

## “Being Open-Minded”—Luke 24:44-45

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, “Being Open-Minded”, is Luke 24:44-45 → *Then [Jesus] said to His [disciples], “These are My words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.* This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

Do you consider yourself to be an open-minded person? Open-mindedness could encompass anything from being open to new ideas to a willingness to consider and accept ideals and philosophies of life different than those to which you hold with conviction. Daily you are called upon to be open-minded as the life choices of others are placed before you in the form of media, lawsuits, business dealings and even legislation striving to influence you—or even force you—to accept the actions and lifestyles of others which go against your moral grain. From the sinful world’s perspective being open-minded is equivalent to accepting an amoral philosophy of life where you are expected to accept any expression of sin before your eyes with no discernment or judgment at all.

Being open-minded is important to the LORD, to which our text well attests. It was the evening on the day of Christ's resurrection. Jesus had just revealed Himself to a couple of men traveling on the road to Emmaus from Jerusalem. Discovering that it was the risen Christ conversing with them caused them to immediately *returned to Jerusalem* to find *the eleven* apostles. It seemed like the most logical thing to do. Why not take their experience to the "experts" to find out what it was really all about or . . . for verification?

As they were telling the disciples *what had happened on the road, and how Jesus was known to them in the breaking of the bread*, He appeared among them and *showed them His hands and His feet* and ate something in their presence (cf. Luke 24:33-40). Such physical evidences surely would convince any person who has left everything to follow Jesus for some three plus years—let alone any skeptic—to believe in the bodily resurrection of Jesus . . . no? Luke 24:41 says *they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling*. Even the "experts" had a hard time being open-minded to this concept.

True to His practice throughout His earthly ministry Jesus appealed to the source of true open-mindedness: **the revelation of Himself in the written Scriptures**. Just as Jesus submitted Himself to the written Old Testament Scriptures, His life, His death and His resurrection are believed on the basis of God's Word—not personal experience, logical

analysis and conclusions, “proof” or any other ways people strive to open their minds to Jesus.

The Scriptures were very important to Jesus because they witnessed to Him as the Savior of all people. He tells us in verse 44 of our text *that everything written about Him in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms had to be fulfilled*. Everything Jesus did, lived and taught was governed by the written Word of God. He always points you to trust in Him for the forgiveness of sins **on the basis of the written Word**. We see this at every encounter during His earthly ministry. For example:

- While speaking about His Person & Work with these two men on the road to Emmaus He said in Luke 24:25-26 → *O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe **all that the prophets have spoken!** Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory?* Notice He did not say, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that your eyes saw in Jerusalem!” He opened their minds to the Scriptures.
- While teaching one time a woman complimented Him by calling His mother blessed. Jesus responded in Luke 11:28 with: *Blessed rather are those who hear **the word of God** and keep it!* He opened their minds to the Scriptures.

Jesus knew that if people wouldn't believe in Him on the basis of the Scriptures, they wouldn't believe on any other basis either. He conveyed

this thought vividly in a parable about a man in hell begging Abraham in heaven to raise someone from the dead and send him to his brothers to warn them so that they wouldn't end up in hell with such eternal suffering and torment. *Abraham* told the rich man that his brothers *have Moses and the Prophets* (referring to the Old Testament written Word of God); *let them hear them*. The rich man said, "No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent." Abraham said to him, "If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead." (cf. Luke 16:29-31) Point in case? Our text records the risen Jesus standing before the eleven apostles **in the flesh** and *they still disbelieved*.

Thus, for Jesus it's not a matter of being open-minded. **It's a matter of being made open-minded to understand the Scriptures**. This is not something you work at being. Verse 45 of our text says: *Then **He** opened their minds to understand the Scriptures*. A relationship with the Lord is based completely on the Holy Spirit working faith in your heart through the proclamation of the Gospel—the Good News that Jesus lived, died and rose to forgive your sins and give you life eternal with God the Father! That's the message of the written Old Testament Scriptures. Even the sacraments would not be means of grace without the Gospel's promise connected to them. As Romans 10:17 says: *Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ*. It is

important to be opened to the Scriptures by reading them.

At the same time, satan is waging spiritual warfare in your heart to distort your open-mindedness. He is striving to cause the Gospel of Jesus to be blurred in your faith open-mindedness by trying to make you think the Gospel is to love other people. That is not the Gospel, it's the law. The Gospel is your sin forgiven in the atoning work of Christ alone. This wonderful forgiveness moves you to love other people with a desire to follow the law of Christ.

Satan is attacking your faith by striving to make you ignore parts of the written Word while misusing other commands of Jesus in that Word. He would make you believe that you should *judge not, that you be not judged* as Jesus commands (cf. Matthew 7:1) in an effort to be open-minded to every form of sin, depravity and amoral behavior flaunted before your eyes. Instead, Jesus tells you to quit making self-righteous judgments about everyone else's bad behavior while you don't see your own sinful behavior. Experiencing the forgiveness of your sins in repentance with the Gospel moves you to help your neighbor in their struggle with sin in your desire to follow the law of Christ. He tells you in John 7:24 → *Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment*—that is, a heart that discerns the other person's hurts and struggles and wants to bring the Gospel of Jesus to bear on their burdens.

Like the disciples in our text, the devil is striving to deceive you to believe in Jesus **on your own terms and not in submission to the Scriptures, the written Word of God.** Thoughts abound, such as: “That’s not the kind of Jesus I want—One Who continues to allow me and my family to suffer and experience pain and misfortune!” “That’s not the kind of new life I want in a King—one where He rules while I still have to experience the terrible tragedies of mankind against itself in our culture!” “I don’t want the love of Jesus that is not acceptant and tolerant of every kind of whim, desire, sin, behavior and philosophy of every individual, right or wrong!” “I want an open-minded Jesus!”

As the world continues to scream for a Jesus Who’s mind is acceptant of sin and amorality, God gives them a Jesus Who’s mind is opened to their sinful heart **and** opened to God’s loving heart for them in which He dealt with that sin **for them once and for all in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus!** He sends you and I into the daily world of our lives to speak that Gospel of Jesus in the midst of all those “open-minded” discussions **and pray the Holy Spirit to work through that Gospel to connect their mind and hearts by faith to the mind and heart of Christ for them.** Then our open-mindedness is Christ’s open-mindedness. After all, when He was on the cross, you were on His mind on the basis of God’s written Word. When you are bearing His

cross in the your daily life as His child, Christ is on your mind on the basis of God's written Word. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding,  
keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

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