

A Message to Fools and the Slow of Heart

by Carter Conlon

The sermon emphasizes the importance of abiding with God, even in times of darkness and crisis, and following His plan and will, rather than settling for false comfort and human effort.

Duration: 38:11

Scripture: Psalm 48:1-2, Luke 24:13-35, Acts 1:8, Romans 1:19, James 4:8

Topics: "Faith Renewal", "Spiritual Redemption"

Description

This sermon from Luke chapter 24, titled 'A Message to Fools and the Slow of Heart,' emphasizes the importance of returning to God's presence and truth, highlighting the danger of straying from the path of faith due to preconceived notions and disappointments. It calls for a return to Jerusalem, symbolizing the place of God's power and redemption, urging believers to let go of self-made plans and come back to where the true strength and grace of God are found.

Transcript

Luke chapter 24, please. Luke chapter 24. I've entitled this, A Message to Fools and the Slow of Heart.

And don't think to yourself, I'm so glad I brought so-and-so here with me today, as you haven't escaped this yet. Father, I thank you, God Almighty. Lord, you're coming soon.

It's midnight. I don't have enough within myself apart from you to set before the multitude that have come and who long to hear your word. But God, you do.

And so I'm asking, Lord, that you would fill my life with your heart, your emotions, your thought. Lord, God Almighty, would you do something that is deeper than can be done by anything of human effort? Would you touch us in a deeper way than we can be touched just in our emotions? God, would you clear out the debris, show us truth, give us the strength to come home? Oh, God, I do pray, Lord, for every person in this sanctuary and those that will be hearing on the internet and those that will be listening in the future. Lord, you're speaking to us in this generation.

And so I pray, God, with all my heart that you would give us the ears to hear what you are speaking to your church. I bless you for the strength to speak this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Luke chapter 24, a message to fools and the slow of heart, beginning at verse 13. And behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about three score

furlongs. That would be about seven miles away from Jerusalem.

And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass that while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were holding, or that means closed, that they should not know him.

And he said unto them, what manner of communications are these that you have one to another as you walk and are sad? And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering and said to him, art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem and has not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said to them, what things? And they said unto him concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel. And besides all this, today is the third day since these things were done.

Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre, the grave. And when they found not his body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre and found it even so as the women had said, but him they saw not.

Then said he unto them, O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. And when they drew nigh unto the village where they went, he made as though he would have gone further.

But they constrained him saying, Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass as he said it, meet with them.

He took bread and blessed it and break and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they knew him. And he vanished out of their sight.

And they said one to another, did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us by the way and while he opened to us the scriptures? And they rose up the same hour and returned to Jerusalem. Now Psalm 48 in the Old Testament declares Jerusalem to be a marvelous city, a physical as well as a figurative place in Christ where Paul says in 2nd Corinthians 4, 8. Now think about Jerusalem but think about the Christian life as well sometimes. Paul said we're troubled on every side but not distressed.

We're perplexed. In other words there are times we don't understand the things going on around us but we're not in despair. Persecuted but we're not forsaken.

Cast down but not destroyed. The psalmist goes on and the New Living Testament says it wonderfully in verse 3. It says God himself is in Jerusalem's towers. He reveals himself as her defender.

Psalm 48 declares that in Jerusalem our enemies will be scattered. The glory of the city can be seen and the safety of it that it offers can be laid hold of. The love of God can be known there and the strength that it offers can be revealed.

The psalmist says it can be clearly understood and he described it can be described to others and become our trustworthy guide until the day that we die. And so when you when you look at what these two men on the road to Emmaus actually knew, the history they had, the text of scripture, it talked about this particular

place called Jerusalem and it was evident that this was not only the past dwelling but it would be the future dwelling place of God. It was the place of safety and security.

It was a physical type of what is yours and what is mine in Christ Jesus. Though at times seemingly we can feel overpowered, overtaken, overshadowed by events. We can be confused.

We can run into difficulty. Although the Bible clearly tells us that we will not be distressed in despair, forsaken or destroyed. I thank God for that with all of my heart.

Now in spite of this clear witness to scripture, our story begins with two believers in Christ. They're leaving this spiritual place, this place of promise and security because things are happening there that they can't understand. They can't lay hold of it with their natural mind.

They can't understand it with their natural senses and they're leaving this spiritual place and they're taking a seven mile journey to another place. Now the number seven interestingly enough means indicates the perfection of God and so they're leaving that which really is God and represents God even though we can't fully understand it in the natural and they're taking, they're going backwards really to another place Emmaus. It's amazing because the word, the city of Emmaus was known for its hot baths.

I guess it must have had hot springs or something in the earth. I don't know or maybe it had a, I really don't know why, but it actually means hot baths. In other words they were leaving the cross.

They were leaving the shed blood of Jesus Christ. They were leaving the place of the true resurrection power of God. They're leaving it all behind and they're headed out to another place that offered cleansing and comfort.

Secondary cleansing. It was a place of created of the natural mind. A place that could be perhaps more easily understood.

A place where you know, come out of the hot bath. May I put it that way and say wow I'm so feel so clean and I feel so comforted. I found it so confusing in Jerusalem.

Such a dusty place. So difficult to understand the ways of God and the things that are going on there. They were in fellowship with each other but their fellowship was inwardly centered around disappointment.

For each of them had felt that their relationship with Jesus would bring them to a place that they thought in their own minds a walk with God should look like. That's the dilemma that many believers in Christ face in this generation. We come to Christ and we give our lives to Jesus.

We start to read the scriptures and we formulate in our minds an idea of what our relationship with God is going to look like. And when it doesn't come out that way we have a tendency to go to another place. We have a tendency to want to hear another message.

Find another source of cleansing and comfort. We want to find something that more suits the image of what we think our lives should look like in Jesus Christ. In verse 21 you know Jesus is asking these men what what has transpired here? What kind of things how do you perceive them? And they said well we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel and besides all of this this is the third day since these things were done.

In other words we we had a hope we had a perception of what our redemption was going to look like. Folks I want you to listen to me on this like you've never listened before. We had a perception of what our redemption should play out like.

What it should look like. How our future should be formed. They had it all in their minds as they walked with Jesus over the three years that he walked in public ministry.

I can see them as part of the crowd because they were part of that inner circle. They knew the people who ran to the tomb. They knew the disciples and they're part of that inner circle.

And Jesus is clearly speaking. He's clearly talking about the cross. He's clearly talking.

He's not even hiding the fact he's going to be rejected. He's going to be beaten. He's going to be delivered into the hands of sinners.

Nothing is hidden. Everything has been plainly spoken but they don't want to hear it because they have another viewpoint of what redemption should look like and how they fit into the kingdom of God. Think of James and John.

They're walking. They're in such incredible proximity to Jesus Christ. They're part of that inner circle.

They're invited into places that nobody else is invited into and yet along the way they're still discussing who's going to sit at the right hand, who's going to sit at the left hand of Christ even though he's telling them I'm going to be rejected and those who follow me are going to be rejected. It's going to be a difficult journey but nobody's listening. And he said and besides all this this is the third day.

In other words we we hope while he was alive, we hope day one, we hope day two and we've given up on day three. We've given up on our view of what our lives should have amounted to in Christ so now we're taking this journey seven miles away from the place of promise and we're going to a place of an alternate cleansing and an alternate source of comfort. And how many people in this country in particular in our last two generations have left the blood, the cross, they've left the surrendered life, they've left the place where really victory is found and where the resurrected life is and they've walked away to another place and they're sitting under another message in places of false cleansings and temporary comfort all because it more suits the vision of what they thought their life should be in Christ.

And then they said but there was also people that went to the tomb and they saw angels and they had a message that he was alive but we are we didn't see it. They claim they found the victory and hope in their situation but there's so many of us who've not found victory in Jerusalem and that's when Jesus starts to speak to them. And he starts with these words you know you would think that he would start with be of good cheer here I am but he says oh fools and slow of heart to believe hardly complimentary.

Why does he speak so harshly to grieving people? What is it of the human heart that seems to need a cup of cold water in its face to bring it back to reality? It must have been a bit of a shock when he spoke that way and called them fools and slow of heart. Now remember that the sin nature in each of us leads us to believe that as God we know what the work of God should look like. Remember that is the sin nature.

That is the seed that Satan sowed in the human race. You can be as God and you can know what is good and you can know what is evil. That is the core of your sin nature.

Now your sin nature will manifest itself in various activities that are clearly listed in scripture but the fuel source of the sin nature is that inner thought that I can be as God and I know what is good and I know what is evil so therefore I know what is good for my life so here I'm going to come into relationship with God through Jesus Christ and I know exactly what that should look like. We know what it should taste like and what it should feel like and we know how everything is supposed to work out. We trusted that he should have redeemed us because you see we had in our minds a plan and a pattern of how this was going to work but when it doesn't work out according to our own thoughts we conclude that God has somehow failed or walked away from us in our situation.

That's why Psalm 14 1 says the fool has said in his heart there is no God. That's why I call them fools. You walked away from your redemption.

You walked away from where your strength was. You walked away from where the plan and purpose of God is. You walked away from the power of God because you concluded that God is not in this place because it was a place of difficulty, trial, misunderstanding.

You made the conclusion that this is not what my redemption is supposed to look like so I'm going to leave this place because I don't find anything of God here and as far as I'm concerned he's been dead for three days and the hope that was once in my heart is gone. There is no God in Jerusalem and so the fool heads out to Emmaus to an alternate place of cleansing, an alternate place of comfort and slow of heart he said. Romans chapter 1 verse 19 Paul says that which may be known of God is manifested in them for God has shown it to them.

In other words the word to them has been clear but it didn't fit their narrative and because it didn't fit they were reluctant to believe it. Luke chapter 24 verse 26 and 27 tells us that nothing was hidden they just never fully wanted to be partakers of it. It says in beginning at Moses and all the prophets he expounded to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

Amazing and he said in verse 26 ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory. It was all there nothing is hidden the whole the whole way of the cross and the way of redemption is completely revealed in the old testament. Just read Isaiah chapter 53 there's there's nothing even left to the imagination it's all there it's very very clear.

And it says in verse 28 they drew nigh to the village that's Emmaus where they were going and he made that is Jesus as though he would have gone further and Christ makes it clear that he would not go with them into this place of their choosing. You go there if you want but I'm not going with you. And I think of all the people running the roads now in this generation looking for a tangible evidence of God looking for security looking for a living relationship with God not realizing that they left where it really is and they moved to a place of comfort and Jesus thank God I believe with all my heart he's coming close to us again in this generation.

For those who can hear it Christ is walking with us again he is talking to us again but he's telling us clearly I'm not going with you into the place of your choosing for that's not with the power of God is found in the place of God's choosing for your life and for my life not in the place that we choose.

I'm not going there he can't go there he cannot endorse a lie cannot embrace us in our fallen condition and our foolish ideas about God he can't embrace us there but thank God in his mercy he walks with us and whispers to us and talks to us and I can hear him calling many people home now in this generation calling

all the prodigal sons and daughters who don't consider themselves prodigal they don't realize though that where they've settled in is not where the gospel is really being preached and it's not where the power of the cross is it's not where resurrection life is found it's not where the will of God is discovered it's it's not a place where men change from image to image and glory to glory by the power of the spirit of God it's a place of human effort human strategy human steps

human reasonings human all everything human is there but it's so dry it's so empty and anybody who's listening online and you're sitting in a place like this you know exactly what I'm talking about you go in week after week after week into this place of hot baths and you're looking for hope and for comfort and you come out and it's so disappointing week after week after week I want to challenge you to get up and go back to Jerusalem go back to where God is verse 29 it says they constrained him you see they knew what they were hearing was the truth and there's a sudden longing came into the heart that said don't let me let this go again this is a sudden stirring if what I'm speaking is the truth there's a witness of God in your heart the anointing is not measured by how animated I am or

I'm not that's not the anointing the anointing is measured by what's happening in you right now if the words I'm speaking have come from God there's a stirring in your heart there's something begins to burn and you may not understand it all but in your heart you say God I know this is right I know this is true that's the measure it's the indication of the anointing it's got nothing to do with the exterior has everything to do with what's happening on the inside and they constrained him verse 29 saying abide with us stay with us don't let us drift any farther come and speak to us for it's towards evening and the day is far spent Jesus it's midnight darkness is starting to come over the whole of the earth a gross darkness deep tragic steeped in rebellion mankind finally raising its fist

against a holy God in unholy defiance and you must know if you're a believer in Christ that we're living at that time right now this is the time we're living in the time that Paul warned about the prophets warned about we're going into a season of incredible darkness there's got to be a cry in your heart now to Jesus to say abide with me oh God abide with me don't let this word slip through my fingers don't let me just walk down the road stop in the time square church on Sunday morning and say wow that sure was different and just continue on my journey to this phony place of cleansing and this false comfort that's not going to keep me I'm only going to find out that I have no oil when crisis hits the world I'm going to find out I'm among those that have nothing in my lamp I'm not prepared

to meet with the bridegroom but oh thank God for the mercy of Christ he is here he is speaking to us abide with us they said abide with us oh God that's the crowd my heart abide with me Lord Jesus Christ don't let me falter don't let me fail don't let me go down the path of deception of my own heart don't let me leave off the strength of scripture and find some comfortable place that I think is called the kingdom of God help me in this Lord Jesus Christ and so they sat down at the table the communion table actually with Jesus and it says it came to pass as he sat verse 30 and meet with them he took bread and blessed it and broke it and gave it to them and their eyes were opened you see folks it was at this table of communion with Jesus that they understood that that which is touched and

blessed by the hand of God is meant to be broken and given for others that's why their eyes were open now that the Christian life is not given to us just so that we can be happy healthy and wise and all the rest is as wonderful as those things are and many of them will become our portion but the essence of it if God's hand is going to be on my life and on your life I am called as Christ was of his father to let my dreams be broken to let my image of how this should play out be broken father if it'd be possible take this cup from

me nevertheless not what I will but what you will if I want the touch of God on my life all my plans and my ambitions all of my self-created view of where this life is supposed to go when God's hand touches me all that needs to be broken and I'm called and you are

called to be given to the needs of others the purpose and the reason of Jesus Christ being in his church on the earth has not changed since the day of Calvary in Jerusalem we are a physical representation on the earth of the love of God that sent his son into the world to be bruised and broken to have his own agenda crushed and to go to a cross according to the will of his father so that you and I may come to the knowledge of the depth of God's love the desire of God's forgiveness the willingness of God to raise us from the dead in Christ and give us the power of the Holy Spirit to live a new life on this earth it's at the communion table it's in this place it's not in a place of hot baths and false comfort it's in that place where the cross is where the shed blood dropped into the

dust of the ground and intermingled itself with my frailty to call me out of darkness and into the marvelous life and light of Jesus Christ to give me strength I could never have on my own to change my heart to give me a passion to see people come home to God saved and lost to put in my heart of fire and in your heart of fire to see the name of Jesus Christ glorified in the earth one more time one more time before he comes one more time because the prophets seem to indicate Isaiah the prophet said gross darkness comes and will cover the earth but the Lord will rise upon you and his glory will be seen on you now I know that refers to Israel but it also refers to those who have been grafted into the lineage of God through Jesus Christ their eyes were opened and then he vanished their eyes

were open and then he went he went his way and they said did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us by the way and when he opened to us the scriptures I'll never forget the moment in my life where I was speaking to Muslims after the war in Kosovo and shared with them the love of God and I remember this one particular statement the Lord put on my heart said you know that what I'm speaking the words I'm speaking are truth because God made you in his image and there will be if I am speaking for the one who made you there will be a witness inside of you that these words are true and I remember these men starting to weep mostly those as I perceived it those maybe 35 and under started brushing the tears off of their cheeks many of them had fought in this conflict it was a part of

this country many of them filled with hate for other people and other races but yet they knew what they were hearing was the truth they'd never heard it before isn't it amazing but they knew what they were hearing was the truth amazing and they said did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us by the way and while he opened to us the scriptures and they rose up the same hour and returned to Jerusalem the same hour not two days five days not a month later they basically said enough of this place we're going back even if we don't understand and it looks like a place of hardship even if it's undesirable to the natural that is the place where God is and we're getting up and we're going home and I see multitudes in this generation I see it in my spirit multitudes like the prodigal

son who have taken their inheritance and have gone far from God's heart far from where the power of God is far from where the true cleansing of Christ really finds its expression and I see suddenly a multitude coming to themselves and getting up and going home only to find the willingness of the father to meet with him on the road and to embrace us and to cover us and to empower us and to invite us on a journey where our declaration is not about our faithfulness but it's about the incredible mercy of God when he sent his son to die and even after all he had done still we make foolish mistakes because we're slow of heart to believe the ways of God but yet he's merciful it's a message of mercy that's going to touch this generation

folks it's a message of God's mercy it's a message of God's

ways not being our ways and his thoughts not being our thoughts and it's here that they found him again was only a short moment after they came back into Jerusalem that they were in a room with some others who believed in him and he appeared to them and he had fellowship with them and he said to them it is written thus it behooved Christ to suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance and forgiveness of sin should be preached in his name among all nations beginning at Jerusalem and you are witnesses of these things verse 49 he says behold I send the promise of my father upon you but tarry in Jerusalem in the city of Jerusalem until you be endued with power from on high here in Jerusalem they found him again and they were renewed with promise of the power that would

be given to them there that's where the power of God is found it's not in a place of our own choosing it's in a place of God's choosing that we find the power of God I've found this I've found it I've found it with all my heart it's not in a place of my choosing it's not in living my life out the way I thought it should be but it's finding the will of God and even though there might be suffering on the road ahead knowing that's where the power of God is it's not in any other place but at the cross but in that place where we can't get through without the power of God in that place of being yielded to the call of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish it in that place where we live by the promises of God made to us in Jesus Christ my message is so simple today and I know it's

from the heart of God and you know it too come home come home ye who are weary come home if anyone thirsts if all of the religious activity has not satisfied you if shallow preaching has left you unfulfilled if living and walking in the place of your own choosing has left you confused and overwhelmed come home just get up and come home and when you do you're going to find mercy you're going to find grace you're going to find life purpose meaning the scriptures will sing when you open the pages of this bible it will sing to you every word will be like honey it may be bitter in your belly but it'll be honey in your mouth it's midnight the day is far spent and the coming of Christ is close it's time to come home oh please come home please come home leave what you need to leave behind you

even if it's only your self-image leave it behind you find that which God has for you leave your plans your own created pathway for your life and places you shouldn't be in leave it all behind and come home and father I thank you I thank you Lord with all my heart it never has been complicated it always has been clear Jesus call your people home Lord only you can do this I can't do this only you can bear witness that these words are right and true God almighty God almighty I ask you father in Jesus name cause our hearts to burn for what is right Lord we're not willing to lose your presence it's not enough just to have you in church on Sunday morning we want to walk with you and we want you to walk with us every day and all day give us the courage this self-same hour to leave where we are

and to get up and go back to where the life the power and the grace of God really is oh God I bless you for this Lord with all my heart you have so tenderly called us all the service Lord you you've rejoiced over us with singing you've called us you've walked with us you've spoken you've whispered to our hearts even during the worship give us the strength and the courage to come home father we thank you for it in Jesus name now here in the sanctuary in the annex those that are online and in North Jersey the Lord speaking to your heart today you just want to get up and say I'm done with trying to manufacture I'm tired I'm done with trying to manufacture what my life is supposed to look like and I want what God has for me tired of feeling dirty I'm tired of feeling tired because there's a

promise of life in Christ and I want that promise so I'm going to come to Jerusalem and I'm going to trust that in that place the power of God is going to come upon me that's the promise the Holy Spirit will be poured out in Jerusalem the place where God is if that's in your heart you want God to do that in your life and through your life I'm going to open this altar and ask you to just come forward we'll pray together we're going to worship for probably the next 15 minutes or so as we do just come talk to God give him your heart give him your all if you're away from God come home please come home just come home don't try to figure it all out just get up and go back to where Jesus really is let's stand together please if you will you have an obvious question where do I go from here well

let's just do what they did they went to a prayer meeting it was a place called an upper room in Jerusalem in spite of their struggles and failure there was a promise that they would be given power and that they would be a witness of the fact that God had raised his son from the dead and forgiven them they went in like you and I did at the frailties and their struggles and their trials and God met them we have a prayer meeting here Tuesday night I'd love it if you'd come out become part of that prayer meeting hallelujah Father we thank you Lord God you are calling us Lord to be a victorious church Lord not the way we thought but the way you have designed it to be thank you Lord for drawing us home multitudes multitudes multitudes coming home thank you for opening our hearts to all people

as your hearts are open we bless you for it we thank you for it in Jesus name hallelujah

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