

From Cold Discouragement to Burning Anticipation

Luke 24:13-35

“My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?” rang out; the ultimate scream of despair echoed from Golgotha, across the Kidron Valley, and ricocheted off the slopes of the Mount of Olives as the deafening sound of one last cry of rejection broke the dark silence and awakened all of the Holy City of Jerusalem. If ever there were a sense of bewilderment, betrayal, and deception among Jesus’ followers, it was now; and no one has felt more alone and abandoned than Jesus. The incredible love of Jesus’ family, followers, and of course the twelve, was equaled only by the confusion, sense of hopelessness, and emptiness in each heart. What NOW?

What significance do those nine words have for us today? This last question of our Savior can not be left to simply stand alone as the darkest moment in Jesus’ life. Is it possible especially for us (who know the historical documentation of what happened three days later) that there can be no greater or more profound impact than what lies in these words?

Actually, if we were to think more critically, we will discover these nine words in the form of a question could well be among the most encouraging phrases for each one of us here.

Perhaps no one understood its significance better than the writer to the Hebrews who penned; “For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weakness but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.” or the Apostle Paul who taught, “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.”

The encouragement is this: if Jesus had those moments of helplessness, being overcome with the pain and discouragement of humanity, then it’s not at all unspiritual nor should it be unexpected that each of us have had, have, and will have those same feelings. As hard as it is to accept the reality of discouragement, bewilderment, helplessness, isolation, and loneliness, it is a very real part of the Christian life. Those who deny these times in their personal lives are either dishonest or not living in the realm of spiritual reality.

As one respected leader recently told me. “To live the Christian life in today’s culture is to live in a war zone.” Many of us today are facing circumstances we would never have imagined. Everything from job loss to the loss of a child, addictions, divorce papers, terminal diagnoses, isolation, and loneliness at school, betrayal of trust, victims of greed, loss of homes, deception of an assumed friendship or relationship, rejection of family, broken promises, abandonment (emotional/physical), guilt, devalued, **forsaken**, abused, deserted, blindsided, stripped of purpose, and that is just the beginning.

It is only in this daily war zone that we can truly appreciate our identification with Christ and His (and our) resurrection.

Life Response

1. This week MEMORIZE and MEDITATE on 1 Peter 2:20-21, “*For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps . . .*”

2. Meditate on the above passage in context of the paragraph 18-25. Note carefully verse 23. Make as many observations as possible of how this paragraph directly applies to your life as you feel “forsaken” by others or even God Himself.
3. To what extent can you identify with Cleopas and his companion (perhaps his wife) and the preoccupation of their disillusionment, sense of hopelessness in their apparent loss? So overwhelmed with their circumstances that they “were prevented from recognizing Him.” To what extent do you think Jesus had the same feeling when He asked the question “Why”? (Luke 24:13-24)
4. Who or what do you go to first when you are overwhelmed and feel isolated from or betrayed by others or God?
(Luke 24:25-27) Note Psalm 139:7-12; 17-18.
5. What does it truly mean to have intimate communion with God through Christ? What should be our expectation? Does His Word create a “burning within us” as we speak with Him? (Luke 24:28-32)
6. This week when you eat together as a family, when you take your lunch break, make it a point to ask His blessing as you remember not only His broken body, His shed blood for you, but His resurrection.

“Our greatest moment of peace, growth and ultimately joy comes right after we sense we are left with nothing but only Jesus and the resurrected life He gives.”

Luke 24:13-35

A living story of contrast in the midst of real life.

Three parts	Three words	
16-17	... Paralysis	...of Circumstances
25-27	... Power	... of Truth
30-32	... Passion	... of Communion

The over-encompassing, theological, governing truth.

Omniscience of God

Psalm 139:7-12

God is ever present to enable us to live with anticipation in the midst of despair.

Paralysis of Circumstances:

- The cause of not being able to recognize Jesus
- The effect on their lives
- It exposed their unbelief

Power of Truth:

- Jesus confronts their unbelief
- Jesus confirms His Word

Where/to whom do we go in the midst of cold discouragement

Philippians 4:4-13; 1 Peter 5:4-10; Psalm 118:5-9; Romans 12:1-12; Psalm 121:1-4;
Psalm 91:1-4

Passion of Communion:

- He acted as though He would go farther
- They took the initiative
- He served them
- Their eyes were opened and they recognized Him
- Their hearts burned with passion