

## When There's Nowhere to Go

Series: Encountering Jesus (through the Gospel of Luke)

April 19, 2020 – Brad Bailey

Series #67 / Luke 24:13-35

Intro

Welcome ...such a privilege to have this time with you.

**For all who were able to join last Sunday... Easter Sunday... it was so significant to engage the reality of the resurrection... in the midst of this particular season.**

As noted last week... this is dynamic time to engage the events that took place long ago.

**Friday... death had reigned...and they were all self-quarantined in fear of that death coming to them. It connects to this time in which we live with death containing our lives in more ways than one.**

**It's a time in which we feel there's no place to go...in more ways than one.**

And that is right where we pick up today.

While we heard about the first discovery of the tomb being empty...and Christ having risen... it was only the start of the process of discovery.

And now he continues... **with perhaps the most interesting encounters with His risen presence.** As we walk through this encounter, I believe we can **hear the Lord's heart for us.** It's found in **Luke chapter 24.** At this point Luke has told us of the crucifixion and burial of Christ...and then the first discovery of the empty tomb and appearances.

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

<sup>13</sup> Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. <sup>15</sup> As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; <sup>16</sup> but they were kept from recognizing him. <sup>17</sup> He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?" They stood still, their faces downcast. <sup>18</sup> One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you only a visitor to Jerusalem and do not know the things that have happened there in these days?" <sup>19</sup> "What things?" he asked. "About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. <sup>20</sup> The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; <sup>21</sup> but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. <sup>22</sup> In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning <sup>23</sup> but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. <sup>24</sup> Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." <sup>25</sup> He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup> Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" <sup>27</sup> And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. <sup>28</sup> As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther. <sup>29</sup> But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. <sup>30</sup> When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. <sup>31</sup> Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. <sup>32</sup> They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with

us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" <sup>33</sup> They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together <sup>34</sup> and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." <sup>35</sup> Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

Luke 24:13-14

Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> They were talking with each other about everything that had happened.

One of the marvelous things about this event, is that it **does not involve** one of the **twelve primary** disciples. We **know little about these two... one is referred to as Cleopas (Claopus) and the other remains unnamed.** They are simply a part of the larger circle which had followed Jesus. Luke had just described how the women returned to the 11 disciples and the "others"... and these two are part of those others.

**They were "... talking with each other about everything that had happened."**

**So much had happened...** beginning with first hearing the news that one who could be the Messiah was on the scene...the promised hope of a savior from God. Then meeting him... the words he spoke... the Kingdom of God He proclaimed ... the power of signs and wonders he demonstrated... the love he showed. **Now at the climatic point** when he went to Jerusalem during the Passover... he is suddenly seized...beaten... condemned by sway of the religious leaders... and crucified.

In the power of Roman control, **crucifixion was the ultimate** way of declaring that "**the Romans run this place**" ... and the **most degrading and humiliating** spectacle imaginable. He's dead. The tomb was sealed... and with it all their hopes....all their vision of God at work in the world. To see Christ enter Jerusalem and suddenly become captive by the Romans.... was utterly devastating.

**Where were they going ? Emmaus... a seven mile walk from Jerusalem.**

They are **leaving behind the bitter memories** of Jerusalem and are **walking to the Village of Emmaus.**

A place that had **no prominence.**

It's **structures lacked any substance** that can be found today.

**In other words...they were going nowhere.**

**As Frederick Buechner describes,**

**"Emmaus was not so much a place--as a state of mind."**

Emmaus is the state of mind they were in **when they knew the death** that took place **on Friday...but not the larger reality that had emerged on Sunday.**

Emmaus is the state of mind we can be walking to **when we are living confined by a pandemic without larger story.**

**Emmaus could be any place we go to avoid dealing with life....and ourselves.**

**Wherever it may take us... it's ultimately the wrong direction... away from God.**

Luke 24:15-17

<sup>15</sup> **As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them;** <sup>16</sup> **but they were kept from recognizing him.** <sup>17</sup> **He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?" They stood still, their faces downcast.**

**What they didn't know was that Christ was right there with them....**

**We're not told how they were kept from recognizing him...** perhaps it involved the differences of his resurrected body... but clearly in this case God intended that they would not initially recognize him.  
**He was walking alongside them but they didn't recognize him.**

Jesus asks, "Hey guys, what's going on.... They respond... "Where have you been buddy?" And they go on to tell him all about who he is and what he did and how he dies. (It almost reads like a great sitcom gag.)

**We're told, "They stood still, their faces downcast."**

"Downcast" describes so well what happens when **disappointment causes us to look down** in such a way that it's **hard to see much else.**

And just like these disciples... we won't have very good ability to see things spiritually speaking. We can get too downward looking to realize God's presence.

**When there's nowhere to go...**

**1. Realize Jesus comes to those who are wondering and wandering.**

This is what he had always done... he came alongside those most aware of what life apart from God brought... to those **disillusioned and drifting... let down and left alone ...faint and forsaken ...vexed and vacant.**

This is the first day the king of creation has risen to life...and he comes to two nobodies going to nowhere.

**Why would Jesus come to these two** on the very **first day of his resurrection?**

> Because **he has no favorites...** he **cares for each and every one of us...** and comes to all who will welcome Him.

> **That is what Jesus was always about. God "with us" is God with each of us.**

**If you think Jesus isn't interested in you... look at Jesus with these two.**

**Comes to those who are willing to join the work of change.** The common quality of all who discovered Christ was that they understood and truly desired for this world to be different... they weren't so connected and committed to the status quo so as to resist the radical calling of Christ. We do well to open up that sense within our own souls.

**Luke 24:18-19a**

**18 One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you only a visitor to Jerusalem and do not know the things that have happened there in these days?" 19 "What things?" he asked.**

**God isn't afraid** to hear what we think is going on...what's inside of us.

He draws out their hearts for him...their hopes in him.

Now they share what they have been through.

The following section was not read...not place back on screen...simply referred in summary to)

Luke 24:19b-24

19 ...."About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. 20 The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; 21 but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place.

22 In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning 23 but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. 24 Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see."

What they describe is essentially this: that **their experienced didn't fit their expectations.**

Everything about this Jesus declared that God had actually come to save us...but then he suffered and died.  
[1]

We hear a truth that runs through every mention of the sacrifice... “that he had to suffer and die”...that is what set Peter back long ago...that is what no one could see as they headed to Jerusalem...that is what crushed them so low that even when initially hearing he had risen... they are perplexed than exuberant.

**God was at work... and they didn't enter it.**

**Why?**

**Misguided expectations.**

**They had embraced distorted expectations...and this cut them off from what God was doing... so much so that we crucified God rather than accept His will.**

What happened on that third day was **confusing because they didn't see the bigger picture...** they hadn't understood that this was not simply about restoring a nation... it was about restoring God's eternal purposes and plan.

What they perceived as God doing less than they expected...he was actually doing MORE than they expected.

How easily any of us can end up walking away in the wrong direction when our **misguided expectations aren't met...** when we **haven't sorted out God's plan from our presumptions.**

Jesus' response...

**Luke 24:25-27**

**25 He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.**

Strong words from this stranger...who is actually Jesus.

**Not the words that condemn them...but rather that correct them.**

**For thousands of years** God's hand in human history had **pointed toward the events** they had just experienced, so... **“beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.”**

**He reveals** the fulfillment of what God has **promised** and **predicted.** [2]

**Jesus is revealing the power that is held in the Word of God...** not simply as a book, but **as living promises... proclamations by God.**

He rooted his declaration with those key words... “as it is written...” because God had set forth his Word for humankind in the living testimony of the Scriptures.

**When there's nowhere to go...**

1. Realize Jesus comes to those who are wondering and wandering.
2. **Let Jesus expand our reality ...and reorient our expectations.**

Jesus doesn't dismiss their experience...he expands it.

He lets them share what they see...and then he **expands that reality...he enlightens it.**

And he does it with what had already been revealed...but they had not grasped.

**It's as if one is sitting in an 8 foot by 8 foot space...surrounded by darkness... so closed from hope and then a larger source of light reveals that in truth....they are in a much larger world...which they simply hadn't seen because they had been kept from that light.**

Story: Leah and I in Indonesia

When the creator reveals that **we who exist in time and space** are part of that which is **not bound by time and space as we know it.**

**And we can hear that the troubles that this current condition include are not the end... the troubles are not walls that define reality and close off hope.**

**John 16:33 (NLT)**

**"Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."**

Now this stranger is no longer just a stranger...has become a voice of insight... We read on...

**Luke 24:28-29**

**28 As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther. 29 But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them.**

It's as if Jesus was giving them an opportunity to decide if they would welcome him.

And when they welcome him... he comes and stays. [3]

And as a result...

**Luke 24:30-32**

**30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. 32 They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"**

We aren't told what caused them to recognize him... **perhaps** they had eaten with Jesus before and there was an **unmistakable way in which he broke the bread...** perhaps in lifting his hands to eat they **saw the scars** from his crucifixion... or perhaps the Lord simply chose this moment. What we do know is that **Christ is known in the midst of fellowship with him.**

As they realize it's Christ... he disappears... but knowing Jesus is alive is all the disciples need to understand.

Their hearts were ignited again.

The disciples saw their **road of despair** begin to turn into a **highway of living hope** as they said to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?"

This is the kind of news that one can't wait to tell....

**Luke 24:33-35**

**33 They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together 34 and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has**

**appeared to Simon." 35 Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.**

They got up and returned to Jerusalem...back to the place they had left...back to what God was doing. And there...they discovered with others...that Christ was meeting others as well. The risen Christ was loose.

**When there's nowhere to go...**

1. Realize Jesus comes to those who are wondering and wandering.
2. Let Jesus expand our reality ...and reorient our expectations.
- 3. Join others who have discovered a bigger world.**

Don't do it alone... they ran to share with others... and they all had encouragement.

We need to connect with those who know about a bigger world.

We need to connect with those who know that death does not reign....that hardship is not the end.

**Like logs on a fire... if separated they can burn out quickly.** But when gathered ...the fire grows.

Some of us know that we've **been out of the fire for awhile**.....and our hearts are not burning as easily as they could when encouraged by others.

I want to encourage you... **pick an online group**...and set apart that hour a week to be connected to others.

**Closing:** Invite us to consider where we are headed.

Are you feeling lost... wondering and wandering away?

PRAYER

**Notes:**

Luke is the only extended account of this but Mark gives a brief mention of just what Luke expounds on. (Mark 16:12-13)

1. Cleopas' in v.21 said: "... we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. The word "redeem" originally meant to liberate from slavery. Cleopas' thought all they needed was a change of circumstances ("If only Jesus could liberate us from Roman oppression!") Many of us begin looking for God – or start going to church, when our circumstances are difficult.

In v.26 Jesus sets things right...: "Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" Jesus is declaring that he has come to redeem the whole world...to defeat the powers that rule over all and reclaim God's rule. What happened on that third day was confusing because they didn't see the bigger picture... they hadn't understood that this was not simply about restoring a nation... it was about restoring God's eternal purposes and plan.

2. For thousands of years God's hand in human history had pointed toward the events they had just experienced, so..."beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself." There are some 48 predictions... some 350 statements in the Old Testament about the coming of the Messiah ...written over a period of 2,000 years. As some have said, 'God wrote an address in human history.' [2]

Christ fulfilled every one of them... including being a descendent of David... being born of a virgin...being one who would embody both God and man...being lifted upon his death... without a bone being broken... cursed and hung upon a tree... reigning over an eternal kingdom... and yes rising again. Many of these referred to the sacrifice and suffering of the Messiah who was to come.

3. God will not force his way into your life. He may break into our circumstances...may come knocking on the door of our lives... but He only enters and stays if we welcome Him.

John 14:21-23

"He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him. ....and we will come to him and make our home with him."