# When is Faith, Not Faith?

**Making Faith Great Again**

Luke 24:13-35

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1. **Introduction (Luke 24:21, 25)**
   1. **Are any of these thoughts true, or false?**
      1. When God is not who I thought He was…
      2. When Jesus doesn’t do what I need him to do…
      3. When things happen that I did not expect…
      4. When my heart is broken and crushed…
      5. When nothing is going right…
      6. That is when I find out if my faith is really faith or just words.
   2. **Two young men are walking home from Jerusalem**
      1. To a village 60 furlongs (about 12 kilometres) away, called Emmaus
   3. **They are quietly talking amongst themselves**
      1. About the past several days in Jerusalem
      2. Going over and over all the horrific events
      3. All the expectations that they had had, when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the very kind of donkey prophesied by Zechariah (Zech 9:9  Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.)
      4. And the devastation of watching the very same Jesus, mocked, spit upon, whipped, beaten, stripped, and laid out on a criminal’s cross, nailed with three 9 inch spikes, and then left hanging on that cross until he died!
      5. And then they remembered watching how just before dusk, the broken, dead body of Jesus was pulled off from that bloody cross, and wrapped, and then hastily laid in a nearby tomb
      6. What a conversation THAT was, I’m sure!
   4. **They are sad looking**
      1. And the utter pain of the reality that had set in with their Messiah dead
      2. Everything was over now
      3. All the hopes they had held on, were dashed, when Jesus was laid in that tomb!
   5. **Then a man draws near, and starts walking along side them**
      1. It amazingly is JESUS
      2. But they can’t tell – not really looking at people’s faces that day
      3. To them, this was just another Joe
   6. **And then He asked them two questions:**
      1. **What manner of communications are these – what kind of words are these that you two are using? Cross, crucified, torture, tomb, bloody, death…**
      2. **And why are you sad?**
   7. **They were shocked!**
      1. Where have YOU been for the past week buddy?
      2. Don’t you know ANY of the THINGS that just happened in Jerusalem?
      3. This was the most public execution ever conducted, and this guy doesn’t know anything about it? How can that be possible?!
      4. Jesus responds with one of the funniest statements in the Bible (24:19)
         1. I think it is so cool, the humour of the Lord
         2. Like a parent listening to their teenager complain about life’s troubles like the parent NEVER had troubles like THEY do!
         3. Jesus says, “*What things?*”
   8. **Then these two men reveal their “faith”**
      1. Listen to how they describe how ALL that they had believed was ruined – was wrong in the end
      2. Listen to them describe what they had believed
         1. That Jesus was a great prophet – the promised Prophet that even Moses said would come
         2. That Jesus was powerful and mighty – nothing was impossible for Him - and He was unstoppable – or at least we BELIEVD so…
      3. “But we trusted…” “We believed…” “We had such faith…” (21)
         1. That Jesus was the Messiah, the deliverer of Israel from the Romans
         2. We thought He was the One sent from God – to be King of Israel again
         3. But not anymore!
         4. Our own religious leaders captured Jesus – our MIGHTY Saviour!
         5. They falsely accused Him, and condemned Him to death – and he LET them!
         6. And then they crucified Him – tortured, murdered Him, and then… buried Him!
      4. And then they made fun of the woman at the tomb on that first Sunday morning
         1. And it has been three long days since that all happened
         2. And now we have some crazy women running around saying that the same person we saw die on the cross, and get wrapped in a burial cloth, and then placed in a tomb – that THAT same guy was back alive!
         3. Right!
         4. And a couple of those Apostle guys, Peter and John, have even gone to check out the tomb, and THEY could not find the body
   9. **Hmmmm…** 
      1. You couldn’t have dreamed up this plot twist folks
      2. This is just beyond amazing – especially to ME!
      3. Because so many times “I” too say I believe, I have faith, I trust the Lord
      4. But then, when things don’t work out like I think they should…
      5. I get not only discouraged, but my faith shows that it sometimes is not really faith at all!
      6. Ever been there? Ever shook YOUR head in disappointment at the Christian life?
   10. **Would to God that WE wanted to have more than just “faith”, but GREAT faith**
   11. **Jesus picked these two young men (He could have picked anybody to work on), but He chose these two men to show how to Have Great Faith Again!**
2. **Message - Your Faith is Not Faith…**
   1. **When You Have Your Own Expectations About God (24:13-21)**
      1. These two men talked and reasoned and made conclusions about what they NOW believed
      2. Listen to what they HAD believed for almost 3 years (past tense):
         1. That Jesus was a good man – just about everyone believes this
         2. That He was a great man even
         3. A Prophet – the Muslims say this
         4. That Jesus tragically died – that it SHOULD NOT have happened
         5. That Jesus SHOULD have done better – should have fixed everything, instead of leaving us, and abandoning us, and letting those wicked men capture Him, and bind Him, and beat Him, and whip Him and crucify Him
         6. Jesus should have fought back
         7. That Jesus should NOT have suffered
         8. That Jesus SHOULD have let Peter use his sword to defend Him
      3. But, none of what they believed, was believed any more
      4. Nothing of what they had expected to happen with Jesus had turned out
      5. All their old expectations now had to be adjusted
         1. Death does that
         2. You lean on your husband for so much, and then he dies? Wow! That will force you to adjust how you react to things now
      6. Why? Why did they lose faith?
         1. Because all their expectations were wrong – were self-generated
         2. Which is usually why most people are angry at God
         3. NOT because God has failed them
         4. But because He was not meeting THEIR expectations of who God and Jesus are supposed to be for them!
         5. Like
            1. I used to pray and believe in God, but He never answered any of my prayers
            2. I used to go to church, and believe in God, but then I saw all the suffering in the world, and because God was fixing any of it, I quit believing
            3. I used to believe in the Bible, but when some of my questions were not answered, I gave it up
            4. I used to trust God for everything, but God just didn’t seem to do what “I” wanted Him to do in “MY” life – So now I am on prescription drugs, and I quit church and found me a wife at the disco, and I work every Sunday now.
      7. Most people only believe in a god of their own thinking – of their own design – of their own ideal, and not in the God of heaven AS HE IS! Alcoholic Anonymous has the phrase… “turn to the god of your own understanding!” Ugh! That’s today!
   2. **When You Can’t Believe in the Impossible (24:22-24)**
      1. The very thought that a three day dead body could come back to life??? Well, that just is impossible… RIGHT?
      2. Well, there is a LOAD of impossible things to believe in this Book
      3. If you can’t bring yourself to believe that God actually created every atom, every molecule, every law of physics, every planet, every star
      4. Then your faith is not faith at all!
      5. If you can’t believe that God split the red sea for 12 hours so that His people, the Israelites could walk on dry ground in freedom from Pharaoh’s army
      6. Then your faith is not faith at all
      7. If you can’t bring yourself to believe that a great fish, a whale swallowed Jonah, and that Jonah was preserved ALIVE for 72 hours in that whale’s belly
      8. Then your faith is not faith at all
      9. If you can’t believe ALL that Moses wrote, and the prophets wrote
      10. Then your faith is not faith at all
      11. And if you can’t believe that God raised up Jesus from the dead, after such a dramatic, tortuous, cruel, bloody death…
      12. Well then, your faith is not faith at all!
   3. **When you Mock those that ARE believing (24:23, 1-10)**
      1. These men had been in the upper room when the four women who had been at the tomb came running in
      2. The words of those women were foolish words (Luke 24:1-10)
      3. They had surprised these men, but not convinced them
      4. They laughed at the very possibility that Jesus would be really alive!
      5. Hey! If YOU are not excited about believing everything in this Book as true, it will show when you get around those of us who DO believe every word!
      6. I wouldn’t want your faith!
      7. Because your faith is NOT really faith at all!
   4. **When God’s Words Are Not Enough (24:25-27)**
      1. Listen to Jesus rebuke – Jesus cut across them like a laser
         1. Calls them fools – WOW!
         2. Slow of HEART – sluggish
      2. Their problem?
      3. Not believing ALL that the prophets (Genesis to Malachi) – every one of them – had said about the Messiah – ALL of the revelations, not just the mighty ones!
      4. These men only believed the parts of the Old Testament that they liked (24:25,27)
         1. The parts that told of a Messiah
         2. Of a powerful Conqueror, leader, KING, who would rule with a rod of iron
         3. And defeat all the enemies of Israel
      5. They ignored and skipped over all the Scriptures that told about
         1. The coming LAMB of God first
         2. The sufferings of Christ to happen FIRST
         3. The hard, confusing parts – like suffering, and like disappointments
      6. Hey. These men had seen so many wonderful miracles done by Jesus
         1. Fed 5,000
         2. Walked on water
         3. Healed countless hundreds of sick and dying people
      7. But the most important things that happened around Jesus were the words that he simply spoke (Luke 18:31-33)
         1. So many Scriptures were constantly being quoted by Jesus
         2. He was constantly preparing them for His coming crucifixion – should have not been any surprise
         3. And each time he spoke, he promised that he would rise again three days later
      8. Hey, our faith does not rest now upon visions, and miracles and healings, and angels
      9. But only on what God has already said, and promised
      10. If these words are not enough, then your faith is not faith at all!
   5. **When YOUR Jesus is still dead**
      1. Listen to those words again…
         1. “But we trusted…”
         2. Past tense
         3. Not trusting Jesus anymore
      2. He was dead to them – dead and buried
      3. Three days had come and gone and nothing had changed
      4. Phew!
      5. Whatever faith these men had had, they no longer had it at all
      6. Which is what most people actually believe today – never mind what they SAY they believe. Their lives show:
         1. That Jesus is NOT who He claimed to be
         2. That Jesus did not really rise again – not really able to defeat death
         3. That people need to just move on and believe something else
   6. **When your HEART is Not Burning (21:32)**
      1. Not engaged – just going through the motions (Mt 15:8)
         1. Just Coming to church - barely
         2. Doing what is expected
         3. Going home the very same!
      2. If your heart does not burn when you hear Bible preaching
      3. When you read the pages of this Book
      4. When you hear the call of God on your heart to do something extraordinary
      5. Then your faith is not faith at all
      6. It is only a creed – a set of words on a paper – something you say, but don’t really trust
      7. These men’s hearts BURNED, were enflamed, were on fire – passionate, active, in motion
      8. If yours is not, then this message is for you!
3. **What Faith Should Look Like…**
   1. **Great Faith *Loves* Jesus**
      1. They missed Jesus
      2. It hurt them so deeply to see Him die – it was so unfair
      3. But as they walked with this “guy” on the road to Emmaus, they fell in love again with just Jesus!
      4. So much so, that when this “guy” started to leave them, they begged Him to stay longer
      5. Just so they could hear Him speak so highly of their Jesus!
   2. **Great Faith Drives the Heart Crazy**
      1. These two men instantly lost their appetite
      2. They were no longer worn out from all the past week, and the long walk
      3. Their hearts and minds were racing
      4. They had to pinch themselves
      5. They had actually seen, and heard and walked with the resurrected JESUS!
      6. They were going crazy wondering what just happened!
      7. NONE of their thinking and conclusions had been right
      8. But, THAT is what faith does to you – it just makes you go WOW!
      9. They had missed who Jesus REALLY was for THREE years
         1. He was Not a Genie - Not a Warrior
         2. But the lover of their SOULS
         3. A suffering Saviour
         4. The Lamb of God, who died in their place!
      10. And it all had been right there in Scripture all along, but they had just never believed it
   3. **Great Faith Believes Whatever the Bible Says Now**
      1. You see, IF the MOST impossible thing actually happened – that the tortured and crucified Jesus actually got up from the grave…
      2. Then EVERYTHING ELSE that the Bible talks about is easy to believe!
         1. That there really IS a place called heaven
         2. And an awful place of God’s judgment for sin, called hell
         3. The coming one world government is real, and already in motion
         4. The coming antichrist
         5. The soon coming mark of the beast of Revelation Chapter 13
         6. The promise that all believers will be raptured up in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye
         7. The promise that death now has no victory over any believer
         8. That sin should not have any dominion over your life
      3. Great Faith is just believing what God says, NOT what I want Him to say!
   4. **It Loves Being With other Believers (24:33)**
      1. They couldn’t wait to get back to the upper room, where the other disciples were
      2. They couldn’t live out in the world, without faith anymore, discouraged, defeated
      3. They HAD to get back to hanging around BELIEVERS!
      4. That is what church is – a BUNCH of people who solidly BELIEVE that Jesus is alive!
      5. Heb 10:23-25 *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.*
   5. **It Affects Everyone Around (24:34,35)**
      1. These two men came running into the upper room – excited, smiling, yelling
      2. They caused such a stir – affected the spiritual atmosphere of that group of people
      3. Got them all questioning their DOUBTS!
      4. Does your faith do that? Make people wonder if possibly THEY are wrong about Jesus? About the Bible?
      5. It should!
      6. It is the truth that turned the world upside down
         1. Acts 2:22-24 *Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:  Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it*.
         2. Acts 17:18 *Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection*.
      7. You can’t SAVE anybody, but you sure can stir people up, and get them wondering if they SHOULD start believing
      8. It will be THEN that Jesus will be able to start working in other people like He did that first Sunday evening (24:36-41)
4. **Conclusion**
   1. **The Crucifixion, BROKE these men’s faith**
      1. Christ’s murder was not what they expected
      2. It was so final
      3. It was a disaster to everything they had hoped for
      4. It was the RUIN of everything they believed
   2. **Then the Resurrection MADE their Faith Great Again**
      1. By activating a love for Jesus most of all – no love for Jesus, no faith
      2. By being the REASON to Believe Whatever the Bible Says Now
      3. By calling believers to GATHER with other Believers – not sit alone, have other priorities
      4. By Affecting Everyone Around
   3. **Christian, If you want resurrected faith (which is what these two men got)**
      1. **Walk with Jesus for a while this week** – make extended time in prayer with him, and reading this Book, just listening to Him
      2. **Let Him rebuke YOU, and your lack of faith**
      3. **Start to believe beyond what you find easy to believe** – believe whatever you read now – every word of every page
      4. **Don’t demand anything more than the Book you hold in your hand** – that’s why Jesus instantly disappeared – so that they would get used to just relying on the words of God – the promises of God – the very will of God!
      5. **Gather with other passionate believers** – quit hanging around deadbeats, and disco-heads, and scoffers and mockers, and people who are only passionate about sports or movies or music or money. BE IN CHURCH every time the doors are open!!!
      6. **And then go tell a world that Jesus is ALIVE!** Proving it by YOUR changed heart, and changed life!
   4. **He is more than anyone could ever imagine**
   5. **He is Lord, and He is the ONLY Saviour**
   6. **And to have the gift of eternal life, you just need to believe it!** Acts 16:31 *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house*.