

Sonoraville Baptist Church
Sunday, May 16, 2010 – 6:00 PM
Rev. Steve Skates, Pastor

Who Is Jesus? - Luke 24:13-35

Introduction: A few years ago, The Floyd County Baptist Association had a partnership with the Finger Lakes Baptist Association in northern New York. One of the partnership ministries we did was to hold simultaneous revivals during one week of spring. Several pastors volunteered to go, and I was asked by the volunteering pastors to go with him and lead the music for one of those revivals to be held in Rochester NY. Well, as it turned out, about two weeks before the revival, that pastor got sick and had to be hospitalized. In fact, he was still in the hospital the day we left for New York.

During those two weeks prior to the revival, as I was shifting gears from leading music to preaching, I had several email conversations with the Associate Pastor of the church where we were to go – the Pinnacle Road Baptist Church. I had to correspond with the Associate Pastor because the Pastor had resigned about a month before the revival. Mostly, we talked about the church and the revival itself. I don't remember us ever saying anything about ourselves.

Elaine went with me and when we arrived on Saturday, the Association's Director of Missions had a big outdoor dinner arranged for us so we could meet the pastors of the various churches involved in the revivals. Well, this Associate Pastor could not make it to this dinner on Saturday. So, when we arrived at the church on Sunday, no one knew anything about us except that we were from Georgia.

That Sunday morning, we were the first ones there because the housing they had arranged for us was actually attached to the Associational office which was itself attached to the back of the church. As we were greeting the people who came in, a gentleman came through the door, and Elaine noticed he was really giving me the once over. Now, I don't know exactly what he was thinking, but I have an idea he was asking himself, "Who is this guy?" I do know that he was really sizing me up, and trying to figure out this big ole southern boy. Well, it turned out that this fellow was the Associate Pastor!

The point is, before that first meeting, I was only an electronic generated message to him. Before that first worship service with that congregation, I was only a person they had heard about – I was a concept of their imagination - a preconceived idea. They didn't know me because they had never met me. If we had met under any other circumstances, chances are we would have walked by each other without even a word being spoken.

Tonight, I want us to sort of try to think as those folks in New York had to think. I want us to try to get in their minds and try to understand what they might think about Jesus. Maybe this person has never met Jesus. Maybe they've just heard about Him. Maybe they've read the Bible a little and have some sort of opinion about Him, but they don't really know Him. Or maybe they just think they know Jesus, but they've totally misunderstood who He really is. All these scenarios are out there. A lot of people are asking, or at least should be asking, "Who is Jesus?"

This would be a good time for us to think about Jesus as well. It would be a good time to ask ourselves the question, 'Who is Jesus to me?' You see, Jesus can be many things to many people. For example, you may talk to someone on the job tomorrow, or I may be talking to someone here tonight, and to you Jesus is just:

1. A Stranger

Many folks wouldn't recognize Jesus if they saw Him or heard His name. To millions of people, Jesus is just a stranger, or at the very least, someone they've heard about.

Others might know something about Him such as His name, or where He lived, or who His earthly parents were. Others might know enough to carry on a brief conversation about Him, or crudely use His name in an inappropriate manner, but they do not know Him. These folks to whom Jesus is merely a stranger would be in the same position as the two travelers we're going to read about in **Luke 24:13-18 (NIV)**. We meet them on the very day Jesus arose from the dead and appeared to Mary and the disciples. They are on their way home to a village called Emmaus, which was eight miles northwest of Jerusalem

13 Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. 14 They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. 15 As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; 16 but they were

kept from recognizing him. **17** He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?" They stood still, their faces downcast. **18** One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you only a visitor to Jerusalem and do not know the things that have happened there in these days?"

The crucifixion of Jesus had been the talk of the town. Everybody knew about it! It was common knowledge. These two followers of Jesus, had also got caught up in the commotion. No doubt they were confused, bewildered, and disappointed men as they were making their way back home. The one they had believed in and followed was dead, and now all their hopes for Israel had been dashed. Luke 24:21 (NIV), "...but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel..."

But as they walked along and talked about all that had happened, Jesus caught up with them and asked them what they were talking about. They stopped and must have looked at each other and said to Him, "Stranger, you've been in Jerusalem these past few days, and you don't know anything about what has gone on! Have you been under a rock or something?"

Their risen Lord was walking with them, but they didn't know Him. They were unable to recognize Him. He was just a stranger to them, and they couldn't figure Him out.

But Jesus wanted to let these men know who He was. He wanted to straighten out their misunderstanding, and set the record straight concerning their preconceived ideas. He wanted them to know who He really was – their risen Savior and Lord!

And today, if you meet someone and Jesus is just a stranger to them, we need to understand that Jesus wants to be much more!

As we read on, we see just how the Lord revealed Himself to these two disciples, and how He'll reveal Himself to others through us if we'll let Him. Who is Jesus? He might just be a stranger to a lot of folks, but He wants to become:

2. A Friend

Those folks at Pinnacle Road Baptist church in Rochester NY quickly became our friends. We got acquainted, we talked and fellowshiped, and even ate together. And the more we did those things, the more we begin to understand a little about each other. As we listened to their stories, we got to know them, and discovered some of their likes and dislikes, their needs, their dreams, their joys, and their disappointments.

Here on the Emmaus Road, Cleopas and his friend made another friend. It wasn't long before they were treating this stranger as a friend and confiding in Him. They began by talking about things that everybody was talking about. You know, current events type conversation.

Luke 24:19-20 (NIV) 19 "What things?" he asked. "About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. **20** The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him;

But then from verse 21 on, they revealed something of their own feelings, beliefs, and disappointments and even that they belonged to the group that had had grand hopes in Jesus.

Luke 24:21-24 (NIV) 21 but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. **22** In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning **23** but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. **24** Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see."

Jesus had gone from being a stranger to their intimate friend. A friend is someone you can not only talk to, but relate to. A friend is someone you can trust and share your life with; someone who will be there for you. Is Jesus your friend? Like the song says, "Is He someone with whom you can share all your sins and griefs? Can you take everything to Him in prayer?"

Are you sharing your friend with others? You know Jesus calls Himself a friend of sinners. Jesus wants to be a friend to sinners, but He needs to be more! Jesus also wants to be:

3. A Teacher

Initially it seemed as though Jesus was the one who needed to be taught, but soon they discovered that He was their teacher. He was the one who could tell them all that they needed to know. Can you imagine teaching Jesus about Himself? Well, that's exactly what these two were unknowingly doing. They were telling Him about the very thing in which He was in the center of – His own crucifixion. Jesus responded in verses 25-27 in

this way.

Luke 24:25-27 (NIV) *25 He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.*

What a Bible study, they had! "They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:32 NIV). He pointed out to them their failure in understanding the Scripture and then taught them the full truth from Scripture.

I think we need to stop here and ask ourselves, "Is Jesus my teacher?" I don't mean, are you in a SS class. I'm talking about letting Him teach us daily from His Word. I'm talking about learning and adopting the Bible as your standard for living. I'm talking about letting Jesus teach you what kind of person you should be, the way you should live, the kind of things you should do with your time, the kind of friends you should have.

Lots of people go to Dr. Phil or Oprah for these kinds of things, but in reality, all life issues are to be weighed in the light of Christ Himself. He is the Way the Truth and the Life. He has the answer for all our questions. And we get to know His answers by getting to know Him through prayer, fellowship and in His word.

Jesus wants to be our Teacher, and He wants us to be His disciples. Is Jesus your Friend and your Teacher? I hope He is but He also wants to be:

4. Your Lord

Luke 24:28-31 (NIV) *28 As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther. 29 But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. 30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight.*

Jesus never forces Himself upon people, but He longs to have people invite Him to draw near. These men invited Him to be their guest, but, as vs. 30 tells us, He soon became the host. "...He took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them."

As these two men got to know Jesus in a more personal way, their eyes and hearts were being opened. This was not an ordinary guy on the street they had just met. There was someone different; someone unique, and there was something wonderful about Him. As they sat down to eat together, they let Him have the honors. Really, it was His prerogative to preside over them and He did just that. And that is how it should be with us.

Let's allow Him to call the shots. Let's "... confess with our mouth, Jesus is Lord, and believe in (our) heart that God raised him from the dead, (so that we) will be saved." (Rom 10:9 NIV) We need to worship Him as our Lord and Master.

Is Jesus your Friend, Teacher and Lord? There's one more thing Jesus needs to be - He must be:

5. Your Redeemer

As I read earlier in vs. 21, these men thought that Jesus was going to redeem the Israel. They hoped that Jesus was the promised "anointed one," the Messiah who would deliver their nation from oppression. But when He died the way He did, their hopes were dashed because their understanding of Jesus was far short of God's - For Jesus is the Redeemer, but not just of the nation of Israel, but the whole world. And the redemption that He would bring was to come through the suffering of the cross that had just taken place.

Luke 24:25-26 (NIV) *25 He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?"*

Jesus came to be the redeemer, but a lot of people missed it. The Jews were looking for a political King who would rid the world of the evil Roman Empire. Buddhists are looking for Buddha to enlighten them and take them to another level of karma. Hindus and Muslims are looking for Mohammed and Allah to let them into heaven based on their devotion. New Agers are looking to themselves and their own works to achieve nirvana. But the believer is simply depending upon what Jesus has already done. Jesus is our redeemer through His shed blood.

1 Peter 1:18-19 (NIV) says, *18 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, 19 but with the*

precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

Christ has redeemed us from the guilt and penalty of sin. All we have to do is trust that it is enough, and believe on Him, and live a life of gratitude for what He has done.

Conclusion: Jesus is the Savior of the world, but a lot of people don't know Him in that way. To many, He's a stranger. To a few, He's someone they've just heard of.

We have the opportunity to introduce Him as the Friend who sticks closer than a brother. We have the privilege of introducing Him as a Teacher by inviting folks to our Sunday School classes. We have the responsibility of showing folks that He's our Savior and Lord by the way we live and by our testimony. If He is walking with you today – and He is – we need to be introducing Him to others, so He can walk with them.

So don't let Jesus be a stranger. There's a world of people out there whom He'd like to meet.