune time to reveal Himself to them. He still does not reveal Himself to them. He makes out as if He is going on further, but they prevail upon Him to enter with them and stay the night. He does so and when He breaks bread with them, then He reveals Himself to them and they recognize Him. Even when our Lord breaks bread with them, He takes the bread, blesses it and distributes it to them. Not only is He doing the same things that He did when He first instituted the Sacrament of the Altar He is also serving as host in someone else's home! When you invite the Lord into your home understand that when He arrives, He will be hosting you in your own home!

Why wait until the breaking of the bread to open their eyes to recognize Him? The real Jesus is telling you where He will be recognized. He will be recognized in the breaking of the bread where He serves as host even if someone else has built the house in which He is breaking the bread.

And so in 1967 Immanuel Lutheran Church dedicated this house. You built it and then you turned it over the Lord for His use. When He inhabits this building, He becomes the host and even though you built the house suddenly you are guests in the house that you yourselves built!

In this house Jesus is recognized in all kinds of things that I could take a long time explaining to you and you would have many questions about it, but one place where Jesus does reveal Himself such that you recognize Him is in the breaking of the bread and not just any breaking of the bread, but His breaking of the bread. His breaking of the bread is what we call the Sacrament of the Altar. We call it that, but it remains His breaking of the bread.

The real Jesus will be recognized in the breaking of the bread.

A false Jesus will not come to you in the breaking of the bread. A false Jesus cannot come to you in the breaking of the bread. That is why so many false Jesuses of our own day and age do not bother with the breaking of the bread. Some of them even ridicule and denigrate the breaking of the bread of the

real Jesus. The reason that a false Jesus must ridicule and denigrate the breaking of the bread of the real Jesus is because a false Jesus hasn't the power to reveal Himself in the breaking of the bread and because a false Jesus does not have that power and the real Jesus does, the false Jesus does not want you to pay attention to that lest the powerlessness and weakness of the false Jesus be revealed.

The real Jesus is risen from the dead. He has all authority in heaven and on earth. He has the power to do what He likes. He has the power to reveal Himself in the breaking of the bread so that you will recognize Him.

And so not only does that give you a criterion on how to recognize the real Jesus namely that He is revealed in the breaking of the bread, it also gives you the assurance that you have encountered Him just like the disciples on the road to Emmaus did.

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.