

Explore the Bible: Revealed

May 3, 2021

- *The Explore the Bible lesson for May 23 focuses on Luke 24:18-31.*

Perhaps you have had the same experience I have encountered while reading the Gospels, specifically the text for this week. Perhaps as our faith grows and our spiritual depth matures, we finally are able to see things in Scripture that, heretofore, failed to grasp our attention. Our spiritual vision deepens and brings into shaper relief biblical truth we believe we've never seen before.

For one, the arrest of Jesus and the release of Barabbas was as much an act of political insurrection as it was a spiritual judgment. Those who sought Jesus' crucifixion would remove one of Pilate's political thorns from his side and create the possibility of some serious and political capital with Rome. Pilate had nothing to lose with Jesus' death otherwise.

Second, the words recorded in Luke 24:25 are stunning. The NIV translates the words to read that, when they sought Jesus' death, the Jewish leaders "surrendered Jesus to their will." To surrender our will to Jesus' purposes is the sum total of what it means to be a follower of Jesus. To seek to bend Jesus' will to ours is a stunning thought, to say the least and the expression of the heart of a true spiritual insurrectionist.

Following Jesus

Surrendering our will to Jesus' will is to surrender our souls to the authority of Jesus, the One who had earlier taught his disciples, "the greatest among you should be like the youngest," (Luke 22:26) and prayed to his heavenly Father, "The greatest among you will be your servant" (Matthew 23:11).

It will, or, it should, take an entire lifetime of following Jesus to unpack and discover the daily meaning of those three, brief sayings of Jesus.

Following Jesus demands that we take a regular, ongoing survey of our true spiritual motives. Are we claiming Jesus' power as our own because we believe that currying Jesus' favor will in some way create more of God's blessing in our lives than that which has already been bestowed on us by the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus? As far as serving God is concerned, motive is everything. Until we believe and confess with the deepest conviction that serving the risen Lord is not about us but, instead, about the kingdom of God, our confessions and deeds will be void of eternal value and meaning.

Greatest moment in human history

On Friday evening, July 20, 1969, I found myself standing out in my front yard looking up at the moon. Then, without taking one step, I'd glance into the living room of our home where live pictures of 38 year-old astronaut Neil Armstrong were being broadcast, as he took his first steps on the moon.

It was remarkable to recall that memory only a few weeks ago, 52 years after the first moon walk and 185.5 miles from earth, we were able to watch live video feeds from Mars as mankind launched the first helicopter on Mars.

Those are two of the most remarkable moments in mankind's history of venturing into outer space. Yet, it also is true the greatest moments in all of history are not the times we first walked on the moon or the first date we received live video feeds from Mars.

The greatest day in all of human history was when God stepped from heaven to earth in the person of God's Son, Jesus, to be born among us, be

crucified for our sins and then to be raised from the dead so that, someday, we, too, would be raised from the dead.

Until we are raised, we walk and serve in humility, constantly monitoring our faith relationship with God and learning what it means to be a true leader by finding our place at the back of the line, not the front.

That is what Jesus revealed to us. Now it is our turn to reveal Christ to whatever tiny corner of this earth in which God has called us to live, die and be raised again as a follower of Jesus.

Glen Schmucker is a writer and blogger. He has served as a Texas Baptist pastor and as a hospice chaplain.