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# Title: The Incarnation of Education

**Text: Luke 24:13-49**

*Speaker: Pastor Chad Bresson*

**Introduction** At the beginning of this month we began a series on the adult education ministry here at Clear-creek Chapel. The series has been entitled The Incarnation of Education. Our goal has been to present to you just what it is we are doing in adult education as well as to put forward a vision for the future. That includes the Biblical Theology Study Center, an educational project that is aimed at equipping church members for leadership and spiritual growth.

Along the way we have learned the following:

First, **all education must begin with Jesus Christ**. Jesus Christ is Wisdom Incarnate, a Teacher come from God who brings us an education that leads us to eternal life. It is in Christ which "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3).

Second, **education is a Person**. Christ embodies the Education come from above. We don't merely learn about Christ. We learn Christ. We are reminded of Paul's words, "that I may know \*Him\* and the power of his resurrection." This education is first and foremost a Person who not only has created the student, but gives of himself to the student. So when we talk about Christian theological education, we are not merely speaking about a set of facts to be known and learned about theology or about Christ, we are speaking of that activity in which we come to learn and know Christ himself.

Third, **there is an alternative education from an alternative teacher that sets itself against Christ** and we must be aware of its presence at all times. No matter how "wise" it may seem, the subversive view of education shakes its fist at the Creator-Teacher. We must always be cognizant and aware of the temptation for the student to usurp the authority and the place of Christ our Teacher. This education we receive at the feet of Christ is counter-cultural. We exist in a society that begins the educational process with the student as a learner who also controls that process.

Fourth, just as Jesus has incarnated education from God, so too **the church is to follow in that pattern, incarnating education** in word and deed. In patterning our educational activity after Christ's, we further the expansion of the kingdom and the glory of his name in our church, in our homes, and in the world. We are to embody, live out, put flesh to that knowledge of Christ to each other and to the world. Even as there has come to us an Education from heaven bringing with it eternal life, we are to, in turn, take that education to others. This kind of education is not merely rote knowledge. It is not merely a set of facts. It is a lifestyle. It must not only be internalized but externalized.

Fifth, **before we can be teachers, we must be learners**. We must train ourselves to be learners. We must never presume, even as we preach and even as we teach, that we need not sit at the feet of Jesus. The incarnation of education, or us being like our Teacher come from God, begins and continues by sitting at the feet of Jesus... learning from him. Everyone is to participate in educating himself or herself at the feet of Jesus. This is a corporate church activity.

Sixth, we will sit at Christ's feet because **it is there we find the ultimate nourishment for our souls**. To be a community of learners is to prize Christ's teaching above all else because it is in Christ's teaching that we find true wisdom and meaning for life. Christ and his teaching are our

portion. If we are to inherit eternal life, if we are to enjoy sustenance at Christ's banquet table, it must be through what we learn at the feet of Jesus.

Seventh, **the student who is fully trained will be made complete in the form of his teacher.** He will look like, act like, think like, and desire like his teacher. A true disciple is one who does not see himself above the Teacher come from God. Rather, the true disciple places him or herself at the feet of the Teacher and in so doing, will be conformed to the image of the Teacher. Those true disciples who place themselves at the feet of Jesus as the one thing necessary for inheriting eternal life are in the process of being made complete as Christ's image bearers. Thus, as the church engages in the educational process, Christ is fulfilling in the church the original creational purpose of man as image bearer.

Tonight, before we begin our Q & A with the elders, there are two things I would like to do. The first is to read a passage of scripture that encapsulates what it means for us to develop our Adult Bible Education in light of Christ being the Teacher of His learning community, the church.

Luke 24 beginning with verse 13... this is the familiar story of Christ's appearance to 2 disciples on the road to Emmaus after his resurrection. This entire story is a fascinating one. This is the story of two opposing interpretations of the resurrection and only one of them is right. Two disciples headed toward Emmaus are quite distraught. As Luke sets the scene, the reader is given a bit of information that the two walking on the road don't have. The person who joins their conversation, which Luke says is more of an argument, is Jesus. They don't know it. The reader knows it. In fact, the reader is clued in that "their eyes were kept from recognizing Jesus". That is a very important phrase for our brief consideration (and by the way, it is a reference back to the parables and the question of who could or couldn't "see" their meaning, as well as the many passages in Luke which reference Christ talking about "seeing" and "sight"). In fact, the language here suggests that their being kept from realizing who Jesus is is supernatural; the scales on their eyes have been placed there by divine intention.

Jesus joins the conversation and they explain to him the reason for their discouragement, which is the events of Christ's crucifixion and reports of a resurrection. As they explain themselves, it becomes quite apparent to the reader that their understanding of things doesn't quite match what Luke has been chronicling since the very first verse of the book. Their disappointment of the way things have turned out is fueled by misinterpretation of the Old Testament. Their expectations of what a Messiah was supposed to be weren't accurate.

Jesus then says in verse 25, **“O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.**

The first thing we see here is **Christ, the teacher come from God – the teacher who began in Luke in the temple as a 12 year old boy among men, interpreting the Scriptures** for two men whose eyes have been closed. The closing of the eyes speaks not merely to their recognition of Jesus on the road to Emmaus, but their recognition of Jesus in all of the Scriptures. If we would see Jesus in all of the scriptures, we must have Jesus to interpret for us. Christ came teaching. Christ came interpreting.

Let's continue to read Luke 24. Verse 28: **“So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, 29 but they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with**

us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them. 30 When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. 31 And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. 32 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?"

The second thing we need to see in this passage is **Christ opening the Scriptures**. First he interprets, then he opens, unfolds, unpacks, explains. We normally think of opening the Scriptures to read... Christ opens the Scriptures in a way that interprets and illumines what is being said. This is what the scriptures are saying and this is what it means in light of these recent events. Note that word opened in verse 32... we will come back to that in a moment.

And the third thing that happens here is that **he communes with them**. This education from scripture cannot be separated from Christ's communion in a relationship with his disciples. This isn't knowledge for knowledge sake. Christ has a bigger purpose for his disciples in mind as he interprets the scriptures. The endpoint for Christ educating them in all of the scriptures has its endpoint in communion with the risen and soon to be exalted Savior.

The fourth thing that happens here is most obvious by now: "**their eyes were opened** and they recognized Jesus". The order of this story is not a mistake. They could not recognize Jesus or see his resurrected glory until their interpretation of the Old Testament had been corrected. Their recognition of Christ, their apprehension of Christ in all of the scriptures is entirely dependent on Christ's interpretation, Christ's explanation, and Christ's communion with them. It is through communion and through the Word that Christ is recognized. There is a direct correlation between Christ opening the Scriptures and their eyes being opened. That word opened is again used in the next story related by Luke.

In a parallel story just a few verses down with the rest of the disciples, it says Christ "**opened their minds** to understand the scriptures". There is an obvious parallel between the eyes that were opened and the minds that were opened. The scales come off the windows to the soul for them to see Christ. But don't miss the other parallel... recognizing Jesus in verse 31 with "understanding the scriptures" in verse 45. Those parallels tell Theophilus, the early church and us this: to recognize Jesus is to understand the scriptures and to understand the scriptures is to recognize Jesus. Jesus cannot be understood, he cannot be communed with any other way than to recognize his image all over the scriptures.

All of that to say this: Adult Bible Education and the theological education it provides are all about recognizing Jesus in ALL of the text of scripture in order that we might have fellowship and communion with Him. **If we would see Jesus, if we would recognize him for who He is and what He did, if we would have communion and fellowship with him, we must be about the business of interpreting him and explaining him in the text.** This is the task that we have been given. It is not education for education sake. It is an education for the sake of communion with Christ. We have missed the point of Adult Bible Education and the Biblical Theology Study Center if we not showing each other Christ in all of the scriptures. In fact, I think I could speak for Pastor Russ, that this is true of all preaching and teaching. We have failed miserably in our task to proclaim the Word if we fail to show you Christ in all of the Scriptures. Our communion and fellowship with Christ (and by implication, with each other) has no meaning unless the scales of our eyes have been removed in the preaching and teaching of Christ in all of the scriptures.

The second thing I would like to do before our Q & A is to present a series of 20 propositions about Adult Bible Education's purposes for theological education here at the Chapel. These 20 propositions have been formulated around the mission and purpose of Adult Bible Education that we have outlined over the past few weeks.

1. God's revelation, Jesus Christ, is the starting point for Adult Bible Education.
2. The mission of ABE is to provide Christ-centered teaching and learning in order to equip and mature the community in Christlikeness so that the community is grounded in sound doctrine.
3. ABE's theological education is church-based.
4. ABE's theological education is integrated into all aspects of the life of the community.
5. ABE's theological education is for every community member, not just the elders.
6. ABE's theological education is a catalyst for spiritual growth, maturity, and transformation in the life of both teachers and learners.
7. ABE's theological education provides the development of Christian presuppositions that provide an interpretive framework for all forms of knowledge.
8. ABE's theological education counters the alternative education offered and propagated by worldviews and philosophies that are against or antiChrist.
9. ABE's theological education is a stewardship.
10. ABE's theological education works with the whole person, not only with a soul to be saved or a mind to be taught.
11. ABE's theological education trains leaders and teachers.
12. ABE's theological education is intentional facilitation of learning.
13. ABE's theological education utilizes the redemptive-historical hermeneutic.
14. ABE's theological education is a catalyst for the formation of Biblical values, motives, attitudes, actions, and beliefs in the life of the believer.
15. ABE's theological education is designed to build thinking Christians and leaders who can proclaim and defend the entrustment of the gospel (the whole counsel of God).
16. ABE's theological education is the process by which the content of Scriptures is shared with the community in the context of the church life.
17. ABE's theological education is serious ordered learning.
18. ABE's theological education is submissive to the centrality, primacy, and authority of the Scriptures.
19. The primary source of ABE's theological education is the Bible.
20. ABE's theological education is the vehicle by which Christ educates His church through the Spirit's illumination of the Word.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Not all, but some of these propositions are loosely based on ideas from the following:

Lawrence Richards, *A Theology of Education* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975)

Edward Hayes, "Theological Foundations of Education", in *The Christian Educator's Handbook on Adult Education*, ed. Gangel & Wilhoit, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993)

John Dettoni, "What is Spiritual Formation?", in *The Christian Educator's Handbook on Spiritual Formation*, ed. Gangel & Wilhoit, (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994)

Robert Pazmiño, *God our Teacher: Theological Basics in Education* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001)

Jeff Astley, "Definition, aims, and approaches", in *Critical Perspectives of Education* (Leominster: Gracewing, 1994)

James Michael Lee, *The Sacrament of Teaching* (Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1999)