

Overwhelmed...“Until”

— A Process —

Luke 24:30-49

Conversations with friends in ministry reveal what seems like an ever growing onslaught of life challenges. It seems to be true in both their personal lives and the lives of those they love to serve. We’ve discovered the same holds true for those who are professional counselors. And I suspect that many of us here today may agree with them.

Just living life feels like it is becoming more complex and convoluted in a world where absolutes are no longer considered acceptable. The result is a fractured belief system dependent upon feelings and human limitations for understanding what is happening to us. So oftentimes we are left victims of our circumstances, waiting for something to change or that an event will come along that will cause us to forget or perhaps become distracted until another circumstance preoccupies our minds. And so the cycle goes.

What is it that governs our lives in the midst of our disappointments, unmet expectations, and crises which take us by surprise, or the unexpected that leave us bewildered, hurt, or devastated? Where do we go for answers? Who do we talk to for encouragement? Where do we go when nothing makes sense and we feel disconnected from God? The answers to these and similar questions can make the difference between helplessness and encouragement, sinking in despair or living with confidence.

What we face is really nothing new. One need not read literature or even Scripture too long before realizing the harsh reality of Jesus’ own words when He taught **“in the world you will have tribulation.”** We see this reality in the life of David throughout the Psalms. When Jesus was crucified, the disciples were especially disillusioned and heartbroken. Even after His resurrection they were initially “terrified” and “frightened.” As we will learn in the weeks to come, they each came to the sobering realization of what Jesus had defined for their future . . . words like “poor,” “hungry,” “weep,” “hated,” “ostracized,” “insulted,” and “spurned” for starters.

Initially, one would think, “Not a good recruitment message for the *cause*.” That is until (and that’s a big *until*) we find the answer to the question “What governs my life in the midst of _____?” (We each can fill in the blank.) The rest of Jesus’ statement answers this question and the rest of our questions about this world of tribulation; **“but take courage: I have overcome the world.”** And how did He do this? By His resurrection!

Yes, *initially we would think the reality Jesus taught would not be a good recruiting tool*; until (and that’s a really big *until*) we think about those who live with no absolute truth, only a *relative* belief, with no encouragement, with no Christ.

Life Response

1. This week MEMORIZE and MEDITATE on 1 Peter 1:3-5, “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*”
 - (a) As you meditate on this passage, attempt to filter your life—with all its present challenges—through the substance and depth of these few verses.
 - (b) What specifically stands out as a means of hope and perspective?
 - (c) Why is the resurrection so significant in bringing hope? (See 1 Pet. 1:6-9; 2:20-23; 3:14-16; 4:12-13; 5:6-11)
2. Note the impact of Scripture as we encounter challenging circumstances from Luke 24:27,32; 24:44-45. Paul taught “so faith comes from hearing and hearing by the word of Christ.” Focus on the following for encouragement:

Psalm 121	Psalm 37:23-26	Philippians 4:4-13
Psalm 123	Isaiah 55:6-13	2 Timothy 1:7-14
Psalm 124	Joshua 1:5-9	Colossians 3:1-4
3. When you think about Peter (Matthew 26:69-75) and Thomas (John 20:26-29) and the love, patience and future ministry Jesus had in store for them in establishing the church, what encouragement can you discover for yourself in the present and in anticipation of the future?

“God whispers in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains, it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.” From: The Problem of Pain by C.S. Lewis

A Doctrinal Must

The resurrection and the Word of God

- ▶ without the resurrection Christianity has no foundation
- ▶ without the Scriptures we have no reference of truth

The Product of Belief: vs 30-35

A panorama of the impact belief has on us as we face challenges.

From discouragement to anticipation

Circumstances seem to often control

“Until” – Belief takes over

Central in belief - the Word of God (vs 25-27)

The Product of Belief - Their EYES were opened

Then - “our hearts were burning within”

The Process of Belief: vs 36-45

The following 40 days Jesus patiently came along side His followers and mentored them in the process of faith.

Saturated with Grace:

vs 36-49 Grace extended to the very ones who failed to believe Him.

vs 34 Grace extended to one who denied, cursed and swore. Peter

vs 36-37 Grace extended to those in His presence.

Where Do You Get Stuck?

Regardless of how miserably we have failed to live out our belief, God’s grace excels beyond

imagination.

- vs 38-43 Grace extended into daily life.
- Where's the trouble?
- Why the doubts?

Jesus helps them process the belief where they are.

Grace beyond understanding (John 20:24-29)
- An insertion of great encouragement
- 8 days later

vs 29 *"Blessed are they who did not see and yet believed"*

You and I are blessed as we are processing our belief.

vs 44-45 Grace in Scripture

Central in belief - the Word of God (vs 45)

The Product of Belief - Their MINDS were opened

The Power of Belief: vs 46-49

vs 49 *"And behold I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.*

Central in belief – The Word of God (vs 46)

The Product of Belief - Their LIPS were opened
"proclaim"

It comes down to a willingness to trust the Father's Word.

Psalm 121

I will lift up my eyes to the mountains
From whence shall my help come?
My help comes from the Lord,
Who made heaven and earth.
He will not allow your foot to slip;
He who keeps you will not slumber.
Behold, He who keeps Israel
Will neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord is your keeper;
The Lord is your shade on your right hand.
The sun will not smite you by day,
Nor the moon by night.
The Lord will protect you from all evil;
He will keep your soul.
The Lord will guard your going out and your coming in
From this time forth and forever.