

“SEEING THE LORD” – A Sermon by Rt. Rev. Bradley D. Heinrichs

Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law. (Psalm 119:18)

LESSON 1 – Luke 24:13-22.

13 Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was sixty stadia from Jerusalem.

14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

15 So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them.

16 But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.

17 And He said to them, "What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?"

18 Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, "Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?"

19 And He said to them, "What things?" So they said to Him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all people,

20 "and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him.

21 "But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel....

25 Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!

26 "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?"

27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself....

31 Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.

32 And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?"

LESSON 2 – John 20:24-29.

24 Now Thomas..., one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.

25 The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

26 And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!"

27 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."

28 And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

29 Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

LESSON 3 – Arcana Coelestia 1540:2.

Historical records by themselves cannot ever constitute the Word, for there is no more of the Divine in them when they are separated from the internal sense than in any other historical narrative. It is the internal sense that makes it Divine....

The Lord Himself also, after the Resurrection, taught the disciples what had been written concerning Himself in Moses and the Prophets, Luke 24:27, thus that nothing has been written in the Word which does not have regard to Him, to His kingdom, and to the Church. These are the spiritual and celestial things of the Word.

LESSON 4 – True Christian Religion 777:2.

The Lord is even now about to appear in the Word. The reason why He will not appear in person is that after His ascension into heaven He is in His glorified Human; and in this He cannot appear to any person, unless He has first opened the eyes of his spirit....

Neither did the Apostles see the Lord with the eyes of their bodies before His resurrection in His glorified Human; but they saw Him in the spirit, something which seems like seeing in sleep after waking up.... It is futile therefore to believe that the Lord will appear in a cloud of heaven in person; but He will appear in the Word, which is from Him and which is Him.

“And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.... Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him” (Luke 24:27-31).

- **Introduction.**

1. After the horrible and chaotic events of the Lord’s arrest, mock trial, and crucifixion, Easter morning had quite a different feel.
2. It started with Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, Joanna, and other women coming to the tomb and finding only the linen clothes Jesus had been buried in, but the body of Jesus was missing.
3. Then the angels appeared to them and told them that the Lord had risen as He said.
4. The women then went and told the disciples, but they did not initially believe thinking they were ***“idle tales”***, only Peter went and witnessed the same thing.
5. Then the Lord met two of the disciples on the road to Emmaus, about a 7 mile walk from Jerusalem. They did not recognize Him at first.
6. But as He walked with them, He explained the Scriptures to them, from Moses to the Prophets, and showed them how it all related to the birth, teaching, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
7. Then later the same day, He opened their eyes, and they recognized Him, and then He vanished from their sight.

- **Seeing the Lord.**

1. In one sense, the whole of the Easter story is about seeing the Lord; being able to recognize, know, and love Him, because you can’t really love anyone and be conjoined to them, unless you know them.
2. This is why He came. In order to accomplish this, He had to conquer the hells, put them back in their place, and put the World of Spirits back in order, so that we would once again have the spiritual freedom to see, acknowledge, and come to love our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
3. The Word had been closed and they could not see the Lord anymore because they had falsified the Word by their tradition and placing man made doctrine over a life of loving the Lord and serving our neighbors.
4. The tomb was sealed shut! However, we are told that the angel rolling back the stone meant that ***“the Lord removed all the falsity that cut off approach to Him, and that He opened Divine truth”*** (AE 400:14).
5. So how do we come to have the tomb opened for us, so that we can see the living God walking with us?
6. First, it comes from having an affection for the truth. This was symbolized by the women at the tomb. You will never see the truth and discover the Lord unless you have a desire to go and seek after it.
7. Second, comes knowing the truth and having faith. This was symbolized by Peter, a symbol of faith, going to the tomb next, and being astonished by what he saw. He now knew the truth and wanted to believe it, but he did not as of yet understand it.
8. Finally, the Lord appeared to the two other disciples on the road to Emmaus and explained the Scriptures to them. Once they understood the truth about His coming and resurrection, they SAW Him. ***“...to ‘see with the eyes’ is to understand, and also to have faith”*** (AC 2701:3, cf. 3863:11).

9. Why was that? Because *“the Divine truths of the Word...are like mirrors in which the Lord's face is seen”* (AR 938:2) Therefore, *“seeing the Lord's face”* means *“knowing and acknowledging Him as He is in respect to His Divine attributes”* (AR 939:1). **Book Example.**
- **Why Did He Vanish?**
 1. It says: ***“Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight”*** (Luke 24:31).
 2. Really seeing the Lord is not just physically seeing His body, but seeing Him spiritually with the eyes of our understanding. Remember Thomas would only believe if saw the print of the nails, and put his finger in it, so Jesus said to him: ***“Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”***
 3. Really seeing the Lord is when we realize that the whole of the Word is about HIM! Throughout the Word, the two great commandments of loving Him above all things and our neighbor as ourself are present. *“When these two commandments are regarded as the end, the Word is opened”* (AC 3773:1).
 4. Consequently, when we read the Word with an affirmative attitude trying to seek Him there, we will find Him. *“the coming and presence of the Lord [is] with those who, ...while reading the Word do not look to themselves, but to Him and the neighbor.... From this it can be seen what is meant by ‘seeing the Lord in the Word’”* (AC 9405:2).
 5. So why did the Lord vanish from their sight? Because once we truly see the Lord in our hearts and minds, then there is no need to see Him naturally with our eyes, His image becomes indelibly printed on our interiors.
 - **The Road to Emmaus a Preview of What Would Come**
 1. The Lord opened the Scriptures to them from Moses through the Prophets. A mini-introduction to the Heavenly Doctrine for the New Church. What must it have been like for them to be on that 7-mile walk with Him?
 2. They had the truth they needed for the Christian Church to succeed, and they had the ability to see Jesus Christ as the one God of Heaven and Earth. However, the Lord foresaw that once more they would lose sight of Him, as they did at the Council of Nicea when they confused the vision of the Lord and divided God into three separate persons.
 3. So while He was yet in the world, He promised that He would come again as the Spirit of Truth: ***“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth”*** (John 16:12-13).
 4. And notice the end of our third lesson from TCR, it said: *The Lord is even now about to appear in the Word”* which is from Him and is Him (TCR 777:2). Then it said it is futile to expect to see Him coming in person once more.
 5. The reason for this is that in His Second Coming the Lord once again, and more fully than ever before, revealed all things in the Sacred Scriptures concerning Himself. There is no need for Him to come again in person, because He has revealed the truths necessary so that the image of His Divine Human can be visible to us in our hearts and minds.
 - **Coming to See the Lord Should Encourage Us.**
 1. This is an essential message of the Easter story. Seeing our risen Lord.

2. To know the truth about the Lord Jesus Christ rising from the grave after conquering death and hell and reigning as the one all powerful God of heaven and hell.
3. May we have the affection for seeking after this truth as the women did.
4. May we learn the truth and believe in it as Peter did.
5. May we all experience the wonder the disciples did on the road to Emmaus when they finally understood the great mercy of His coming, and began to comprehend the depth of His compassion for us.
6. May our hearts “*burn within us*” as the hearts of the disciples did when they came to this acknowledgement while He talked with them “*on the road*”, and “*opened the Scriptures to*” them. (Luke 24:32).
7. And when we finally come see the Lord clearly in His Word and recognize His presence with us, like Thomas may we declare: “*My Lord and my God!*” (John 20:29). **Amen.**