

Christ is risen!

After the Lord rises from the dead, he appeared to the disciples on many occasions before he ascended into Heaven. This morning we're going to talk about the encounter two disciples had with Jesus as they walked from Jerusalem to the town of Emmaus and what this has to do with you and me in our walk with God and with one another.

OPENING PRAYER

LUKE 24:13-35

That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem,¹⁴ and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened.¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them.¹⁶ But their eyes were kept from recognizing him.¹⁷ And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad.¹⁸ Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?"¹⁹ And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,²⁰ and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him.²¹ But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened.²² Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning,²³ and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive.²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see."²⁵ And he said to them, "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.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?"³³ And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together,³⁴ saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"³⁵ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

In the Gospel, we read, **Luke 24:13-16**, That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem,¹⁴ and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened.¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them.¹⁶ But their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

It is no accident that this encounter was preserved for our reading. There's a teaching here about faith, about where it comes from and how it is preserved.

Consider how the eyes of the disciples were kept from recognizing Jesus as He walked with them. They didn't make a decision not to see who he was. But the Gospel says, God himself prevented them from recognizing Jesus.

This story would not be helpful for you and me if Jesus simply appeared to the disciples, and said, "Hey, boys, what's happening?!" And they said, "Jesus! It's great to SEE You!" For you and I don't get to SEE Jesus. But if these disciples came to faith in their risen Lord otherwise, then they just might have discovered something which you and I can hold on to.

In the Gospel, **Luke 24:17-23**, (Jesus) said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. (Cleopas said to Jesus,) "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?"¹⁹ And he said to them, "What things?"

(And so they told him about how a great prophet had been crucified, and how) some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning,²³ and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive.

The two disciples are sad and sorrowful, but they should've been rejoicing! After all, they had heard the accounts themselves from the women who had seen the empty tomb and the angels, and there was Mary Magdalene who had personally seen and touched Jesus. But, alas, they refused to believe and chose instead to dwell in their misery. There's a strange and dreadfully dark kind of comfort found in wallowing in one's own sorrow.

In the Gospel, **Luke 24:25-27, (Jesus) said to them, "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.**

Jesus had a Bible study with the two disciples. He spoke from the Word of God, their common authority, and he showed them what was necessary for Israel's redemption.

But the disciples had this thing going on inside of themselves that played like a broken record: Kill the Romans and God will reign! Kill the Romans and God will reign! But the thought that God is in lockstep with man's most visceral, violent, bloody solution to the human problem couldn't have been more wrong.

God's ways are not man's ways. Jesus explained to the disciples that his own suffering was one of the main ingredients for this ministry of redemption. So many times he had explained this to them. But they were foolish and they were **"slow of heart to believe."**

In his Bible study with the disciples, maybe Jesus shared this passage from **Isaiah 53:3-5: "He is despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief....⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.⁵ But he was wounded for**

our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed."

Or maybe he revealed the meaning of **Psalm 16:9-10: "My heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. ¹⁰ For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let Your Holy One see corruption."**

Perhaps Jesus encouraged the disciples with words from **Ezekiel 37:12-14: "Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves.... ¹³ And you shall know that I am the LORD..., ¹⁴ And I will put my Spirit within you...."**

In the Gospel, we read, **Luke 24:28-29, (Jesus and the two disciples) 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.**

Notice how Jesus waited for them to invite him to stay with them after he had opened the Scriptures to them. Their relationship had taken on another dimension. When we bring the Word of God into our conversation, that is what can happen.

In the Gospel, we read, **Luke 24:30-32, When (Jesus) 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?"**

After Jesus left them, he removed from their eyes the blinders he had put there to prevent them from recognizing him. And they see, saying, **"Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while He opened to us the Scriptures?"** This is the reason this story is in the Bible. The disciples believed in Jesus BECAUSE OF THE SCRIPTURES.

It wasn't a miracle that brought the men to faith; it wasn't the physical appearance of the Lord; it wasn't signs and wonders. But it was the Word of God itself that created life-giving faith in the men's hearts.

So why did the Lord reveal himself physically to the two disciples? He did this to confirm what they already knew in their hearts and that they might give witness to the power of his Word to everyone they knew.

The two disciples returned to the others after their encounter with the Lord and proclaimed, "**The Lord has risen indeed!**" Indeed, he has risen, he has defeated sin, death, and the devil, and he has claimed you and me as his own.

The only thing now is whether or not we can believe these words are for us. I think it's kind of like winning the lottery. The first words out of anyone's mouth when they win are "No way!" They can't believe it. In the same way, we can't believe that our Lord is so generous, personal, loving, kind, and compassionate. "No way!" we shout, for we can't imagine a God who can love creatures such as ourselves. But he does, and the reason I can tell you this with confidence is because that's what the Bible says.

Even when you're selfish, God loves you, that's why he gave himself for you, for his generosity knows no bounds. Even when you're filled with self-pity, God loves you, for he gave his son up to the Cross, that he might bear our shame. Even when you're filled with self-importance, God loves you, for Jesus humbled himself, that we would be transformed into true kings and queens of the heavenly kingdom by his grace.

I know this is true because that is what is written in the Bible.

In the Bible, Jesus said, "**God is love.**" Let us rest in this love, in Christ's acceptance of us as his children this week.

In the Bible, Jesus said, "**I am the light of the world.**" Brothers and sisters in Christ, let us permit the Lord to be our light this week.

In the Bible, Jesus said, "**Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations.**" This week may you have the opportunity to share Good News with another person who really needs to hear it, in the name of Jesus. Amen.