

Welcome to Route 66



Luke 24:-27

March 16th, 2014

We are beginning a new sermon series that I am really excited about. I call it Route 66, as we are going to take one book of the Bible each week for 66 weeks. Luke, chapter 24, would you stand with me as we read from God's word. There is no better passage to introduce this sermon series to you than Luke 24. Jesus is speaking to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. He had been crucified and now the third day, He's alive and He meets two of the disciples who have heard the news, but they don't believe He is alive. Their eyes can't see who He really is, but they have this fascinating encounter of meeting the risen Lord. They don't realize who they are talking to, and they are talking to Him about Him. And now Jesus begins to speak. The last verse is the basis of this series.

Scripture

"And he said to them, "O 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."

I think many of you realize that U.S. Route 66 (also known as the main street of America and the mother road) was one of the original highways in our U.S. highway system. It was actually commissioned a U.S. highway on November 11, 1926. The road signs that we are all so familiar with were not actually placed on the road until a year later. U.S. 66 stretched from Chicago, Illinois to Santa Monica, California; 2448 miles! The public

planners of that highway had the goal of connecting rural America together. U.S. Route 66 would not be completely paved until 1938 and it would be the first highway in America to be completely paved. It stretched southward through Illinois, into Missouri, into Kansas, then into Oklahoma, across Texas, into New Mexico, Arizona, through Southern California, and it finally reached the coast of the Pacific. The first fast burger drive through restaurant was established on Route 66. By the late 1930's, you could not count the number of vehicles that was using Route 66 to get to Southern California. When Los Angeles hosted the Olympics for the world in 1932, they advertised throughout the country to take U.S. 66 to get there and the economy of small town America thrived, partly because of U.S. Route 66. But then something happened. In 1956, President Eisenhower signed the interstate highway act. He had been influenced by the Autobahn in Germany. He also remembered when he had to take a truck across the United States in 1919 in a truck convoy of the U.S. Army. He believed it was actually in the best interest of our national defense to have an interstate highway system. The planners of our interstates began to by-pass rural towns, and all of a sudden, Route 66 began to diminish. On June 27, 1985, it was actually decommissioned from our U.S. highway system. America wanted to get where it was going, and we wanted to get there as soon as we could get there. At that time in the life of an American, it wasn't about the journey to the destination, it was about the destination; life didn't start for you until you got there. We had no regard for the consequences that the interstate highway system would play on rural America.

In 2006, Walt Disney released a Pixar animation movie entitled Cars. The motive of that movie (besides for Walt Disney World to make money, of course) was to picture what the interstate highway system did to small towns in America. 'Lightning McQueen' had tied for the Piston Cup Championship and there was going to be a tie breaker in Los Angeles. He is on the East coast and he and his hauler, 'Mack,' are going to drive all night long to get there. Exhausted, Mack drifts off and is startled by a gang of street racers, causing the sleeping Lightning McQueen to roll out of the back of the hauler. When McQueen wakes, he tries to find Mack and starts chasing after him, only to find that he is chasing the wrong semi and he

ultimately winds up in Radiator Springs. He doesn't want to be there; there is nothing in the town. Because of some mistakes he made, he ends up before the law and gets charged, and he must serve community service. He must pave the street in town. He messes it up and has to redo it, so he is there for several days. While he is there, he meets 'Mater' the tow truck, (you got to love Mater) who befriends Lightning, even though Lightning doesn't want a friend. All he wants to do is to get to the Piston Cup Championship, but a little Porsche named 'Sally' catches his attention. There is a scene in the movie where Sally takes Lightning through U.S. Route. 66, and then he begins to see what interstate 40 actually did to many of the western towns along U.S. Route 66.

As a pastor, I find it amazing how society today actually mirrors what was happening in the 1950's and 1960's. Not economically, because we have all adjusted to the interstate highway system, but spiritually. In the 1950's and 1960's, we wanted to get in our vehicles and get where we were going quickly. We were into being there, with no regard to the consequences to other people. Today, in America, we are living in a society that wants what it wants and wants it now, with no regard to the consequences to other people. It seems to me that for the first time, perhaps in the history of this country, what God said to the nation of Israel in Judges is what He could say about America: *and everyone did what was right in their own eyes*. But what many Americans find so right in their own eyes, God calls evil; He calls it sin. While we still live in the Bible belt of America, for the first time, we are living in a society that is spiritually by-passing the Church of Jesus Christ. Spiritually, society, and many church members, are by-passing the authority of God's Word and are no longer building their lives around the truth of what God has revealed to us in His Word.

It is not the purpose of this sermon series to try to save the Church; it is the purpose of this sermon series to confront people with the reality of the great salvation that God has engineered for us in and through His Son, Jesus Christ. In Psalms 119:9, David asked this simple question, "How can a young man keep his ways pure?" He then answers, "By guarding it according to the Word." Then, he made that famous statement that we say in Bible school every year; I will hide His Word in my heart that I may not

sin against God. David saw a direct relationship with having the Word of God planted deep within him and it affecting his life. He said, I will make it "a lamp unto my feet, and a light upon my path." That may have been the heartbeat of King David, but it no longer seems to be the heartbeat of society. It doesn't even appear to be the heartbeat of many Christians in the Church. In Psalms 119:136, David cried out, "My eyes shed streams of tears, because people do not keep Your law."

I am praying that by the time Route 66 gets toward its completion, instead of some in the Church condemning the world and trying to act like we don't understand how people can live the way they live and want to do the things they do, we can come to grips with where our neighbors and our society really are. And instead of it causing us to rise up in judgment against them, it might cause us, like David, to shed some tears when we begin to think about our neighbor, family member, or friend, not just spending eternity without Christ, but living in this world without Him right now.

Route 66 is not going to be about information; it's going to be about transformation. It's not going to be a sermon series about the book of God; it's going to be a sermon series about the God of the book. It's not going to be a sermon series that has the aim to fill the seats of the Hardin Baptist Church, but to get the people who are in the Hardin Baptist Church on their feet to live out the life change of Jesus Christ to a lost and dying world. There was a time in our history when you and I were called the people of the book and when that phrase was used, it was talking about a certain group of people in a certain church who were known with the reputation of everything they did. It came from the book and that book was the Bible. My granddaddy Bogard was the first one to tell me we are a people of the book.

Have any of you ever googled that statement, 'people of the book?' When I searched it, do you know what the first forty-five references came up? Islam. We're talking about a google search in Hardin, Kentucky that will turn up not Christians, but a religion that has no hope at all. I find that amazing. It absolutely blew me away.

Why is Route 66 important to us as a church? Let me remind you of a word that Paul wrote to Timothy. He told him to continue in the things he has learned, and to remember from where he had learned them. Then he mentioned how the sacred writings, our Old Testament, had actually made him wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Did you catch that? Not the 27 books of the New Testament, but the 39 books of the Old Testament. Paul told Timothy that these books have brought you to the realization that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, and your faith is in Him because of this. So get ready for this; sixty-six books in sixty-six weeks, but it's all going to be about the great salvation we have from God in Christ Jesus. I'm not going to be preaching on the family or the Christian life style. All those are good things, but we're going to be talking about the Church. For the next sixty-six weeks, we are going to show how each and every one of those books fits together. And the truth of that book, in its entirety, is God's rescue of man from sin and the great salvation He has brought us in Jesus Christ.

I want you to make sure you get this. The reason we're teaching this sermon series is to ultimately glorify God. But while we are glorifying God, we want to evangelize sinners and equip the saints of God. Jesus knew the Jews, like many Baptists, had a love for Scripture. When He was confronted by them, He said you're searching the Scriptures and in them you think you have eternal life, but the Scriptures are they which testify of Me. That's the same thing Paul told Timothy, that the purpose of your Bible is ultimately about a person, and that person is Jesus Christ.

Please make sure you know the person of Jesus Christ. Don't be without the 100% confidence and assurance that there has been a time when you have turned from a life of sin, put your faith and trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross, you have identified that through believer's baptism, and you are in a daily walk with Him. This is what Route 66 is going to be about.

Paul actually told Timothy that Scripture is God breathed, ***theopneustos***. Most of our English translators, before the ESV, translated that word as 'inspired by God.' But our English word, *inspire*, means 'to breathe into.' Our Bible has been breathed into, but before it was breathed into the men

who wrote Scripture, what Paul wants us to know is that it is 'breathed out.' Its origin is not man; its origin is God. So while we go through these sixty-six books in sixty-six weeks, yes, we are talking about a book that is human, but we are also talking about a book that is God's. We believe it to be the very Word of God. Paul told Timothy that it's profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. I like what Warren Wiersbe said. I read this when I was a young man. He said these four categories talk about what is right, what is not right, how to get right, and how to stay right. Imagine for sixty-six weeks, being in the Bible and its purpose is to be profitable to us who know Jesus. It is going to teach us what is right, what is not right, and if we're not right, how to get right. Then, once we get right after not being right (and we've all been there) it's actually going to teach us how to stay right. What is the purpose, ultimately? 2nd Timothy 3 says so that the man of God, the Christian, the believer, the disciple, the follower of Christ, may be competent. Whoa! There has been a lot of damage done in our incompetency as Christians. Maybe zeal was there, but some of us have used this as a sword instead of letting God use it as a sword, so that we'll be competent, we'll be equipped for every good work. Meaning, if we truly become a people of the book, if society would become a people of the book, that because this book points us to a person we can live in a daily relationship with, then ultimately, we are prepared for every situation life throws at us.

In Psalms 119, David talked about how he was a young man, but that he was basically living life better than many old mature people. Why? Because he had built his life around the Word of God. It is still the number one best seller in America, and yet, according to Gallup poll, only three in ten Americans read from it. The poll was done across America and 60% of Americans could not name the four gospels. We are living in a society today where the Bible is used just like a lot of other things, setting on our mantle and on our bars and on our tables; it is just to decorate the house. I mean, it has the names of granddaddy and grandma, who they married and when they married, and yet, this is the book that according to Jesus when He was talking to the Jews, He said you're searching the Scriptures. He said, you say you believe in Moses, but if you believed in Moses you would believe in Me because Moses wrote about Me. When is the last time

you read the first five books of the Bible and said whoa, there's Moses talking about Jesus; this is so cool! Do you remember Phillip? He was one of the first deacons in the Church and he was so excited! He was preaching in a big city, lives were being changed and the Spirit of the Lord told him to go out into the desert. He goes out into the desert, and what is the last thing you would expect to find in the desert? Water and people, and he found both. He found a man from Ethiopia, secretary of the treasury of the queen, who had been to Jerusalem to worship and was returning in his gold plated chariot, and he is reading from Isaiah. He had been to Jerusalem to worship God and is now reading Isaiah and he doesn't have a clue who this is talking about. All of a sudden the Spirit of the Lord says to Phillip to go join thyself to the chariot. He starts running beside the chariot and the man looks out the window and sees a man running beside him. That had to flip him out! Phillip hears him reading the Old Testament and asks him if he knows what he is reading. He said, how can I unless somebody guides me? Phillip said, if you'll stop this thing, I'll get in there with you and tell you what it is talking about. They stop the chariot and he gets in. The man has his Bible open to Isaiah, chapter 53, and he asked if this was talking about Isaiah or about somebody else. The Bible says that Phillip, a deacon, opened Isaiah 53 and told him about Jesus.

Now we don't expect people who don't know the Lord to get it, and we know God puts us in the path of people to help them get it. But boy, the story in Luke that blows my mind is those two fellows on the road to Emmaus. They had been in Jerusalem and had seen Jesus die, but they did realize that this is what Scripture had talked about! The Messiah must come, He must suffer, He must die, and He is going to return to His glory. But when He died that day, they suddenly realized that they had pinned their hopes on Him and He is dead. And when He died, their hope died with Him. They are now returning home, and Jesus appears. Now, their eyes are fixed where they can't recognize Him and they are talking to Him about Jesus. Can you imagine that? Wouldn't you love to be with somebody who had heard about you and they start talking about you, but don't know that it is you? So you are going to hear what they really think about you! These guys are crushed, and they begin to question Jesus. Where have you been? Are you the only guy in Jerusalem who doesn't

know what just happened? Do you know what He did? He said, "Oh you foolish ones." Now, He's talking about people who claim to be followers of Christ. He said, Oh, foolish ones, why do you not believe what the prophet said? He is again referring back to the Old Testament.

I am telling you all of this so that you will not be surprised when we go through the first thirty-nine books of the Bible. They are not written to be a history of the nation of Israel. They are being written to be the history of the God of Israel. The God who took nothing and created everything. And He had the right to give a piece of land to a group of people that He had called into being for the very purpose of bringing about the birth of His Son so that salvation would not be just for one people, but so that salvation would be for all the peoples of the earth. The prophets talked about that salvation according to Jesus.

Jesus went on to say, was it not necessary that the Messiah suffered? How can you be a Jew, read your Old Testament, and not understand that the Messiah who was going to come was going to suffer? He was going to give His life for ransom for others, and then you, standing on the authority of God's Word, reject Him! Jesus said, was it not necessary, didn't the prophets talk about the necessity of the Messiah suffering and then He would rise to His place of glory? And then to me, one of the most amazing verses in the Bible says, "Beginning with Moses and the prophets..." Back then the Jewish Bible did not have the books in the order that we have them. The Pentateuch was first, then the Prophets, then the Wisdom Literature, and then the Writings. So beginning with Moses, the first books of our Bible, and then the prophets, but it doesn't stop there; it says in every Scripture, "He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."

Hermeneutics is the science by which we study the Bible. If you are a Bible student, you don't just pick this up and start reading and go by your own rules. There are some rules that we must follow when interpreting Scripture. This word that Jesus uses here is where we get our English word, hermeneutics, from. So Jesus took the Bible, opened it up, and He began to clearly explain from the Old Testament all of those places that was ultimately talking about Him. After that, their eyes opened and He

goes on His own way. They try to get Him to eat with them and when Jesus leaves, they say, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?"

Our prayers as a staff and those of us who will be preaching this series is that there is a burning in our heart as for sixty-six weeks, we open each of the sixty-six books and ultimately talk about the great and grand salvation that God has given to us. May there be a freshness in the saints of God as we open Genesis and ultimately see that He is 'the promised seed.' Then, we will open the book of Exodus and see Him as 'the Passover lamb,' and then in Leviticus as we see Him as 'the offering that was made on the Day of Atonement.' In Numbers, He is 'the brazen serpent.' In Deuteronomy, He is 'the prophet greater than Moses.' In Joshua, He is 'the captain of our salvation.' In Judges, He is 'the judge of the earth.' In Ruth, He's 'my kinsman redeemer.' In Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, He is 'the King of kings and He's the Lord of Lords.' In Ezra, He is 'the Temple.' In Nehemiah, He's 'the Gate that leads into the city.' In Esther, He is 'the Provider of our salvation.' In Job, He is called 'the Redeemer.' In Psalms, He is 'my shepherd.' In Proverbs, He is 'a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother.' In Ecclesiastes, He's 'the Creator to remember in the days of thy youth.' In the Song of Solomon, He's 'the Lover of my soul.' When we get to the prophets, we can open Isaiah and find Him to be 'the virgin born suffering servant.' In Jeremiah, He is 'the righteous branch.' In Lamentations, He is 'the One whose compassions are renewed each and every morning.' In Ezekiel, He 'sits in the Temple.' And in Daniel, yes, He's that 'fourth man in the fiery furnace.' In Hosea, we're going to see Him as 'the Son called out of Egypt.' In Job, He's going to 'pour out His spirit upon all flesh.' In Amos, He's going to be 'the reconstruction of the Tabernacle of David.' In Obadiah, He's going to 'usher in the day of the Lord.' In Jonah, He's going to be 'prefigured in His death, burial and resurrection.' In Micah, He's going to be 'born in Bethlehem of Judea.' In Nahum, He's going to be 'the avenger of my soul.' In Habakkuk, He's going to be 'the Holy One of Israel.' In Zephaniah, He's going to 'bring in the kingdom blessed.' In Haggai, He's going to be 'the chosen servant of Yahweh.' In Zachariah, He's going to 'stand on the mount of Olive.' In Malachi, He's going to be 'the sun of righteous who rises with healing in his wings.' Can

you imagine the burning in the disciple's hearts as Jesus opened up the Scripture to who He was? But Jesus only had thirty-nine books that talked about Him then. Today, we believe all Scripture is still ***theopneustos***, (God-breathed), which means we are going to have twenty-seven more. When we get to the New Testament, we are going to open to Matthew and He's going to be 'the King of the Jews.' When we get to Mark, He's going to be 'the servant who paid His life a ransom for men.' In Luke, 'the Son of man,' in John, 'the Son of God, the great I Am.' In Acts, He's going to be 'the ascended Lord.' In Romans, He's going to be 'justification of the sinner.' In Corinthians, He's going to be 'the first fruit of the resurrection.' In Galatians, He's going to be 'end of the Law.' In Ephesians, He's going to be 'our peace.' In Philippians, He's going to 'humble Himself and become obedient even to death; death on a cross.' In Colossians, He's going to 'tame the fullness of the Godhead body.' In Thessalonians, He's going to be 'the returning Lord.' In Timothy, He's going to be 'the mediator between God and man.' In Titus, He is going to be 'our blessed hope.' In Philemon, He's going to be 'our forgiveness.' In Hebrews, He's going to be 'the great priest after the order of Melchizedek.' In James, He's going to be 'the Lord of the Sabba.' In Peter, He's going to be 'our inheritance.' In John, He's going to be the 'incarnate Lord.' In Jude, He's going to be 'the one Lord God.' In the final book, the book of Revelations, He's going to be 'the lion of the tribe of Judah!' He's coming as the bridegroom for His bride. He is now seated on the right-hand Throne of God, but one day He's going to leave Heaven, and He's coming, riding on a horse on the clouds of the earth, and He's coming for His Church! Everything we ultimately lost in the garden, we are going to regain in the New Jerusalem of God when we reign with him forever and ever in a new Heaven and on a new earth!

It's going to take us sixty-six weeks to get to that eternal place of restoration, but we are going to start in a place of ruin for man. This is one of the greatest opportunities God is ever going to give us to know, without a shadow of a doubt, that we, and all those we bring with us will hear what God has done for us in Christ Jesus, no matter which book we are in. We hope you will travel with us. It's not about the destination, it's about the journey. On this journey, may our friends come to know Jesus Christ and may we become more like the Jesus we are telling them about.