

Three common threads are woven through Luke 24: unbelief, the importance of the Word, and the creation of understanding. The disciples began in unbelief but finally moved to full understanding.

I. *Unbelief!*

1. The disciples failed to believe despite the reliable testimony of the women. The report, which “seemed to them like nonsense” (24:11), should have been considered reliable,
 - a. ... because the women were not anticipating what they observed.
 - b. ... because the women had nothing to gain.
 - c. ... because it was confirmed by the prophecy of Christ.
2. The disciples also failed to believe despite personal observation.
 - a. Observation was sufficient for Peter to believe in an empty tomb but not sufficient to conclude that Jesus had been raised from the dead.
 - b. Observation was sufficient for the disciples to believe that Jesus was a prophet (Luke 24:19) and had preached and done miracles by the power of God, and to hope that He might redeem Israel, but not sufficient to lead them to believe that Jesus had been raised from the dead.
 - c. They could not even believe they own eyes when Jesus appeared.

Do not forget how “unbelievable” our message can sound. When God is excluded or minimized, then man will conclude resurrections do not occur.

II. *Opened Scriptures*

The disciples needed the Word of God to understand what had happened.

1. God gives importance to communicating His Word.
 - a. What the two disciples on the way to Emmaus remembered of the encounter with Jesus and particularly commented on was the effect on them of His teaching from the OT. (Luke 24:27, 32)
 - b. The encounter with the eleven confirms this. The core of Jesus’ teaching was summarized for them (24:44, 46-47). To remember His teaching and fulfilment of the Word was important to Jesus.
 - c. Even the women had experienced this emphasis on the Word (24:6-7).
God chooses to use His Word in peoples lives. See Hebrews 4:12.
2. The death and resurrection of Christ was established in God’s Word.
 - a. ... as God’s revealed plan and therefore both purposeful and knowable Cf. Luke 24:25-26. The prophets had revealed His death and resurrection. They were necessary.
 - b. ... as prophesied and therefore expected and verifiable.
 - c. ... as explained and therefore understandable. Peter had understood Jesus’ words (Mt. 16:21-22), as had the scribes and Pharisees since they wanted the tomb secured (Mt. 27:63).

III. *Understanding!*

The disciples needed to be given full understanding.

1. God gave them physical evidence for the resurrection, offering physical contact (39-40) and showing the physical phenomena of eating (41-42).
2. God called to mind the teaching which they had received.
3. God directly gave spiritual understanding.
 - a. He opened the eyes of the two so that they recognized Jesus and they recognized the burning or passion which He had put in their hearts as He taught them from the OT.
 - b. Of the rest it says, “... he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures” (24:45).

In 1 Corinthians 1-2 it is not ultimately a matter of knowledge or of intellect, that leads to understanding, but the work of the Spirit of God opening our minds to understand the truths of God.

From a human perspective the resurrection of Jesus is a fairly unbelievable. Without an active God there is really no reason to believe that someone clearly dead could come back to life. Yet this is the message of Easter and the message of the Bible, because we cannot take God out of the picture.

Without the resurrection the Christian faith is absolutely senseless. If Christ were not resurrected, than neither will we be resurrected and we could not live in the hope of a better future (1 Cor 15:16-19). The resurrection established for us that Christ’s death was a sufficient sacrifice. He was crucified because of our sin and was raised again because of our justification (Romans 4:25). If there were no resurrection, there would be no justification.

If you are uncertain of how you stand before God or perhaps know that you fall short of God’s perfect standard, then seek God’s forgiveness now. It was made possible alone in the death of Christ and made clear in His resurrection.

All who are believers need to be faithful in using the Word of God and to have faith in God that He will use His Word in the hearts of people.