

# Hope for the Disappointed

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[ 0 : 00 ] Our scripture reading today is from the New Testament, from Luke chapter 24, verses 13 down to 35. And we'll read together. It's also printed in your bulletins.

! And let me ask Jean to come and help us as we read. That very day, two of them were going to the village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened.

While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, what is this conversation that you're holding with each other as you walk? And they stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, Cleopas, answered him, are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days? And he said to them, what things?

And they said to him, concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God and all the people. And how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. Moreover, some of our women amazed us.

They were at the tomb early in the morning, and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had seen a vision of angels who said he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see. And he said to them, oh foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

[ 2 : 20 ] So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he was going further, but they urged him strongly saying, stay with us, for it is towards evening and the day is now far spent. So he went in to stay with them.

When he was at table with them, he took bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. And they said to each other, did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures. And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the 12 and those who were with him gathered together saying, the Lord has risen indeed and has appeared to Simon. Then they told what had happened on the road and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Let's pray. Lord, we ask now as we come and think about this passage for a little while that you would draw near to us. We long to draw near to you. So open our hearts to see what you have to say to us here.

We need your help. We know that we have spiritual blindness. And so we ask, Lord, that you would remove scales and help us to understand and to believe what you teach here. And so we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

We are in a topical series called Wonderful Counselor, and it's referring to Jesus as our Wonderful Counselor, which the Old Testament does. So Isaiah chapter 9 says, the people were walking in darkness, in grief and anguish, and then a great light appeared. So a light, it's a prophecy of the light that was to come at Christmas, a light shone into the world, upon the world from the outside.

[ 4 : 14 ] And that light is called in Isaiah 9, the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, and many other titles that are given there. Now that means that Jesus comes at Christmas as our Wonderful Counselor. That means so many things. Two of the things that it means, one is what B.B. Warfield pointed out. B.B. Warfield was a theologian at Princeton in the 19th century, and he wrote a little

book called *The Emotional Life of Our Lord*. And the opening line of that book says this, it belongs to the truth of our Lord's humanity that He was subject to all sinless human emotions. So Warfield says that when you read the Gospels, you realize that because Jesus is truly human, He experienced the full range of human emotions, yet never did so with any sin. So we look to Jesus as the Wonderful Counselor to learn how to feel as a human being. He teaches us how to be fully human, fully emotional, yet without any sin. The second thing that He helps so much with as Wonderful Counselor is that all across the Gospels, He encounters people who are struggling with negative emotions because of so many experiences in their life. And He, we might say, is the most compassionate and understanding person that has ever been in all the universe. He's gentle, lowly, meek, and mild. He, with a bruised reed, He will not break them. And so He comes and He treats, encounters people with negative emotions.

Last week we looked at shame. This week we look at disappointment in this story. And so let's think about it. The fact of disappointment, and then three ways Jesus walks with us when we're disappointed.

So first, the fact of disappointment. Now, you will have noticed that Luke 24 is very far away from a Christmas story. It's the opposite end, so all the way from the incarnation to post-resurrection. So this is one of Jesus's three post-resurrection appearances that shows up in Luke. So this chapter contains those three, and one of the things that's striking is that Luke wrote the Gospel of Luke, and he also wrote the book of Acts. And in the book of Acts, at the beginning, we learned that there were 40 days between the resurrection and Jesus's ascension. 40 days, probably 40 of the most important days in world history. And Luke only gives you three encounters, three scenes of his post-resurrection appearances, of those 40 days. And this is one of them. And that's striking, because when you read this story, you may notice that at first the characters, the two men, they're nameless. And then we learn the name of one of them is Cleopas. And who is Cleopas? And if you're struggling to come up with an answer, it's because we don't know. He's not anybody. He's Cleopas, but he's a minor character. He doesn't play a role at all anywhere else in the Bible. Jesus Christ shows up here to one nameless man, one man named Cleopas. We don't know anything about them. And then where is he? It points out in the text, he is seven miles from the center of Jerusalem. The Greek, you might say, there's got to be something to that number seven. There's not, because it's actually in Greek says that he was 60 stadia away from the city of Jerusalem. Stadia is a Roman measurement that's 605 feet. So he's 60 times 605 feet away from Jerusalem, which is about 11,000 meters, 6.874 miles, in fact.

And not quite seven. That's where he is. The point is, why is he there? He's on a dusty road on the way to Emmaus, which also is a minor village. It doesn't play a major role in any way in the story. And he's there. It would be like after the resurrection, instead of Jesus going out to the royal mile right out our doors and announcing, look at me, I'm alive. It would be like we find him walking the Glencourse Reservoir walking path out at the Pentlands, that's about seven miles away, where you're only going to see five people the whole time. That's where he is. And so you say, if Luke's going to choose just three scenes to show us why this tiny little thing to two people on a dusty road way away from the urban center, where all the people are, where you could really make something of the resurrection. And I think the reason for that is found in the details of the text.

[ 8 : 50 ] And if you look at verse 17, Jesus walks up to them and he says, what are you talking about? What are you discussing with each other? And then this little note, Luke writes, they stood still, looking sad.

And then we wonder, well, what is it that's making them so sad? Gloomy, despairing is the word that's used here. And in verse 21, they say, we had hoped Jesus the Messiah would have redeemed Israel.

We had hoped he was going to redeem Israel. And of course, they're implying there, but he did not. And so they're incredibly sad. And what we're reading about is two disciples that are disappointed. They had big hope in Jesus and they believe that he's dead. And so they're disappointed. Jesus is encountering two men on this dusty road, a long way from the city center that have no names really in the gospel stories. And I think he's encountering them because they are disappointed people, because they're sad people. And that makes sense to us when we think about how God speaks to disappointment all across the Bible. What is the Bible? One helpful question to ask is, what is the Bible? And the Bible, we say one way to say it is, the Bible is actually God's interpretation of God's actions in history. So God has worked all sorts of things throughout history, and then he turned and

he wrote it down for us. And what we have in the Bible is actually God interpreting for us what he's done, how we should think about it, how we should receive it. And when you realize that, that you open the Bible and it's God's own word about what God has done, it's striking, it's astonishing really how many times the Bible shows believers expressing disappointment towards God. And you can just, you can go back early. We'll have a list here that's too long to read, but Abraham's frustrations at 99 years old. Where is the child that you had promised me, Lord? Or God brings Israel out of Egypt in a miraculous way, and then they get into the wandering section of the story, and they, every story is basically about a different way of how they figure out to complain and grumble, and are frustrated with God. Why did you bring us out? And think about Elijah on top of the mountain, when he sees this miraculous act, a sign of the fire come down, and he's faithful. In the very next chapter, he said, I was so faithful, you didn't bring the revival. Nobody believed. And if you just, if you walk through the Psalms, listen to the language of the Psalms over and over again, it says things like this. Why are you so far, God, from saving me? How long, O Lord? Why are you silent? Awake, Lord, why do you sleep? Has his unfailing love vanished? Will the Lord reject us forever? Has God forgotten to be merciful? Why, Lord, do you reject me and hide your face from me? John 11, Mary and Martha both come to Jesus separately, and they say, Lord, if you would have been here on time, our brother would not have died. A constant expression of disappointment with the way life is actually going based on the expectations we have of what it means to be a believer in this life and walk through this life with God. Why does, you know, 40 days, some of the most important 40 days of human history here between the resurrection and the ascension, and I think the reason Luke shows us this scene is because he wants to really cement to us a consistent pattern across the Bible, and that's that God allows the disappointed to express themselves to him, and God gives permission, we might say, to lament toward him, and that's really the category of expressing disappointment towards God. We call it lament all across the Bible. So disappointment, what is that? It's the gap between the expectations we have in life and the circumstances we actually receive, and then there's oftentimes a grief and a sorrow of what we had hoped for, what we had desired but yet has never come to pass or did not happen or happened in exactly the opposite way we hoped for. In a bruised and broken world like we have, a very sinful world, there is a sort of good disappointment. It is right to be disappointed so often because we have good desires in our life. When you're walking with the Lord, you're following Jesus in your life as a believer, and there are good things that God created for us to provide a good life, and we don't get them. There's good disappointment. It's right. Unmet expectation of what is good, but we don't get it in this bruised, broken, and fallen world, and so it makes sense so often to be disappointed. I think one of the ways this comes out for us in normal life is through the experience of unanswered prayer, and we can think about wondering, have my prayers been answered? And there are many of us in this room who have prayed for years about a marriage that we had hoped for or a relationship that's not yet healed or about children that haven't come or a job that never came in life or that we lost or a relationship that really needs mending or economic struggle. We've never been able to have enough money to really be settled or prodigal children that we've prayed for or loneliness. Lord, when are you going to bring me out of my loneliness or seemingly senseless loss? How could you take this person away from me like that, right? Or the mental health struggle that just seems, I don't want this in my life. I want you to take it away from me, Lord. I don't want these struggles in my mind. Weighs out of a thousand situations. Maybe for some of us, it's struggling with doubt. We want to be past doubt. Maybe for some of us, it's wrestling with the problem of evil. It really overwhelms us, and it overcomes us in this life, and we pray, and we pray, and we pray, and we feel God's perceived absence, and we say, why are you silent? How long are you going to be silent? In the Bible, the Bible says lament like that toward God, and I think this passage is here because it cements the reality of that permission that the Lord loves to walk with and listen to the disappointed and to ask them to bring their disappointments to Him and towards Him. It's such a counter-cultural. It's probably something that's counter to our instincts to speak like that to God, but boy, the Psalms do it all the time. One-third of the book of Psalms is lament Psalms towards God. This is what one scholar, Walter Brueggemann, says about it. He says, the lament Psalms are a candid, even aggressive petition that makes an urgent demand of God. The speech of lament is a bold, nagging insistence that things are not right here on earth. The Bible says, do not pretend everything is okay. Disappointment is normal in a fallen world. Don't pretend everything's okay. Bring it to the Lord. It's cement. Jesus coming to meet with the disappointed cements that invitation that God gives us. Now, secondly, and I say finally, but of

course, the second point is three ways Jesus walks with the disappointed. So now I get to start the three-point sermon. Look, there's so much to say about how the Bible treats this issue of disappointment in our lives and lament, and what all I can do is be confined to a few of the ways that Jesus treats it here in this passage. And so let me give you the most important first in case I run out of time. And that's the most important way he addresses disappointment and lament in these men's lives is that he speaks so clearly to the main issue underneath their disappointment. And what is that main issue? And the main issue is that they believe that death is the end. The main issue is that they do not believe in the resurrection.

[17:07] They are walking down this road believing that death is the end of everything. And that's really what is getting them down so much. They don't have a worldview in which resurrection is the answer. You can look down at the story in verse 20, 21, 22.

They say to Jesus, you must have not been around. You must have just arrived at the city to not know all the things that have taken place, how Jesus was crucified. They killed him. And then in verse 22, and it's been three, sorry, verse 21, it's been three days. And then the women amazed us because they went to the tomb, and they came back, and they said that the tomb was empty. But then they say, but basically they're suggesting we haven't seen him. So they don't believe in the testimony that he could actually be alive. And so here, they are not gullible men. By the way, a side note, they are not gullible people. First century people were not gullible people. And in some sense, it was less likely for a Jewish believer in the first century to believe a man could be God and that a man could rise from the dead than it is for us today. And so they were resistant to this idea that the tomb was empty, therefore he must be alive. They don't believe it. And so they think basically that he's still dead.

Now, in a city like ours, in a culture like ours, in a secular pluralist environment like we have, most people, and maybe some of us here today, believe that you die and then you rot.

That death really is the end of everything, that there's a finality about it. And we could say, do we have the courage to say that if we believe that, we have to be willing to admit that our life is not very much different than a midge. Why? Because a midge comes into this world, and scientifically, scientifically, you cannot say that you are any more valuable than they are.

And scientifically, you say you began by chance, and you're going to end with the type of finality that means your origin is meaningless, your destiny is meaningless, you will be forgotten, and therefore your life is meaningless. And you see, the reason that these men are so down is because they believe death is the end. That's what they're so disappointed about. And if it's true, if what so much of our culture believes about death really is the end, then death really does get the last word, and every disappointment that we're walking through in our life will actually get the last word.

Disappointment will be the end of our lives. And if Jesus stayed dead, you know, we had, they say, we had hoped He would redeem Israel. They're saying, if Jesus really is dead, then the one person we thought that could have fixed everything, that hope is gone. And this really is the end of everything. And Jesus comes, how does He answer it? He comes and He says, oh foolish ones, slow to believe. And that line from Jesus is not, it's not a harsh judgment, it is a gentle rebuke. And just like the Bible cements all throughout this reality of God inviting you to bring your disappointments to Him and to lament towards Him. So we see the same pattern here, where in the lament, He says, oh foolish one, slow to believe. It's like it's a father getting on his knees, putting his hand on the shoulder of a child. Oh foolish one, slow to believe. That's the tone of this language. Just think about it in the rest of the Bible. In the rest of the Bible, what does God do? The entire book of Job is complaint, it's lament, it's struggle with disappointment, circumstance. And then God comes to Him and walks with Him. And God says, now Job, like a dad getting down on his knee to put his hand on Job's shoulder, where were you? Where were you when I set the foundations of the world? Gentle rebuke. And what is Jesus saying? He's saying, you do not, you don't see the whole story yet because you have yet to realize that He is not dead. He is risen. And in verse 31, their eyes are going to be open and they're going to see He's alive. And He's going to invite them to re-situate their entire worldview within the reality of the hope of the resurrection. And the most important thing that Jesus gives us in the normal disappointments of life is a hope, a stubborn hope really, in the reality of resurrection life. And to be able to say, the lower my disappointments in life take me, the higher

[21:44] He's going to raise me. The deeper they take me into the valley, the higher up He's going to take me up the mountain. The resurrection, it's true, it's history. You see, at Christmas time,

you've got to believe, you've got to believe that God became a human, and you've got to believe that that human died and rose again. That's the core of the message of Christmas, and it really is the most important thing here. In Psalm 27, David, King David, is discouraged and he's disappointed.

He says things like, an army is encamping against me. They're going to take my life away. And he says, at the end, my mother and my father have forsaken me. Boy, that's disappointment. And then he says, how does he address it? What does he do to his heart? He turns to his heart and he says, I believe I shall look upon the face of the Lord in the land of the living. He turns to the resurrection. He's not seen it yet, but he hopes in it. He takes his disappointment and situates it with inside a worldview of resurrection, and that's the most important thing. George MacDonald, the Scottish author, the novelist, the fairy tale writer, there's a story, I'm not sure if it's apocryphal, but it gets said. I hope it's true, about him chatting with his son. And he was explaining resurrection life and eternal life to his son. And his young son apparently replied, heaven, dad, heaven seems too good to be true. And George famously said, nay, it is so good that it must be true. And then George goes on to write all these fairy tales. And what do they say? The wicked witch will die and the brave children will find rescue. They'll find redemption. They'll find resurrection. They'll find real life. They'll find the way of escape. He situated his entire worldview in the stubborn hope of the resurrection. That's the first thing Jesus gives us, the most important.

Secondly, Jesus also comes to these men and he gives them, I think he gives to us today, an invitation to recognize our own blindness. So in verse 16, it says, we read this simple fact, their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

And then in verse 31, their eyes were opened as they ate with him. Now there is so much to say about that reality that we can't say today. Other people in the post-resurrection experiences also had blinded eyes. They couldn't see Jesus correctly. I think at least part of that is that that physical inability to recognize the post-resurrected Messiah, the glorified Redeemer, is a reflection on a spiritual reality that even as believers in this sinful world, the text is telling us we can't see everything. We've still got a spiritual blindness about us, that even as believers, we struggle with spiritual blindness. And I think that fact in the stories is pointing us to that. And when it comes to dealing with disappointment, one of the things I think we have to see here is the text is drawing us to say, I still have so much spiritual blindness in my life. In other words, I've got things that I know, we've got to be willing to say, I've got things in my life I know I can't interpret rightly.

[ 24 : 57 ] I can't see rightly. There's a blindness in my life. We don't interpret the events of our lives rightly all the time. And some of that could be lingering unhealthy expectations of what life is supposed to be like in a fallen world. Lingering unhealthy expectations of what it means to say, I have followed Jesus. Now I expect my life to be really easy and healthy and comfortable. Now this is exactly what happens. I was reading a book this week about expressing disappointment towards God and lament. And the author pointed out two really common things that we do. And one of the things is he he said, we express disappointment towards God with misguided expectations for what the Christian life and the fallen world we live in should be. Now this is what happens in the passage. In verse 21, what do they say? We had hoped he would redeem Israel. And oh boy, when they say that, there are so many misguided expectations underneath that line. And if you read into it a little bit, what you realize is that what they think redemption means is redemption. The redemption they're looking for was redemption from Roman occupation. That's what they're talking about, redeeming Israel from

Roman occupation. And so they think here that Jesus' redemption is first social, it's political. It's about getting the right man in the right political office. And if we were able to do that, we would have a life of comfort and ease and wealth and health and prosperity.

And they think that when Jesus died, that meant the lack of redemption. Because of course, he was supposed to come and be this mighty man that would dismiss Roman occupation. And so they have these incredibly unhealthy expectations. They don't see through the lens of the Bible rightly. And so they're expecting things and being incredibly disappointed when the reader knows what? What do you know as the reader? That his death was redemption, is redemption. And that's what they can't see.

And you know that he's standing there resurrected from the dead, having accomplished redemption. And it's the very thing they think was a failure. And so they're unable, because of their expectations, to situate their experiences in the whole story. They don't really see what true

redemption is.

What's the difference? And I think we could say it like this. Cleopas did not see that the real redemption he needed is redemption from his spiritual blindness. He thought the redemption he needed was from Rome. He thought the redemption he needed was from bad circumstances. He thought the redemption he needed was from disappointment. And in reality, the redemption he needed, the true problem was the spiritual cancer in his heart, his sin. You see, another way we sometimes can be disappointed in unhealthy ways is because we've forgotten that the biggest problem we have this Christmas season is our sin.

[ 27 : 53 ] It's spiritual blindness. It's spiritual cancer. That's the biggest problem we have. Do you believe that? That the biggest problem you have today, no matter what is going on in your life, is your sin. And that Christmas really is about the fact that he came to redeem you, redeem Israel, redeem the Gentiles from spiritual blindness, the cancer that's deep down within us. The second way that this book points out that we can sometimes struggle with disappointment in our lives that Jesus really treats here is an unanswered prayer can sometimes develop into an idea where we say, Lord, if you would only show up in my life and do something big, then I would finally commit fully to you. Lord, I've been praying about this for so long, and I've been so disappointed. And if you would come and finally do that thing, show up big, give me a miraculous sign, then I will promise to give my life away to you more fully, more completely. That's another really common way we treat it. And the gospels alone up to this point show us something really important, and that's that every time Jesus did that and did a miraculous sign, it is not that more people came close to him. It's that people picked up rocks and wanted to stone him. And if you read that all throughout the Bible, you realize in the miraculous seasons of Scripture, people tend to move away from God to hate God more for the big things, for the big signs. Fire comes down from the mountain and nobody believes. It just doesn't work that way. Why? Same issue. Because the issue is not merely circumstances, not merely needing miraculous signs. The issue is spiritual blindness. It's cancer in our lives. That's the real issue.

Ed Clowney, he was a scholar, theologian at Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia. He writes in one of his books, he says, why did Jesus at Christmas not come as a 25 feet, 25 feet, 25 foot, there it is, 25 foot tall man. Why did he not just come as a 25 foot tall man? So if Jesus would have come as a human at 25 feet tall, wouldn't everybody have said, yes, he must be God? And Clowney says, no, they would have killed him faster. Why? Because the big issue is not miraculous signs or God showing up in super extraordinary ways in our life. The big issue is our sin. And what Jesus does here, if you notice in this passage, through all the little details is he walks up to these men, he travels with them, he sits with them at the table. Verse 28, this funny, interesting little detail, he pretended as if he was going to walk further than Emmaus. Why? Because he wanted them to invite him into their ordinary lives. This passage is incredibly ordinary. Jesus just does ordinary stuff with them.

And that is exactly how Jesus works in our lives, incredibly ordinarily. We oftentimes are saying, Lord, do something huge. And instead we need to get past that. And instead say, 99.9999% of the time, I expect Jesus to just be with me. That's it. That's all we've got to look for. And that's actually what he offers here in this passage. 99% of us in this room came to faith. Christians in this room, you came to faith probably not through a dramatic event, not through a lightning bolt, not through something big. You probably came through a process. You don't know exactly how it happened. That is normal. Sometimes God does big things, but in the midst of handling disappointment and in the midst of some of us are not coming to faith, we're not saying, I believe Jesus, because we're waiting on drama. And Jesus actually typically works through the ordinary. And that's exactly how he treats us in our disappointments. Lastly, briefly, very briefly, he gives us, thirdly, he gives them the very same thing that all of us can have today and the thing that we do have today. And that's first two things he gives them. Verse 27, what did he do? He sat down with them and he opened up the Bible and he explained it to them. That's all. He said, let me situate your disappointment by just bringing you back to God's word and helping you understand your life in that light. And it says in the text, their hearts burned as he explained it to them. And what did he say to them? Notice he said, especially he taught them how the Bible is all about him. So look, as we finish, you can come and read the Bible today as a moralist. So we've just finished a Daniel series, not quite. We're coming back to it in January. You can go to the book of Daniel and we could say, dare to be a Daniel. Have the courage that Daniel had, the faithfulness that Daniel had. And that's true in a way.

You could come to the David story and say, you've got to face the giants, the Goliaths in your life like David. And sometimes that works okay. But over and over again, what's going to happen is you're going to realize at some point that there's disappointment coming in our lives that we cannot fix. There's no amount of courage. There's no amount of strength. And what Jesus does in verse 27 is he explained to them how the whole of the old Testament was about him. It pointed to him. And the Bible can give you inspiration, but the Bible is not an inspirational guide. It's not to be opened and just looked for verses to find inspiration. It's actually all about Jesus and the redemption that he was going to bring to this broken, this dire world that we live in.

[ 33 : 49 ] Charles Spurgeon, he famously told a young preacher who he listened to, and he thought that the preacher did not preach a good sermon at all. He came to him after the service. And what did he say?

He said, young man, don't you know that, don't you know that Jesus, finding Jesus in the Bible is like London? He said, in England in his time, he said, every, don't you know, young man, every single road in England leads to London somehow, some way. And when you open the Bible, you got to realize it's the same with Jesus. Every single road, every single passage, every single story somehow leads to Jesus. And we could say the same thing about history.

Our lives, everybody's lives, it comes through him, from him. It returns back to him. It's ultimately about him. And this is how the Bible addresses your disappointments. Not by giving you five steps, five steps to fix your life, not by teaching you how to be more stoic, how to have more resolve, more courage, but by showing you that every single moment in history is ultimately about how Jesus is fixing the world. And that every single disappointment, everything we're longing for, everything we want that's not met in this life, every loss that we have can become a road, can become a road when we situated in the light of the resurrection that leads to him. In other words, when you realize the first advent means everything for your life, you're always looking and hoping in your disappointments for the second advent. And the last thing he does here, as he does the incredibly ordinary thing at the end of the passage of sitting down at a table with them and eating. And what is this meal? Verse 35, he says, they go to the others and they say, we experienced the breaking of bread.

That same line appears in Acts chapter 2 from the same author, Luke, to refer to what? The Lord's Supper. What did Jesus do at the end of the story? He celebrated the Lord's Supper with them. Physically, he was there. He broke the bread. He gave them the cup. That's what we read about at the end of this passage. And that means that how does Jesus deal with our disappointments? Well, we can have the very same thing today. We do. We have it today right before us. We're going to celebrate communion right now. And our biggest need as we come to the table is to see our lives in the light of his life, to see our lives in the light of his body broken, in the light of his bloodshed, in the light of the fact of his resurrection. And to realize that you today, no matter what's going on in your life, as we come to the table, let me say it like this. The last word, every human counselor that we go to, a friend, a family member, a biblical counselor of any kind, they have boundaries, right? There are topics that are eventually off limits. There are emotions that are just too much to share. There are complaints that other people just cannot handle. Jesus Christ, the wonderful counselor, has no limits for that. And that means today you can literally bring anything to him, everything to him. There is nothing that he cannot absorb. He absorbed our sin upon the cross. There's nothing that he cannot absorb today. And so as we come to the table, he doesn't say, come to me, all of you who are doing great. He says, come to me, all of you who are weary and heavily burdened and disappointed with so much, because by the death and resurrection I've accomplished for you, I promise to bring you rest. Let us pray. Father, we want the wonderful counselors touch today, and we come now to the table of our Lord to receive that. And so we pray,

[ 37 : 45 ] Lord, that you would speak to us in whatever disappointments and struggles we bring. We bring them to you, Lord, and we pray this in Christ's name. Amen.