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BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH

ELKHORN, NEBRASKA

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KARL SCHAPHORST

1 MR. SCHAPHORST: Hallelujah. He is risen. That is
2 such great news and all my hope rests in that. It really
3 does.

4 The story that we read today in the Gospel of Luke,
5 I think, is really a great story.

6 I wish there were more post-Jesus resurrection
7 stories, because I hunger for them.

8 I just suck them in, because I think they tell us so
9 much.

10 And when I was reading this story, "On the Road to
11 Emmaus", something struck me that I thought was very much
12 parallel to who I am, very much relevant to me today, even
13 though the story was told two thousand years ago.

14 I look at myself as walking through life on a road.
15 Maybe the destination isn't as clear as the town right in
16 front of me, but certainly, figuratively speaking, I'm on a
17 journey.

18 I'm on a road and I know that for at least 33 years
19 I was walking along, and Jesus was walking along right there
20 with me, and I did not recognize him.

21 He was there. I'm sure he was talking to me. He
22 was revealing himself to me, but I never saw him, never knew
23 who he was, never really called on his name.

24 I grew up in the church. I went to the Episcopal
25 church, and participated, sang in the choir, was an acolyte,

1 did all those things.

2 But I'm here to tell you, I did not know Jesus. I
3 didn't know him.

4 I had the ritual, but I didn't have the heart;
5 didn't have the heart.

6 And there is a difference. There really is a
7 difference.

8 So today I really do want to challenge you to search
9 your heart and to know where you are in your relationship
10 with Christ.

11 I think this story helps us as we journey with these
12 two travelers to see how they eventually discover that there
13 is a redemption, through faith in Jesus Christ.

14 So I'm going to go back to the story. I'll be
15 following the story in the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 24,
16 starting in Verse 13.

17 One of the first things that I find very interesting
18 here is that here they are traveling, they are traveling
19 along, they are talking to each other, and as they are
20 talking Jesus comes up.

21 And the first thing that Jesus does is he prevents
22 himself from being revealed to the travelers.

23 Don't you find that kind of odd and kind of
24 interesting?

25 I mean, certainly these travelers, who we know were

1 disciples, because if you read in a few verses before the
2 story begins, they're not part of the twelve, but they are
3 disciples.

4 And they were following Jesus when he was doing all
5 of his miracles, and doing all the things around, so they
6 were disciples of Jesus.

7 Jesus comes up and surely they would have recognized
8 him. Surely they would have known him.

9 But what Jesus does, it says right here in Verse 16,
10 but they were kept from recognizing him.

11 I find that odd. Maybe I could compare that to like
12 a student who is taking a test.

13 There's the question. There is a blank for where he
14 has to write in the answer.

15 Then the teachers comes up and says, "Here is the
16 answer. Go ahead and right it in the blank."

17 Is he going to get the right answer?

18 Certainly if Jesus had revealed himself, right, to
19 the two travelers, it would have been a joyous moment.

20 They would have celebrated. They would have been
21 crying, hugging him, and embracing him, it would have been a
22 great moment.

23 But, see, again this is a heart matter. Jesus was
24 wanting to test the heart. He wanted to know what was in
25 their heart.

1 So he wanted to see what they were talking about,
2 see how they received all that had happened, and see if they
3 processed it properly and had begun to accept the truth.

4 So, he says, "What are you discussing with each
5 other while you walk along?"

6 "They stood still, looking sad," there is the first
7 strike against them, right?

8 Are they going to get the right answer? Well,
9 strike number one. They're sad.

10 The greatest redemption just took place three days
11 ago. Actually the resurrection was on that day, and they are
12 sad.

13 If they truly understood, they would be skipping
14 along all the way to Emmaus, but they are sad. They are
15 downcast.

16 "One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you
17 only a visitor to Jerusalem and do not know the things that
18 have happened in these days?"

19 Now, this question that is asked reveals something
20 about the crucifixion and the resurrection.

21 We all recognize that that event is truly
22 significant, probably the most significant event in the
23 universe, right?

24 But to the locals, to them at that time, it was
25 extremely significant.

1 And Jerusalem, which was beaming with people, it was
2 Passover, the Nation of Israel had descended upon Jerusalem
3 to celebrate the Passover, to celebrate the feast, right?

4 Everybody was there. They all knew about the
5 crucifixion. They all heard the news.

6 Anybody that was in Jerusalem surely would
7 understand that that's what we are talking about

8 And yet they respond surprised to Jesus saying,
9 "Weren't you in Jerusalem? Are you just a visitor? Did you
10 not pay attention?"

11 It is good to know how significant event it was,
12 that everybody knew about what was going on, not just the
13 Pharisees, not just the Romans who were crucifying, not just
14 the people that were near it, it was everybody.

15 And not only was this event played on the Jerusalem
16 stage; it was played on a world-wide stage.

17 The things that happened, I go to the Gospel of
18 Matthew, from the sixth hour until the ninth hour, this is
19 right before he passes away, he's on the cross, from the
20 sixth hour to the ninth hour darkness came over the land.

21 Certainly everybody saw that, right? And this is
22 not 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., because that probably wouldn't be
23 a big deal, right?

24 I mean, the sun comes up, sometimes it doesn't get
25 light right away. No.

1 See, the Jewish days didn't begin until the sun
2 rose. That was 6:00 a.m.

3 So when we are talking about the sixth hour, we are
4 talking high noon, the sun is blazing in the middle of the
5 sky, and the land goes dark for three hours.

6 And that was not just a local eclipse; that was a
7 world-wide darkening of the sky.

8 The whole world was witnessing the most incredible
9 event ever.

10 It goes on. There was a huge earthquake. I wonder
11 if this was an earthquake that didn't shake the entire world.

12 The rocks were split. Certainly everybody
13 experienced that.

14 The curtain that separates the holiest place from
15 the most holy was torn in two.

16 That's a four inch piece of fabric that ripped, not
17 from bottom up, but from top to bottom, to reveal the holiest
18 of holy places in the tabernacle.

19 That was torn and many of the Pharisees who denied
20 it most of all saw that and witnessed that.

21 And then the tombs cracked open and holy people that
22 were laid to rest were seen walking in the streets by
23 hundreds of witnesses, as the scriptures tell us.

24 This was a big event. These travelers should have
25 been kind of puzzled.

1 What are we talking about? What else is there to
2 talk about? What else is there to talk about?

3 So, it was a big event, played on the world-wide
4 stage.

5 So, Jesus asked them about what things they are
6 talking about, and so they begin to tell him.

7 "We are talking about Jesus of Nazareth. He was a
8 prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the
9 people."

10 That's a pretty nice thing to say about Jesus, isn't
11 it?

12 Strike two. A prophet? Wasn't Jesus the Messiah?
13 Isn't Jesus the Messiah, and they consider him a prophet.

14 After all they have seen and heard and touched and
15 experienced, they still don't get it.

16 Their hearts still don't get it. They think he's
17 jest merely a prophet, who is powerful, but yet are afraid at
18 this point to call him the Messiah.

19 We read on. "The chief priests and our rulers
20 handed him over to be sentenced to death and they crucified
21 him, but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to
22 redeem Israel. "

23 And there's strike number three. I can't blame the
24 travelers for maybe missing this one.

25 Because they understand Jewish history. They know

1 the Old Testament, and they understand what redemption means,
2 and the kind of redemption that Jesus brought wasn't what
3 they were expecting.

4 If you go to the Old Testament, time and time again
5 when the Nation of Israel was in oppression, and the enemy
6 was hurting them and causing them grief, God, our almighty
7 Father, would reach down and lift up a judge, a righteous
8 judge, and what would he do?

9 He would gather the Nation of Israel, they would
10 march out into battle, they would conquer the oppressors, and
11 then they would have peace and freedom again, right?

12 That's what they understood. That's what they were
13 expecting Jesus to do, is to rise up and lead the nation of
14 Israel to end the Roman oppression.

15 But that's not what happened. That's not what
16 happened. It was a different type of redemption.

17 I go to the letter that Paul wrote to the Ephesians,
18 because he writes something here that I think is neat.

19 And one thing that is good to point out here about
20 how God redeemed his people in the Old Testament, understand
21 that the people first confessed, repented, and got back on
22 track.

23 And once that happened, God would lead them out of
24 their oppression.

25 He would do that time and time again. But, did you

1 notice, if you read in the Old Testament it usually doesn't
2 last very long.

3 Sin creeps back into the camp. Sin sneaks back in
4 and God allows the enemies to deliver Israel back into the
5 enemy's hands, right?

6 So the redemption that they had in the Old Testament
7 never was permanent.

8 It always was a perishable item, wasn't it, and it
9 didn't last very long.

10 So what good would it do for Jesus to redeem Israel,
11 just like God did in the past, only for it to be gone in a
12 few years, maybe a hundred or two hundred years, right?

13 The type of redemption that Jesus brought was one of
14 eternity. Imperishable.

15 I read Verse 7, Chapter 1 of Ephesians.

16 "In him we have redemption."

17 This is the redemption that those travelers didn't
18 really understand.

19 "In him we do have redemption through his blood, the
20 forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's
21 grace."

22 This is interesting, because it was always sin that
23 caused the Nation of Israel to fall into oppression. It was
24 always sin.

25 In fact, many times that's what causes us as

1 Christians to fall into oppression.

2 If we could just figure out a way to remove the sin,
3 to offer a way of forgiveness, what kind of redemption would
4 that be?

5 Wouldn't it be better than the old? Wouldn't it be
6 more improved?

7 Wouldn't that covenant be better? That is the
8 redemption that Jesus brought to Israel.

9 First Peter, Chapter 1, Verse 18, he writes, "For
10 you know that it was not with perishable things, such as
11 silver or gold," such as chariots, such as swords and armor
12 and armies and cannons and guns, that was what?

13 Those things are perishable. Empires are
14 perishable, right? It wasn't that.

15 It was by the blood of Jesus that you are redeemed
16 from the empty way of life, handed down from your
17 forefathers, "but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb
18 without blemish or defect."

19 That truly is a different redemption. It's not a
20 physical one, is it?

21 It's not a physical one, but it's a spiritual
22 redemption, one that has eternal consequences.

23 Isn't that better than the other, by a long ways,
24 and the travelers didn't understand that, at least not yet,
25 we're not condemning them, that would have been a tough thing

1 to truly understand, even after all they had seen, but they
2 truly did not understand it by the way they responded, by
3 expecting Jesus to redeem, and here they're saying they
4 thought he would and he did not.

5 The reading goes on, "And what is more, it is the
6 third day since all this took place. In addition, some of
7 the women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this
8 morning, but didn't find his body. They came and told us
9 that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive.
10 Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it
11 just as the women had seen, but did not see him."

12 Again, I find this interesting. They are a couple
13 miles outside of Jerusalem on the day of resurrection and
14 they know quite a few details about it, don't they?

15 Remember the Pharisees, they knew they were talking
16 about Jesus being raised on the third day.

17 They don't want this to spread. They don't want
18 this news to get out into the city of Jerusalem.

19 In fact they actually post a guard, a Roman guard,
20 at Jesus's tomb so that nobody could steal the body and
21 create a Watergate kind of thing.

22 Chuck Colson, I listen to him on the radio
23 sometimes, he heads up the prison fellowship ministry called
24 Angel Tree.

25 He served in the Nixon administration. He spent

1 time in jail for his efforts to conceal a lie, and that lie
2 was Watergate.

3 He learned a lot, and he came to Christ, and his
4 knowledge of that whole event helped him to strengthen his
5 resolve in knowing the truth that if you are trying to
6 conceal lies, the goal is you don't want a lot of people
7 knowing about it, the more people that learn about it, the
8 more people that can try to find out the real truth and cause
9 your claim to fall apart.

10 That's exactly what happened in Watergate back in
11 the '70s. That's exactly what happened.

12 If you look at the crucifixion, and here we have
13 probably a hundred, maybe thousands of disciples that were
14 all gathered with the apostles when the story came, and when
15 the news came, and you bet that news spread, holy cow, I mean
16 everybody was aware of the crucifixion.

17 Everybody knew what was going on. Everybody was
18 plugged into this, and they're thinking, wow, resurrection,
19 this can't be right.

20 So you know the Pharisees were probably trying
21 everything they could do to deny the truth, and yet the truth
22 remains with us. Hallelujah.

23 The resurrection is as real as Jesus was alive, and
24 I think that is significant.

25 It helps us be at peace with the truth, because I

1 know that sometimes it's hard to accept the truth. Sometimes
2 it's very hard.

3 Well, Jesus finally has had enough. He gives them
4 their grade on their test and here's what he says in Verse
5 25.

6 He said to them, "How foolish you are, and slow of
7 heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Did not
8 the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his
9 glory?"

10 He recognizes that they don't get it yet. This is
11 what I think is so cool.

12 Jesus becomes an evangelist. He becomes an
13 apologetic.

14 He starts going into apologetics to help these two
15 travelers begin to understand.

16 It says in Verse 27, "Beginning with Moses and all
17 the prophets he explained to them what was said in the
18 scriptures concerning himself."

19 I find this to be kind of incredible. I so wish
20 that the scriptures would have listed out exactly where Jesus
21 went.

22 Maybe we would have a nice formula on how to lead
23 people to Christ and give them a true heart.

24 It doesn't, so we have to speculate. That can be
25 fun, too, because it gives you a need to dive into the Holy

1 Scriptures, and so that's what I did.

2 If you don't mind, I want to speculate a little bit
3 and maybe think of what passages Jesus might have brought up
4 here to these two travelers to help them in their walk of
5 faith.

6 He started with the prophet Moses. That means I
7 have the whole Bible, because Genesis was written by Moses,
8 so I can go all the way back to Genesis, right?

9 And if you don't mind, I will. Listen to how Jesus
10 is revealed in the Old Testament.

11 Listen to how Jesus is revealed in the story of
12 Isaac and Abraham, when God commanded Abraham to take his son
13 and offer him up as a sacrifice. I pick up the story in the
14 22nd Chapter.

15 "Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and
16 placed it on his son," his only son, Isaac.

17 "And he himself carried the fire and the knife. As
18 the two of them went on together, Isaac spoke up and said to
19 his father, "Father?"

20 "Yes, my son," Abraham replied.

21 "The fire and the wood are here, but where is the
22 lamb for the burnt offering?"

23 Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb
24 for the burnt offering, my son," and the two of them went on
25 together."

1 Do you see Jesus in that? Do you think the two
2 travelers got it when Jesus opened up the scriptures to them?
3 Maybe not.

4 Maybe he went to the book of Exodus, also written by
5 Moses, and talked about how he was the blood of the lamb.

6 It was the blood of the lamb painted on the door
7 posts that saved the Nation of Israel from the plague of
8 death.

9 The blood of the lamb, and if you want to learn more
10 about that, please come next week to "Holy Moses" because you
11 will learn about the blood of the lamb and how it saved the
12 Nation of Israel.

13 It really gives new meaning to me when John the
14 Baptist saw Jesus walking by, he said, "Behold," he didn't
15 say the Messiah; he said, "Behold the lamb of God, who takes
16 away the sins of the world."

17 It was appropriate. It was the blood of the lamb
18 that saved the Nation of Israel.

19 Did the two travelers get it? Maybe not. Maybe not
20 yet.

21 Maybe Jesus went to the Book of Numbers and told
22 them how when the wondering Nation of Israel in the desert
23 was entering into sin again, snakes were biting them and
24 causing them to get sick and die, and through repentance
25 Moses constructed a wooden staff and planted it in the desert

1 with a snake wrapped around it and then the people in
2 repentance could come and they could look at the staff, at
3 the pole, and miraculously be healed from death.

4 Maybe they saw Jesus in that; maybe not.

5 Maybe Jesus went to the prophets and started talking
6 about what they had to say.

7 I go to Jeremiah, I'm pretty sure he probably went
8 to this one, talking about the covenant, the old covenant,
9 which was what?

10 It was the Ten Commandments, right? The law etched
11 in stone on stone tablets, kept in the arc.

12 That was their covenant. It was a good covenant.
13 It was perfect. If only they could have obeyed the
14 commandments, right?

15 Well, they couldn't, so the covenant needed some
16 tweaking, and Jeremiah knew that, and here's what he writes
17 in 31.

18 "The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will
19 make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the
20 house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with
21 their forefather's when I took them by the hand and led them
22 out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a
23 husband to them, declares the Lord. This is the covenant I
24 will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares
25 the Lord. I will put my law in their minds and write it on

1 their hearts. I will be their God."

2 Do you see Jesus in that? Do you see Jesus as the
3 new covenant?

4 I speculate why the curtain was torn when Jesus
5 died.

6 That curtain separated the holiest of holies, and
7 only one person could go into that place, and that was the
8 high priest. Anyone else that entered would die.

9 And yet when Jesus died that curtain was torn and
10 the holiest of holies was revealed, because we now have
11 direct access to our Father through Jesus. He is the new
12 covenant.

13 When I came into the knowledge of Jesus, when I was
14 born again, I did not know the Ten Commandments.

15 I didn't need to know them. I honestly did not need
16 to know them, because Jesus was in my heart, and I knew what
17 Jesus wanted me to do to please him.

18 It's kind of strange, but it was not something
19 written in a book; it was something written in my heart.

20 Just as Jeremiah suspected it would be when the new
21 covenant comes. Doesn't that sound like Jesus?

22 Do you think the travelers got it then? I wonder.

23 If there is a piece of scripture that Jesus went to,
24 and believe it, we could do this all day long, we could go
25 through the entire Old Testament and see Jesus written all

1 over it.

2 But there is probably one piece of scripture that
3 I'm pretty sure Jesus went to.

4 And he went to Isaiah, because God revealed
5 something to him that was truly incredible.

6 If you will bear with me, I want to read to you
7 Isaiah 53, and you tell me if you see Jesus written here in
8 the Old Testament. I start in the second verse.

9 "He grew up before him like a tender shoot and like
10 a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to
11 attract us to him. Nothing in his appearance that we should
12 desire him. He was despised and rejected by men; a man of
13 sorrows and familiar with suffering; like one from whom men
14 hide their faces, he was despised and we esteemed him not.
15 Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows;
16 yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him and
17 afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions. He
18 was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought
19 us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We
20 all like sheep have gone astray. Each of us has turned to
21 his own way and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us
22 all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his
23 mouth. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a
24 sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his
25 mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away, and who

1 can speak of his descendants, for he was cut off from the
2 land of the living for the transgressions of my people and
3 was yet stricken; he was assigned a grave with the wicked,"
4 because he was a criminal, "and with the rich in his death,"
5 because Joseph gave him his grave, and Joseph was very rich.

6 "No, he had done no violence, nor was there any
7 deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the Lord's will to crush and
8 cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life the
9 guilt offering, he will see his offering and prolong his days
10 and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. After the
11 suffering of the soul he will see the light of life and be
12 satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify
13 many and he will bear their iniquities. Therefore, I will
14 give him a portion among the great. He will divide the
15 spoils with the strong because he poured out his life unto
16 death, and was numbered with the transgressors; for he bore
17 the sin of many and made intercession for the sins of the
18 transgressors:

19 Do you see Jesus in that? What an incredible piece
20 of scripture.

21 This is the word of the Lord. This is Isaiah,
22 hundreds of years before Jesus came. This is a God-given
23 revelation.

24 Do you think the travelers got it then? Well, let's
25 return to the story. Let's find out. I go back to Luke 24.

1 "As they approached the village to which they were
2 going, Jesus acted as if he were going further, but they
3 urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening
4 and the day is nearly over."

5 So you can kind of gather that they probably still
6 don't get it, because they probably wouldn't be inviting him
7 like another stranger.

8 They would be saying Messiah and they would be
9 worshipping him and praising him, so they probably still
10 didn't get it.

11 Then they go in the home.

12 "When he was at the table," and Jesus was at the
13 table with them, "he took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and
14 began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and
15 they recognized him and he disappeared from their sight."

16 So isn't that a good ending? Their eyes were
17 opened.

18 Did you notice, it's almost like it was not
19 something of their own doing.

20 It almost seemed like it was Jesus that had to make
21 that transition, doesn't it?

22 And I believe that through this lesson, and through
23 this course that they went through in talking to Jesus,
24 their hearts were prepared and they were ready to receive the
25 truth, and at that moment they recognized that Jesus is the

1 Messiah.

2 Again, I look at my own journey and how many times
3 Jesus kind of is not knocking on the door and do I open the
4 door? Do I let him in?

5 After Jesus had disappeared they asked each other,
6 "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with
7 us on the road and opened the scriptures?"

8 I ask you that same question. Do the scriptures
9 burn within you when you hear them? Do you rejoice at the
10 sweet sound of them?

11 Do you sing for joy when you read the parts of the
12 Old Testament that reveal Jesus to us, or do they still sound
13 like strange passages?

14 Our faith is up to us. There is preparation that we
15 need to do.

16 There is no question. When the time has come, Jesus
17 will be there.

18 If you are truly searching, you will find him. If
19 you are there, hallelujah.

20 But Bethany, this is the place for believers and
21 those who want to believe, right? And we have been given
22 everything we need. We have been given everything we need.
23 There is no more.

24

25