

# Joy Hindering Faith

by C.H. Spurgeon

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*C.H. Spurgeon explains how overwhelming joy can paradoxically hinder faith, illustrating that believers often struggle to accept the reality of God's grace because it seems too good to be true.*

**Scripture:** Luke 24:41-45, Genesis 45:25-26, Job 9:16, Psalm 126, Acts 12:12-14, Psalm 73:22-23, John 6:35

**Topics:** "Faith and Doubt", "Salvation by Grace", "Joy in the Christian Life"

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## Description

In this devotional sermon, C.H. Spurgeon explores the paradox where overwhelming joy can hinder faith, causing believers to doubt the reality of their salvation. Using vivid biblical examples and personal insight, Spurgeon encourages listeners to trust in the greatness of God's grace and the simplicity of salvation by faith. He offers comfort to those struggling with doubts born from joy, assuring them that God's mercy is perfectly suited to their deepest needs.

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## Transcript

"And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, He said unto them, Have you here any meat? And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And He took it, and did eat before them. And He said unto them, These are the words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me. And He opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures." Luke 24:41-45.

THE disciples were gathered together with the doors of the house fast closed, for they were afraid of the Jewish mob. Suddenly HE came, HE who was chief in their thoughts, the Christ whom they had seen dead upon the Cross, whom some of them had helped to bury! There He stood before them and, "they were terrified and frightened." As on a former occasion, on the Sea of Galilee, so now they said, "It is a spirit," and they cried out for fear. The Savior did His best to correct their minds of their mistake. He said to them, "Handle Me, and see, for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see I have. And when He had thus spoken, He showed them His hands and His feet." He went as far as He well could go to prove that He was a real Man, composed of real flesh and bones.

Then they believed, for it was perfectly clear that He had risen from the dead and was in their midst. They had hardly begun to believe that their Lord was really with them before it seemed too good to be true! A wave of joy came rolling up and then appeared to be sucked back, again, and they seemed to be sucked back by it. They believed not for joy—they were astounded—they were full of wonder. They did believe,

otherwise they would have had no joy, but the very joy swallowed up the thing of which it was born and they did not believe because of the excess of joy! This is an experience which has been very common and I merely take this text, tonight, that I may deal with some persons who have found Christ, and are saved, but who are now troubled because it seems too good to be true.

First, then, tonight, I shall speak, if I have the strength to do so, upon the difficulty under which they labored— "They yet believed not for joy." Secondly, I shall speak upon the manner in which our Lord helped them to get over the difficulty. He first ate a piece of fish and a portion of a honeycomb in their presence—and then opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures.

I. First, then, THE DIFFICULTY UNDER WHICH THEY LABORED. "They believed not for joy."

This is not the only instance in which joy has seemed to stop the flow of faith. It has occurred on other occasions. You have an early instance of it in the Book of Genesis. Will you kindly turn to Genesis 45:25, 26? Jacob had lost his beloved Joseph. He believed him to be dead. He had been shown a bloody coat which he knew was his son's. But now the brothers come back from Egypt with news that Joseph is yet alive and is governor over all the land of Egypt! "And they went up out of Egypt and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father, and told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not." It was too good to be true and his heart sank within him! "You must be deceiving me," he said. He knew that his sons had been liars before. Indeed, if this report were true, they had been liars before, and now he cannot believe their news—it is too much for him—and the old man swoons away. So have I met with many who had been told that Christ had saved them and they believed it—but after believing it, it seemed as if it was presumption to believe any such thing—and they were thrown back into doubt and despondency.

Job was once in a similar condition, for he says in his Book, (9:16)—"If I had called, and He had answered me; yet would I not believe that He had hearkened unto my voice." He had such a fear of God. He saw so much of his own unworthiness and of God's greatness, that he says that if he had prayed, and God had heard him, he could not have believed it to be true! This is a more spiritual case than that of Jacob, but it makes a very good parallel instance as to the fact that joy, itself, may cause unbelief.

The same idea comes up in Psalm 126. You remember the words, "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like they that dream." They seemed to say, "We could not believe it! We thought it was all imagination, a freak of fancy, the high play of spirits in dreamland—surely it cannot be true."

If you need another case, you have that of Peter as recorded in the 12th Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. When Peter had been brought out of prison, the angel led him into the street and he found that he was free, but he "knew not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision." He could not believe that every barrier to his escape had been removed and that he was really out of prison! There is a young woman mentioned in the same chapter, who was very much of the same mind as Peter. Read the 13th and 14th verses—"And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda. And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in and told how Peter stood before the gate." Why did she not let him in? Ah, she was too joyful to do that!

As the woman at the well left her waterpot when she found Christ, so did Rhoda leave Peter standing outside the door—she was too joyful to let him in! A hungry man, when he at last finds bread, may be too joyful to eat. A thirsty man may come to the fountain and, for a moment, be too joyful to stoop down and drink of its cooling stream. Men and women are strange paradoxes. We are made up of paradoxes—we

are the most curious creatures in all the world! We believe and get joyful, and then we disbelieve because we are joyful, for we think that it cannot be true joy, or true faith! I do not understand you, my Brothers and Sisters, because I do not understand myself! And I do not believe that you understand yourselves, either! The mercy is that you do not need to understand yourselves—you are in the hands of a Great Physician who knows all about you and who will prescribe for you when you cannot even tell what is the matter with yourself!

I have given you these instances out of the Scriptures, but such cases are common enough in our experience. Here is one who has heard preached the doctrine of immediate salvation by faith. He understands that—

"The moment a sinner believes, And trusts in His crucified God, His pardon at once he receives, Redemption in full through His blood." He has believed and he has received! Redemption in full and now he says to himself, "Can it really be true? What? All my sins forgiven? Am I whiter than snow? That great sin of mine that seemed to turn all my being to crimson and scarlet—is that washed out?" It seems too good to be true and the man's doubts come thick upon him by reason of the very greatness of the pardon which he has grasped!

Suppose, further, that it is whispered in his ear, "You are redeemed from among men by a special redemption, for Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it. The Good Shepherd laid down His life for the sheep and you are a part of His Church—you are one of His sheep and, therefore, specially and peculiarly redeemed out of mankind." As he turns it over, he believes in a general redemption for all sinners—but he cannot believe in this special, peculiar, effective Substitution—and he says to himself, "It is too wonderful to be mine. For me to have a special part in what Christ did, how can that be?" You first rejoice because you believe it and then you begin to doubt it because you rejoice! Perhaps it is whispered in your ear still further, "You were chosen from before the foundation of the world! You are espoused to Christ, married to Him in an everlasting wedlock. You are a member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. And because He lives, you shall also live—you shall be with Him where He is and shall behold His Glory." You feel so full of delight that you can hardly bear yourself—but you have scarcely begun to be delighted before the whisper comes, "It is too good to be true. It must all be a mistake." And so you believe not for joy.

Suppose that you should sometimes have those high enjoyments, those love feasts, those banquets in the Hall of Love with Christ? Suppose that you should come to lean your head, with holy John, upon His bosom and not only know His love, but be caught up, as it were, into the third Heaven of immediate fellowship with Him? Now you feel as if you could die for very joy, until there comes this cold, shivering doubt, "You are altogether mistaken! You are a mere fanatic! You

are an enthusiast, for God could not have admitted a man such as you, into such close fellowship." Often have I met with persons troubled in this manner—and it is to them that I speak.

Now, let me ask, what is the occasion of this difficulty? Why do we get these doubts about the great mercy of God? I answer, first, because of a deep sense of unworthiness. If any man here could see himself as he is, and then could see the fullness of God's love to him, I believe that it would make every individual hair of his head stand upright with astonishment and, next to that, it would carry him right away with a ravishment of adoring wonder. "Such a wretch, such a beast, such an almost devil as I was and yet loved of God!" It would startle him. Hear how David puts it, "So foolish was I, and ignorant; I was as a beast before You.

Nevertheless, I am continually with You; You have held me by my right hand." The sense of our own unworthiness makes it seem too good to be true that we should really be saved.

Next, the custom of fear in which some of us were found creates this difficulty. We were accustomed to think despairingly of our sin. Month after month some of us could see no hope—no, not a ray of light—so that when the Light of God did come, it was too much for our poor eyes. Have you never gone suddenly into the light and found yourself less able to see than you were when you were in the dark?—

"When God revealed His gracious name And changed my mournful state, My rapture seemed a pleasing dream, The Grace appeared so great," because of the mournful state in which I had been before.

Then, perhaps, most of all, it seems hard to believe because of the intensity of our former anxiety. These disciples had been intensely thoughtful about Christ and anxious about Him—and that was why they could not, in a moment, believe that He was really risen from the dead. And when a man has been thinking long about his soul. When he has felt his sin like lead. When he has looked into the awful burnings of Infinite Justice. When he has heard, as it were, the sentence, "Depart, you cursed," ringing in his ears, do you wonder that he needs to be quite sure that he is really forgiven? He cannot take that for granted. He looks, and looks, and looks, and looks again—and he cannot rest till he is certain that his sin is all blotted out and that he is "accepted in the Beloved." Hence, even the very delightfulness of the idea of being justified by faith in Christ causes a doubt to enter the heart.

Further, I do not wonder that the doubt comes in when you think of the simplicity of the way of salvation. Look! I have been for years trying to save myself. I have gone to Abana and Pharpar and washed, and washed, and washed, and I am still a leper. And then, one day, I do but believe, I do but go and wash in Jordan and at once my leprosy is gone! I should think that if the woman, whose issue of blood was staunched when she touched the hem of Christ's garment and felt in her body that she was healed of that plague, she must also have had, a moment after, the fear, "But surely it will come back again! I cannot have been cured in so simple a way! I have been to all the doctors and have spent all my money and only grew worse. Am I really healed?" So, when a sinner sees himself saved by nothing but believing—by simply trusting Christ—do you wonder that an early thought with him is, "This must be too good to be true—to be saved so

simply"?

Add to this the immediateness of Divine Grace and you understand where the difficulty arises. If it took a month to save a man. If it took seven years to put sin away, I could understand that by degrees we should come to believe in the process, though I do not know but what we might very likely get fresh doubts out of that process! But to be saved in a moment—to pass from death to life in less than the twinkling of an eye! To have all sin forgiven more quickly than a watch can tick—this is the work of salvation! This is the giving of the new birth, the passing of the act of indemnity and oblivion—and this takes no time whatever!—

"Tis done! The great transaction's done; I am my Lord's, and He is mine." And then the saved soul turns around and says, "Can it be true that I am really saved—I who was, just now, in the very depths of despair?"

Now, I am only going to deal with this difficulty in the following few words to show you that it has no solid basis. You say, "Can this be true?" because it is so good. My answer is—You need something good, do you not? You need something greatly good! Could anything save you but a great act of Grace? Tell me.

Are you not of Richard Baxter's mind when he prayed, "Lord, give me great mercy, or no mercy; for little mercy will not serve my purpose"? If anybody

says, "It is too good to be true," say, "It is no better than I need. I need perfect pardon! I need complete renewal! I need to be made a child of God. I need to be saved." It is not too good to be true, for it is not too good to be what you need!

Do you not think, also, that great things belong to God? Do you expect God to be little in His mercy, little in His gifts, little in His Grace? You make a great mistake if you do, for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are His ways higher than man's ways. The greatness of the goodness which you receive should be to you a letter of commendation. If it were little, it might come from man. If it is too great to come from man, that proves that it comes from God! Let the greatness rather reassure you than cause you to doubt. When a doubt arises from the simple way of salvation, let me put this to you—What other way would save you? I know that I shall never get to Heaven by any way but the way of faith. I have not even a fragment of confidence in anything that I have ever done, or ever designed to do—

"I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all, But Jesus Christ is my All in All."

O my dear Hearer, you may surely be content with a way that suits you—the way of believing! "It is very easy," you say. It is not too easy for you—you could not go a harder way. To faint away into the arms of Christ and throw your whole weight upon Him, let it not seem too simple for you, for this is all that you can do. Yes, and more than you ever will do unless the Grace of God leads you to do it! Do not, therefore, doubt the way because it is so simple. What other way would you have?

Once more, do not say that the gift of God's Grace is too good to be true, for those of us who live in the daily enjoyment of it are, by nature, no better than you and yet it has come to us! Why should it not come to you? I never saw the man yet whom I would have put behind myself in the matter of salvation. If I had had to guess which man in this congregation would not be saved, I would not have guessed any man but myself. I stood in the rear rank—not that I had openly sinned worse than others, but there were certain elements of character that caused me to despair. Yet I was fetched in by God's Grace and why should not you, also, be brought in? "Ah," you say, "I am a very odd person." So am I—you are not odder than I am! "Oh!" says one, "but I am such a strange body." So am I. I am a lot out of all the catalogs. Whoever you are, be you who you may, come along to Christ! He cannot cast you away for He has said, "Him that comes to Me, I will in no wise cast out." Come to Christ, dear Friend, and He will not cast you out! This Truth of God is not too good to be true! If I have not found it too good to be true, you will not find it too good to be true. Lay hold of it and believe it.

Thus I have tried to set before you the difficulty that the disciples were in when they believed not for joy.

II. Now, in the second place, I shall only be able to speak briefly upon THE MANNER IN WHICH OUR LORD

HELPED THEM TO GET OVER THE DIFFICULTY.

Of course, their main point was that they could not believe that Jesus was risen from the dead—it seemed too good to be true.

The Lord helped them out, first, by a fuller view of what He could do. They had handled Him. They had seen and felt that He was real substantial materialism, composed of flesh and blood, which spirits have

not. He takes a piece of fish and eats it. He takes a piece of honeycomb, dripping with honey, and eats it and, as I think, He gave them a part of the same food. If they were not satisfied with looking at Him and handling Him, they would have a further evidence that He was in the body, for He could eat and drink like any other individual.

Now, I pray the Lord to give to any here who say, "It is too good to be true," a clearer view of Himself. If you will think more of Him who brings you this great salvation, you will not be less astonished, but you will be less doubtful. Think of who He was, God, in the bosom of the Father, and the Father, in giving Him, gave Himself! It is no trifling salvation, depend upon it, that God comes to work out. If it had been a small salvation, He might have sent Gabriel and said to him, "Go and save those sinners." But as God Himself comes to do the work, you may depend upon it that it is a great salvation!

And when our Lord came here, He not only lived and labored, but He suffered. He was "a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief." He was mocked, spit upon, scourged, crucified. He died. He who only has Immortality, died! Does that Cross over yonder mean a little salvation? Do the groans of Christ mean little gifts for men? Do those gory shoulders, plowed by the lash, mean trifles for trifling sinners? Do the five wounds and the cruel scorn, and the great passion all mean a small salvation for sinners? Oh, no, Beloved, they mean great salvation for giant sinners, the sons of Anak, a

great salvation for the biggest sinners that ever lived! Think of the Cross of Calvary and Christ on it and you will never say that the great salvation He worked out is too good to be true!

But He is alive, again, and He has gone up yonder, through the shining ranks of cherubim and seraphim, to the Throne of God. And what is He doing? Pleading for sinners, making intercession for the transgressors! Is that a little thing for which the Christ prays? He might have made one of His saints to be the intercessor if it had been some trifling thing, but it is a great, priceless, infinite blessing for which Christ prays before the Father!

Listen, once more. Christ has joined the Glory of His name with the work of salvation. He cares more to be a Savior than to be a King! His highest Glory comes from His rescuing men from going down into the Pit. Creation glorifies God. The morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy when the world was made, but God did not think that was a work to rejoice over—He merely said that it was good. He could have made 50 more worlds, yes, fifty million worlds, if He had pleased! But when Jesus saves men by laying down His life for His chosen, it is written, "He will rest in His love, He will joy over you with singing." Think of Jehovah, the Triune God, bursting into song! He sings— for all His Glory is wrapped up in the salvation of men! Is it, then, a trifle? No! I rejoice in the greatness of salvation and believe in it all the more because it is so great and so worthy of the Glory of God! I hope that neither you nor I will fall into the difficulty of the disciples when they believed not for joy.

But now our Savior did another thing. After thus manifesting Himself, He began to open up to them the Scriptures. Ah, that is what we all need for the removal of our doubts! The least read Book in the world, in proportion to its circulation, is the Bible. I believe that "Jack the Giant Killer" is more read than the Bible in proportion to the number of persons who have the books. It is sad that it should be so. There is the daily paper and there is the weekly religious paper, as it is called, and these two, together, put on the table—hide the Bible! We need to read our Bibles more—we must read our Bibles more! If we do, what shall we read there?

Well, we shall read of a great Fall that took place in the Garden of Eden. You know, they tell us, now, that when Adam fell, he broke his little finger—and it was fixed up—and he recovered. But that is not what the Bible says. He broke his neck and a great deal more than his neck! Oh, what a fall was there, my Brothers and Sisters! You and I and all of us fell down. It was a fall which dislocated man altogether. Well, now, for a great fall, you must have a great salvation. Therefore do not be astonished when you read of a great salvation! It is involved in the meaning of the great disaster of

the Fall.

Then, the Fall brought on great depravity. Although they make it out, now, that man, through the Fall, has only suffered very slightly, just a little toothache, or something of that sort, yet the Scripture does not tell us so. His whole head is sick and his whole heart faint, and from the sole of his feet to the crown of his head he is nothing but wounds, bruises and putrefying sores! "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Now you must have a great salvation to meet this great depravity! There must be a great work of Grace to turn this ship right-about, to lay a mighty hand upon the helm and reverse its course!

Next, Beloved, if you read the Bible carefully, you will find that there is such a thing as great sin. Ah, you do not need to read your Bible for that! Reading your own heart, by the light of the Bible, and remembering that every evil thought as well as every evil word, yes, and every evil imagination, is sin before God, you will see what a mass of sin one single human being is defiled with! You need a great salvation because of great sin!

Further, if you read your Bibles, you will find that there is a great Hell. Everything in the Bible is according to scale. When men talk of a little Hell, it is because they think they have only a little sin and believe in a little Savior—it is all little together! But when you get a great sense of sin, you need a great Savior, and feel that if you do not have Him, you will fall into a great destruction and suffer a great punishment at the hands of the Great God! As you would escape a great Hell, believe in a great salvation and never be staggered because it is great.

And then there is a great Heaven. Oh, what a Heaven! Have any of us any idea of what it will be like? We sit and meditate upon it. We sing about it and we sometimes half think that we are there—but we are not by a very long way. When we once get inside the gates, we shall say, with the Queen of Sheba, "The half was not told me."—

"Then shall I see, and hear, and know All I desired or wished below! And every power find sweet employ In that eternal world of joy."

To get you there, you must have a great salvation. Therefore, do not begin to say, "It is too good to be true." Come, now, surely you are not going to be a fool and have the world and give up your hope of going to Heaven! I am often wonderstruck at the way in which God, in His infinite love, makes some men go the way that they never thought of going.

There are persons in this house, tonight, with whom I have conversed lately, children of ungodly parents, brought up in the midst of worldly amusements. Suddenly, softness fell upon their hearts and they began to think! The things that they loved, they began to loathe. They could not tell why. They sought the House of Prayer, they learned the way of salvation and laid hold on Christ. When they go home tonight, there is not one of the family that will welcome them, and they, themselves, strove hard to get away when God

began to work upon their heart. But the harpooner in this pulpit, by God's Grace, sent a harpoon in so deep that, whales as they were, they could never get it out! They dived deep into the sea of greater sin—but that harpoon held them. The next time that they came up to breathe, they got another harpoon, and they were, at last, wounded to such an extent that they had to yield! And now they are yielding, with the full concurrence of their will, to the Lord who has mastered them and led them captive—and now leads them in triumph! Glory be to God for this! You have to go to Heaven, my Friend—you are bound for Glory—and you will go there. There is a tug, just in front of you, that will draw you there, and you shall not be lost on the way. Why, if such is your grand destiny, do not wonder that, on the voyage, you have great things from God almost too great, at times, to be believed!

I have done when I have said one thing more. If even joy, sometimes, hinders our believing, do not let us think much about joy, or much about sorrow. The man who always thinks about being comfortable is generally the most uncomfortable being in the world! And the man who is always thinking about being happy goes the right way to work to be always unhappy! If we are to be saved by our feelings, we shall get saved and lost every other day, for we are just like the weather-glass. They said to me, yesterday, "The glass is going back." Very likely it was, but it does not rain, for all that. Another day they say, "The glass is going up," and then I find it generally does rain, so I give up the glasses and begin to wonder whether there is any truth in them at all!

Sometimes my feelings say to me, "You are no child of God," and then I begin to pray, and so I know that my feelings have deceived me. Another time they say to me, "Oh, you are a child of God, that is certain!" And then I get as proud as Lucifer—and that a child of God should never be! What is the good of looking to your feelings at all? Walk by faith! Believe the Gospel! Cling to God's promises! If they fail you, all is lost. But they cannot fail you! Rest in the finished work of Christ, but as for joys and sorrows—

"Let them come, and let them go, Fickle as the winds that blow."

You need place no reliance upon them. Hold on to this—"Christ died for the ungodly." "He that believes in Him is justified from all things." "He that believes in Him is not condemned." Hold you to that and then come what will, sink or swim, all will be well with your souls!

The Lord bring us all to that blessed condition, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON LUKE24:13-48.

Verses 13-15. And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. 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. When two saints are talking together, Jesus is very likely to come and make the third one in the company! Talk of Him and you will soon talk with Him. I would that Believers more often spoke, the one to the other, about the things of God! It has been said that in the olden time, God's people spoke often, one to another, but now we have altered that, and God's people speak often one against another. It is an alteration, but it certainly is not an improvement. May we get together, again, and, like these two disciples, talk of all the things that happened in Jerusalem 18 centuries ago! If we have less of reasoning than they had, let us have more of communion.

16. But their eyes were restrained that they should not know Him. Christ was there, but they did not perceive Him. Our eyes may be very easily shut so that we do not see Christ even when He is close to us.

We see a thousand things, but we miss the Master.

17. And He said unto them, What manner of communications are these that you have, one to another, as you walk, and are sad? Christian people, why are you sad? It should not be so! And when you talk, why do you increase each other's sadness? Is that wisdom? Surely the Master might say to some here present, "Why are you sad?" I hope that He will enable you to shake off the sadness and to rejoice in Him.

18-20. And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering, said unto Him, Are you only a stranger in Jerusalem, and have not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And He said unto 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. These were sad things to talk about. They thought that they had lost all when they had lost Christ—and yet there is no theme in all the world that is more full of joy than talk about the crucified Christ! This is strange, is it not? If we look beneath the surface, we shall see that the darkest deed that was ever perpetrated has turned out to be the greatest blessing to mankind— and that the cruelest crime ever committed by mortal man has been made the channel of the greatest benediction of God!

21-23. But we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done. Yes, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulcher; 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. How innocently they tell the story! How they convict themselves of stark unbelief! And the Master hears it all patiently and quietly. What a strange sensation it must have been for Him to hear them talking about Him in this amazing way when, all the while, they did not know who the "stranger" was to whom they were speaking! Have you ever thought of what the Savior must think of many things that we say? We think them wise, but they must be very foolish to the eyes of His infinite wisdom, and very shallow to Him who sees everything to the bottom.

24, 25. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulcher, and found it even so as the women had said: but Him they saw not. He said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken. He loved them tenderly, but He rebuked them strongly—I had almost said sternly—"O fools, and slow of heart!" I am afraid that is our name—"fools." I am afraid that it may be said of us that we are "slow of heart to believe." We need so many proofs. We very readily disbelieve, but we very slowly believe! If you had a piano in your house and you left it for months—and when you came back, you found it all in beautiful tune, you would be sure that somebody must have been there to keep it in tune! But if, on the other hand, you left it to itself and it got out of tune, you would say that such a condition was only what was to be expected. So it is natural for us to get out of tune! Sometimes we ring out glad music on the high sounding cymbals and we lift up the loud hallelujahs of exultant joy! But soon we are down, again, in the deeps and strike a minor key. Grace, alone, can raise us! Nature, alas, sinks if left to itself!

26, 27. 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. The best Book, with the best Teacher, descanting upon the best of Subjects! Everywhere this Book speaks about Christ—and when Christ explains it, He only brings Himself more clearly before our minds!

28. And they drew near unto the village, where they went. They were sorry to be nearing their destination. They would have liked to walk to the ends of the earth in such company and listening to such

conversation!

28. And He made as though He would have gone further. Christ intended to go further unless the two disciples constrained Him to tarry with them.

29. But they constrained Him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. That is our prayer to the Lord Jesus tonight, "Abide with us, dear Master! We had Your blessed company this morning and now the sun is almost down—abide with us!" Let each one of us pray the prayer that we often sing, for, morning, noon, and night, this is a suitable supplication—

"Abide with me from morn till eve, For without You I cannot live; Abide with me when night is nigh, For without You I dare not die."

29-31. And He went in to stay with them. And it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, He took bread and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him. In the breaking of bread, Christ is often known. It is a wonderful emblem. Even if this breaking of bread were not the observance of the Lord's Supper, it was something very like it. Christ's blessing and breaking of bread anywhere are the true token of Himself.

31-33. And He vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our hearts 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. It was getting late, but it is never too late to tell of Christ's appearing, and never too early! Such a secret ought not to be kept an hour and, therefore, "they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem."

33-36. And found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen, indeed, and has appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how He was known of them in the breaking of bread. And as they thus spoke, Jesus, Himself, stood in the midst of them. You see that, while they were talking about Christ, He came and stood in their midst! Speak of your Master and He will appear! Oh, happy people who have but to talk of Jesus, and lo, He comes to them!

37-40. But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And He said unto them, Why are you troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I, Myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as you see I have. And when He had thus spoken, He showed them His hands and His feet. They knew those signs, the marks of His Crucifixion. They ought to have been convinced at once that it was even

He.

41. And while they yet believed not for joy. Does joy stop faith? Beloved, anything stops faith if we will let it! Faith is a Divine miracle. Wherever it exists, God creates it and God sustains it—but without God, anything can hinder it— "while they yet believed not for joy."

41. And wondered, He said unto them, Have you here any meat? That is, "anything eatable."

42. And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish. Which, as fishermen, they were pretty sure always to have.

42. And of an honeycomb. As a second course, to complete the meal.

43. And He took it, and did eat before them. Some of the old versions add, "and gave the rest to them," which I think is very likely to have been the case. It would be all the more convincing to them if He really ate before them, and then that they also partook of the same food of which He had taken part.

44. 45. And He said unto them, These are the words which I spoke unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me. Then He opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures. Good Master, do the same with us tonight!

46, 47. And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. This Gospel message was to be proclaimed among all nations, "beginning at Jerusalem," but not ending there! It has been preached to us—let us see to it that we pass it on to those who have never heard it.

48. And you are witnesses of these things. We also are called to be "witnesses of these things." May the Lord make us to be faithful and true witnesses, for His name's sake! Amen.

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