

# Bible Study Notes

## The Road to Emmaus

4/21/20

Primary texts for today. The Luke text is the main passage, the Mark passage is an earlier account.

- Luke 24:13-35
- Mark 16:12-13

This week's study focuses on the time frame of the first day after Easter morning (the empty grave discovery). Luke's Gospel is the most detailed of the Gospels and this passage reflects that intent. Notice that not only is Luke's account more detailed, but he portrays the Disciples in a much more positive light. Mark's account says the Disciples "did not believe", and Luke's story portrays the Disciples believing that Jesus had risen. And then goes on to describe how Jesus came among them (next week's discussion).

### **Luke 24:13-35** (NRSV)

*<sup>13</sup>Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, <sup>14</sup>and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. <sup>15</sup>While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, <sup>16</sup>but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. <sup>17</sup>And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. <sup>18</sup>Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" <sup>19</sup>He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, <sup>20</sup>and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. <sup>21</sup>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 took place. <sup>22</sup>Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, <sup>23</sup>and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. <sup>24</sup>Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him." <sup>25</sup>Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! <sup>26</sup>Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" <sup>27</sup>Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. <sup>28</sup>As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. <sup>29</sup>But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. <sup>30</sup>When he was at the table with them,*

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*he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. <sup>31</sup>Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. <sup>32</sup>They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" <sup>33</sup>That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. <sup>34</sup>They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" <sup>35</sup>Then they told what had happened on the road.*

This event can be divided into four sections:

1. The meeting
2. Conversation
3. A meal
4. Return to Jerusalem

### 1. The meeting (Luke 24: 13-16)

- Two disciples from the "extended group" of disciples were apparently returning home after celebrating the Passover in Jerusalem.
- It is not clear why they are going to Emmaus, nor is it certain where Emmaus was. There is no Emmaus shown on the ancient maps with 7.5 miles of Jerusalem.
- Symbolically we may want to consider Emmaus as a place to escape life or terrible events. Luke may be drawing a picture of the two travelers wanting to escape the terrible events of the crucifixion.
- This is another story in the Bible where Jesus shows up unexpected. No one would predict that Jesus would go to a deserted highway to meet two followers not in His inner circle.
- The two travelers are kept from recognizing Jesus. You may notice the symbolism that people cannot recognize Jesus until they have personally interacted with Him.
- Note the irony that the travelers were discussing Jesus before Jesus joins them.
- This echoes many situations in the Bible where people entertain angels unaware.
- Luke uses this meeting to prompt a repetition of the Easter events.

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### 2. Conversation (Luke 24: 17-27)

- Jesus opens the conversation by asking the travelers what have they been talking about
- The irony is that the travelers assume Jesus knows nothing of what happened in Jerusalem, yet Jesus is the only person who really knows what happened.
- This gives Luke the opportunity to have Cleopas reiterate the events as the disciples understood (misunderstood) them.
- The Cleopas version of events had the Jewish leaders calling for Jesus' crucifixion and that the people loved Him. Not exactly how the passion unfolded.
- The travelers repeat the understanding of the followers that Jesus' body was gone.
- Again we get confirmation that the empty grave did not convince people of the full meaning of the Easter story – only that Jesus' body was gone.
- The travelers even watered down the appearance of the angels in the tomb by saying the women “had a vision” – not that they actually saw angels.
- The ending of Cleopas' story details their frustration and disappointment with the crucified Jesus. This dashed their hopes for a strong and mighty Messiah to rescue them from the Romans (and anyone else). Clearly they are not understanding Jesus' mission.
- When the travelers were done with their version, Jesus takes over the conversation.
- He is clearly disappointed with their lack of understanding and faith:  
*“Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared!”*
- He begins the process of revealing Himself and the true meaning of the Easter story.
- He opens their minds to the Scriptures so that they can understand how God's plan unfolded over the centuries.
- Luke is using this monologue as a way to reinforce and validate Jesus as the Messiah, Lord and Savior of mankind.
- Jesus' words reinforce the theme that Jesus going to the Cross and rising from the dead was to fulfill the prophets and Scripture.

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### 3. Meal (Luke 24: 28-32)

- When the group got to Emmaus, Jesus went to travel on. This would have been expected with the social practices of the time. But the 2 travelers strenuously invited Jesus to join them.
- This sets up a scene where Jesus is the invited guest at a meal, which echoes other such events in the past.
- The only words that Jesus speaks in this section is the blessing of the bread.
- In the act of blessing the bread, Jesus' role changes from being the guest, to being the host.
- It is the action of breaking and blessing the bread that Jesus' true identity is revealed to the travelers!
- This blessing, breaking and sharing of bread is not the Eucharist (Holy Communion). However, it is an event which is sacred, in the same manner that when we celebrate Holy Communion that also is a sacred event.
- There is symbolism that when the travelers extended kindness to a stranger (Jesus), that in that act Jesus was revealed!
- In this passage Luke reinforces the theme that Jesus is revealed to us in the Scriptures and the breaking of bread.
- Another observation is that once the travelers recognize Jesus that He immediately disappears. This is consistent with our lives today. The events and times that Jesus appears to us are of short duration. We see/feel the Presence of Jesus just for a moment and then He is gone – on His way to the next person. Jesus does not stay in one place very long. He is always pushing on to the next person/situation.
- The last verse describes an experience familiar to us today. The travelers are very excited when they look back and realize that they were in the presence of the Lord!  
*“Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?”*
- Many, many times I have realized that in a situation or event in my past that God was present –I just didn't recognize Him at the time.  
Have you had this same experience?
- God's presence seems to always be fleeting, unexpected, something that we can't quite get a firm grip on. Yet very real.
- It took this personal interaction with Jesus for the travelers to recognize and believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior!

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### 4. Return to Jerusalem (Luke 24: 33-35)

- Jerusalem is the center of Luke's Gospel, this story begins and ends in Jerusalem.
  - Upon Jesus' identity being revealed the travelers "immediately" return to Jerusalem.
  - Luke records an urgency for the travelers to share their Good News with the others in their group. That the travelers would return to Jerusalem this late in the day seems unusual.
  - Experiencing the Risen Savior is not a private gift. It is such an exciting event that we want and need to share our excitement with others!
  - Once the travelers get to Jerusalem they first have to listen to the other disciples' experience with Jesus!
  - Sharing the words "Christ is Risen" is something the world doesn't understand. But to those who have personally experienced Jesus, whether directly, or through one of us; it is confirmation of a life-changing event in our lives and a source of everlasting hope!
  - Easter is not done on Easter Sunday morning. The Easter message echoes in our hearts and through our lives to eternity. These 40 days between Easter morning and Pentecost are dramatic events recorded for our benefit. Our lives will not be the same because of the empty grave on Easter morning!
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- **Next week:**
    - Events in the Upper Room
    - Luke 24:36-49
    - John 20:19-23