

Title: Walking the Emmaus Road  
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Texts: Luke 24:13-35  
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## Walking the Emmaus Road

**[Proposition: We can truly and deeply know the Risen Christ—through the Scripture and through the Lord’s Supper.]**

The appearances of Jesus in his physical resurrected body radically transformed the lives of the witnesses—and by the Holy Spirit these experiences propelled them to spread a movement that literally reshaped the world. But every Easter I find myself wrestling with this question, Given that we are not eyewitnesses to the bodily resurrection of Jesus, can you and I know the Risen Christ the way the eyewitnesses did? Put another way, how do we move beyond knowing Jesus is Risen as a fact of history, a trivia night answer like Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin, to knowing the Risen Christ in this heart deep transformative way.

That’s what makes this story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus so interesting to me, because while it is a bodily appearance of the resurrected Jesus—his disciples do not recognize him because of his radiant white robes or glorious appearance. It says their hearts were set aflame when he explained Scripture to them, and that they came to know him in the breaking of the bread. So this passage says, “Yes. You can not only know about the Risen Jesus, but truly and deeply know Him—through the Scripture and through Lord’s Supper.

### I. We can know the Risen Christ through Scripture.

As these two disciples reflect on their experience in v. 32:

*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?”*

They do not say, our hearts were burning within us when we saw him in radiant white robes, or the scars in his hands and side—they say our hearts burned within us as “he opened to us the Scriptures.” While we can’t see the physical body of the Risen Christ, we can truly know Him—we have the Bible.

The Apostle Peter, who did see the Risen Christ, wrote in his first letter to a group of Christians, probably in Rome 1 Peter 1:23

*23 since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God;*

Born again not through seeing what he saw, but through the Word of God

Peter had also been a witness to the Transfiguration (when Jesus revealed his glory on the mountain), and he writes in his second letter 2 Peter 1:18-19:

*18 we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. 19 And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to*

*which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts,*

By the way, he goes on to include Paul's writings in "the Scripture" in chapter 3:15-16.<sup>1</sup> So both Luke's story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus, and Peter – a witness to the Transfiguration and the Resurrection, are telling us that we do not have to be eyewitnesses, but through Scripture we can come to truly know Christ.

Illustration:

Before he was a Christian St. Augustine was a philosopher and basically a professor of rhetoric in the court of the Roman emperor. He eventually left the pseudo-Christian group called the Manicheans, and through his connection with Bishop Ambrose of Milan, became attracted to Christianity. Though he was attracted to Christianity, he was also entangled in a life where he couldn't see to let go of his immoral, somewhat hedonistic life. He became desperate and one day went out into his courtyard praying the words of Psalm 13 "How Long O Lord."

Suddenly he heard the voice of children singing "Tolle lege, tolle lege." Take up and read, take up and read. He picked up his Bible opening to Romans 13:13-14:

*13 Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.*

He writes:

I wanted to read no further, nor did I need to. For instantly, as the sentence ended, there was infused in my heart something like the light of full certainty and all the gloom of doubt vanished away

Now I may be telling you things, pointing you to passages you already know, but what is your interaction with Scripture actually like? When you read it are you just learning historical data about Christ, or are you coming to know him more and more. Does your heart burn within you as the truth of the Gospel becomes real to you?

Or maybe you aren't sure you believe any of this, you have assumed the Bible is repressive, or irrelevant, or in your experience boring. You read, and it does nothing for you. Well, I believe our story shows us that to know Christ through Scripture, we have to approach Scripture the right way. There's two things here:

***B. To know Christ in Scripture, we have to recognize that the whole Bible is about him.***

Many people, Christians included, fundamentally misunderstand what the Scripture is. It is not primarily rules or instruction for living. It is not primarily a bunch of moral example

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<sup>1</sup> The author of Hebrews writes, 4:12:

12 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

stories. Neither is it an encyclopedia of doctrine. In this passage the Lord Jesus tells us what the Scripture is about. Look at v. 27:

*27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.*

Later after these two disciples return to Jerusalem and to the eleven and tell them their story, Jesus appears in the midst of all of them and v. 44:

*44 Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”*

So in the opinion of Jesus, What are the books of Moses about? What are the prophets about? What are the Psalms about? They are about him. From beginning to end, the story of Scripture is the story of God at work in the world to redeem and rescue his people from sin and death. On every page the OT foreshadows, prophesies, and prefigures the culmination of God’s plan: the sending of his own Son into the world to die and rise again.

It is this type of interaction with Scripture that warms the heart and allows us to know the Risen Christ. In his commentary on this passage, N.T. Wright puts it this way:

Only when we see the Old Testament as reaching its natural climax in Jesus will we have understood it. Equally, we will only understand Jesus himself when we see him as the one to whom scripture points, not in isolated prooftexts but in the entire flow of the story. And, when we grasp this, we, like Cleopas and Mary, will find our hearts burning within us.<sup>2</sup>

The second part of seeking

### ***C. To know Christ through Scripture, we have to humble ourselves***

This doesn’t come naturally to us, we experience the whole world through our own eyes, as if we were the main character in a movie or the hero in an FPS – naturally we understand and process everyone and everything in terms of how it relates to me. Scripture tells us God brings down the proud, but gives grace to the lowly.

When Jesus asks them about what they’re talking about, Cleopas responds critically, almost sounding sarcastic, in v. 18 to Jesus’s question:

*“Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?”*

Cleopas then recounts the events of the trial and crucifixion, and even the initial reports of resurrection—and his assessment is found v. 21:

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<sup>2</sup> Tom Wright, [\*Luke for Everyone\*](#) (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2004), 297.

*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.*

“We had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel” in other words, we had hoped, but now we know that he isn’t. One commentator says, here Cleopas comes close to those who mocked Jesus at the crucifixion: “He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One.”

Jesus responds to Cleopas with strong words in v. 25-26

*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?”*

Do you see how Cleopas’s words smack of pride? God didn’t do what I thought he should in the way I thought he should. If you read the Bible and it makes you puffed up, you’re doing it wrong. If every time you go to Scripture all you see is how bad other people and you do not see Christ’s love those you despise, you probably lack humility.

The need for humility is reinforced even more in v. 16 and v. 31. When Jesus appeared they were kept from recognizing him, and only when God “opened” their eyes could they see.

So if we would know Christ in Scripture we have to begin by humbling admitting that the Bible isn’t about us or our agenda, we don’t know as much as we think we do, and we are dependent on God to open our eyes so that we can know Jesus through Scripture.

Illustration:

You folks who were at the last Church In the Park have already heard this story. But, a few weeks back I was having a lot anxiety and so I went for a walk hoping to calm down and release some of the stress. One thing I had been stressed about was prepping for the message for CItP that weekend, so while I walked I was listening to a talk on Matthew 11:28 which was my text. When that talk was over I kept walking and all my anxieties started to flood back in, and then suddenly it hit me like a bolt of lightning:

*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.*

In that moment I knew that promise was true, that Jesus was alive and wanted to take my burdens. I repeated this to myself several times and I began to weep. I felt my anxieties and stress lift, and I felt the assurance of God’s love and compassion and care for me right there on the sidewalk. The point in telling you this is that it was that Scripture that did that work in me.

So this passage teaches us **we can know the Risen Christ through Scripture.**

For many of us here that whole first point is probably a welcome reminder, but familiar territory. But something else really stood out to me from this passage that probably isn’t as familiar.

**II. We can know the Risen Christ through the Lord’s Supper**

I believe you can see this in verse 30-31:

*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.*

Now some will point out that this scene on the road to Emmaus is not technically a Communion service. Jesus doesn't re-state the Words of Institution: This is my Body, This is my Blood. No cup is mentioned, and these disciples were not part of the Twelve who were there at the Last Supper with Jesus... Those are all fair points.

But the echo of the Last Supper in Luke 22:19 is hard not hear:

*19 And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."*

In both cases, he took, blessed/gave thanks, broke, and gave. Moreover, Luke will tell us in his second Volume, the book of Acts, in 2:42: that "the breaking of the bread" was one of the central elements of the early Christ movement and there he clearly means the Lord's Supper. So, even if this scene in Luke 24 is a not a "Eucharist" per se, it certainly seems like Luke wants us to be thinking about the Supper. This makes v. 35 so pregnant with meaning:

*35 Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.*

When we come to the Lord's Table in faith, Christ is made known to us in a special way. It is a symbol of Christ and his benefits, and it is an instrument by which God makes those benefits real to our hearts. According to John, the Lord Jesus himself had said in John 6:56:

*Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.*

Similarly, the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:16, the Lord's Supper is a participation in the body and blood of Jesus.

Christ is present to us in the Lord's Supper as the Protestant Reformers sometimes called a "Visible Word." The Lord's Supper, the Eucharist, is in a sense an extension of Word, it takes the word of Christ: This is my body given for you. This is my blood of the New Covenant poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins -- tangible to our senses as we see, smell, touch, and taste.

Illustration:

We are not computers going through life processing 1s and 0s, we are embodied. Some of the most important things in life we come to know not through mere words, but through our senses. When my 18 month old looks at my wife, he already knows her love for him—though his verbal communication skills are not yet fully developed. He has come to know her through his

experience of her- through her voice (more the sound than the words). By seeing, smelling, tasting, and touching. Christ instituted the Lord's Supper so that we could likewise come to know him.

How do I know Christ is Risen, and his promise of forgiveness is true: I can see it, smell it, touch it, and taste it in the Supper—and as my senses apprehend the bread and the cup my spirit knows Christ and his benefits.

Illustration:

I heard a pastor tell a story of a little girl named Anna. Anna was growing up in the church and learning the stories of Jesus and when she was about three years old, she started asking her mom to take Communion. Week after week as she would come forward with her mom wanting to take communion, and the pastor would look at her mom and mom would say she's not ready, she doesn't understand, she's only three. Well Anna kept asking, so finally her mom said "When you turn four you can have communion" – thinking by then Anna would have become fixated on something else and forget about communion. But she didn't, when she was four she came forward with her mom, and the pastor again looked at mom and mom said she's still not ready. Anna wasn't having any of that, she started yelling, "I'm four! I want the bread! I want the bread!" Maybe she couldn't explain what was happening in the Lord's Supper, but she knew enough to know it was special, and she wanted to be part of it.

There *is* something special that happens in the Lord's Supper—and **in it we can truly come to know the Risen Christ truly and deeply.**

Today we walk our own Emmaus Road in the hearing God's Word and Breaking Bread at the table. Let us humble ourselves before God so that we might know the Risen Christ through Scripture and the Supper.

**Amen.**

### **Prayer of Consecration for Communion:**

All praise and glory is yours, O God our heavenly Father, for in your tender mercy, you gave your only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the Cross for our redemption. He made there, by his one oblation of himself once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world; and he instituted, and in his Holy Gospel commanded us to continue, a perpetual memory of his precious death and sacrifice, until his coming again.

So now, O merciful Father, in your great goodness, we ask you to bless and sanctify, with your Word and Holy Spirit, these gifts of bread and wine, that we, receiving them according to your Son our Savior Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, may be partakers of his most blessed Body and Blood.

### **Post-Communion Prayer:**

Almighty and everliving God,  
we thank you for feeding us, in these holy mysteries,  
with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood  
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ;  
and for assuring us, through this Sacrament, of your favor and  
goodness towards us:  
that we are true members of the mystical body of your Son,  
the blessed company of all faithful people;  
and are also heirs, through hope,  
of your everlasting kingdom.  
And we humbly ask you, heavenly Father,  
to assist us with your grace,  
that we may continue in that holy fellowship,  
and do all the good works that you have prepared for us to  
walk in;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,  
be all honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.