

Christ Opens the Scriptures

"And they said one to another, Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?" – Luke 24:32

Summary:

The disciples recognised Christ's teaching by its effect on their hearts. His instruction does more than reach the ear: it awakens shame for sin, love for Jesus, zeal for his glory, and concern for sinners. Christ opens the Scriptures through three means. Providence gives biblical truth fresh beauty, sweetness, and force, especially in affliction. Faithful ministers apply general truth to particular needs and help believers see what they had overlooked. Above all, the Holy Spirit gives the light by which revelation is rightly understood. Therefore, believers should distrust self-sufficiency, ask God for wisdom, and acknowledge him in every way, confident that he will guide them even unto death.

Outline:

1. **Christ's teaching reaches the heart**
 - His words awaken conviction, love, zeal, and earnest concern for others.
2. **Providence illuminates the written Word**
 - Life's events, especially affliction, reveal Scripture's beauty, sweetness, and force.
3. **Faithful ministers apply divine truth**
 - Preaching brings distant or general truths home to personal needs and circumstances.
4. **The Holy Spirit supplies essential light**
 - Revelation and outward means cannot be understood savingly without his illumination.
5. **Wisdom must be sought from God**
 - Those who distrust themselves and acknowledge the Lord receive his faithful guidance.

Text

That is—we have discovered him. Why did we not recognize him earlier, on the road, by the way he spoke and stirred our hearts? His teaching is known by its effect: while other teachers reach only the ear, he penetrates the heart, filling it with shame for sin, abhorrence of sin, holy resolve, love for his Name, zeal for his glory, and earnestness to save sinners. He converses with us along the way and opens the Scriptures in three ways.

First, through his providences. As the word explains Providence, Providence illustrates the word. Many biblical passages reveal beauty, sweetness, and force only through certain events, often afflictions. These drive us to the Book, which we value most in trouble, and help us read with new eyes and feelings.

Secondly, through his servants, he replenishes ministers to serve others and gives them the learned tongue to speak timely words to the weary. David sought understanding in the temple; entering God's sanctuary gave him the clue to unravel the mystery that had confounded and distressed him.

Has preaching often resolved our doubts, dispelled our fears, and strengthened our faith and hope? It makes the general specific, brings the distant close, and gives significance to what once passed unnoticed. How often has the Church's Angel, like Hagar's, opened our eyes and shown us the well!

Thirdly, by his Holy Spirit: "He shall lead you into all truth." Revelation alone does not make the Spirit's influence needless. David had God's word, yet prayed, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." A dial tells time only when lit by the sun; a compass guides only in light. "In thy light we shall see light."

Here is a promise to guide and encourage: "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." Why do many continually go astray? They do not trust the Lord wholeheartedly, but rely on their own understanding.

This sermon is taken from William Jay's devotional, *Morning and Evening Exercises* (January 22, Morning), first published in 1854.