



October 10, 2021 ~ Luke 25:13-35

OPEN

Medically, heartburn “is a painful or burning sensation in the esophagus, just below the breastbone caused by regurgitation of gastric acid....Heartburn actually has nothing to do with the heart; it is so called because of a burning sensation of the breastbone....Peristalsis, the rhythmic wave of muscular contraction in the esophagus, normally moves food down..” <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heartburn>

You might experience heartburn after Thanksgiving dinner...but I hope not! In a figurative sense, we may all feel that we are experiencing a collective heartburn as we enter fall still coping with COVID-19 and all the other ills of society. At times such fears dissipate, only to be “regurgitated”, if you will.

What is the answer? Give thanks! Philippians 4:6 instructs followers of Jesus, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” And of course, thanksgiving is the theme in our hearts today.

We need a “holy heartburn”! Remember the limited vision of the disciples in the story of Jesus feeding 5000? They only saw the fish and bread, not Jesus. Yet it was in the **giving of thanks** that the bread multiplied, and Jesus was seen His power and authority (see John 6:11).

DIG

As I reflected this fact, God brought to my mind one of my favorite Bible stories – the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. These men encountered the risen Christ and experienced a burning in their hearts!

Take some time to read carefully through this amazing story found in **Luke 24:13-35**. What does this account of our resurrected and living Lord say about our gratitude?

A. Gratitude can be rattled – vv. 13-24

This story of Jesus joining two disciples walking to Emmaus is unique to Luke’s Gospel. Returning home following Passover, they likely waited until the first day of the week, because of Sabbath travel restriction. Emmaus was about seven miles from Jerusalem (v.13). This story is set in the context of God’s followers completely destabilized, distraught, and disillusioned – see verses 14-16.

Their hopes and expectations had been dashed. Like the disciples in the feeding of the 5000, they did not see Jesus, even though they encountered Him. These two on the road to Emmaus were kept from recognizing Jesus. They showed a deep sadness and half-hearted belief. They were not fully confident in what Jesus had taught and promised. Instead of gratitude to God, they were **rattled!**

Linda Graham is a psychotherapist in California who teaches self-compassion and resilience. In a [blog post](#) she commented, “Gratitude...helps us shift and broaden our perspective, strengthening our capacities to cope.” Describing a personal experience of being rattled, Graham wrote, “Gratitude created conditions in the brain for coping...”

This kind of cognitive discipline is admirable but I believe it falls short. There has to be more to gratitude stimulating greater mindfulness. If our gratitude is focused on the circumstantial, it will become rattled. This was true for first Century disciples who experienced Jesus in person. And it will be true for Jesus followers today.

B. Gratitude can be restricted – vv. 25-27

When Jesus caught up with these men in their journey and conversation He cut to the quick. He challenged them to **believe** (v.25). He rebuked them for not embracing a suffering Savior (v.26). Because their vision of Jesus’ mission was misguided, their thankfulness was rattled. So, Jesus led them through a Bible study like no other! He explained the truth concerning Himself found in two sources.

- **The Law – Exodus 12:** In this passage, God instructed Moses in the celebration of Passover. Notice how the sacrifice of Jesus is so vividly displayed in this ceremony – see [verses 5-7,12-13](#). In fact, in I Corinthians 5:7 Paul stated, “For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed...”
- **The Prophets – Isaiah 53:** This passage predicted a suffering Servant – Jesus Christ. Notice in [verses 3-6](#) the way in which Jesus would suffer for us. All this was predicted by the Spirit of God through Isaiah hundreds of years before Jesus was born!

These disciples longed for a political savior. And because their vision of Jesus' mission was limited, their gratitude became choked out and **restricted**.

How about you? Are you ungrateful because God has not done the thing you expect Him to do? Is it possible, that He has different plans for you?

C. Gratitude can be renewed – vv. 28-35

Thankfully, our thankfulness and gratitude can be **renewed**. Jesus did not give up on these two disciples. He did not leave them with just a lecture...but He revealed Himself personally to them. In this story we see a picture Middle Eastern hospitality. And notice two verbs that show how Jesus acted in this situation. He “went in to stay” (v.29) and “reclined” (v.30) but the Guest became the Host!

Jesus assumed that place in the blessing of the bread. And it was when Jesus broke the bread and gave thanks that He was recognized by these two disciples – see verses 31,35.

Are you allowing yourself to be content with a lecture about Jesus? Do you base your gratitude on what you have understood or expected Jesus should do for you?

Or are you discovering life as the “willing vehicle of the Divine Presence” (Maj. Ian Thomas) – “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27)?

We will only become renewed in our gratitude and thanks to Him when we encounter Him personally. Jesus must be welcomed into our lives as the Host. Jesus must become central to who we are. This is the reminder of **Colossians 3:15-17**.

REFLECT

Do you have holy heartburn? Or are you caught up with the anxieties and complexities of life. Has your thankfulness become rattled...or restricted by a mere human vision of God? What happened with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus? They were transformed!

- **What did they do?** According to verse 32, understanding led to unction (passion) which led to urgency. They went that very hour to Jerusalem to tell the other followers of Jesus.
- **What did they say?** Did they give a repeat of Jesus' Bible lesson? No. They simply testified to what they had experienced (verse 35). This was the core mission of the early church!

Gratitude Exercise

1. For what are you thankful today?
2. What would you have written down if you were not “rattled”?
3. Now, review your list. Which things are focused on the circumstances of your life...and which are focused on God's gracious provision?
4. Think about the times when you are grateful. How often is your focus on the “gift” rather than the “Giver”?

