

# EASTER HITS DIFFERENT WHEN YOU'RE BARELY HOLDING ON

Easter Sunday: April 5, 2026

Pastor Brian

*"I feel hopeless, and I cry out to you..." (Psalm 61:2a, CEV)*

## Luke 24:13-34 (NLT)

<sup>13</sup> That same day two of Jesus' followers were walking to the village of Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> As they walked along they were talking about everything that had happened. <sup>15</sup> As they talked and discussed these things, Jesus himself suddenly came and began walking with them. <sup>16</sup> But God kept them from recognizing him.

<sup>17</sup> He asked them, "What are you discussing so intently as you walk along?"

They stopped short, sadness written across their faces. <sup>18</sup> Then one of them, Cleopas, replied, "You must be the only person in Jerusalem who hasn't heard about all the things that have happened there the last few days."

<sup>19</sup> "What things?" Jesus asked.

"The things that happened to Jesus, the man from Nazareth," they said. "He was a prophet who did powerful miracles, and he was a mighty teacher in the eyes of God and all the people. <sup>20</sup> But our leading priests and other religious leaders handed him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified him. <sup>21</sup> **We had hoped** he was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel. This all happened three days ago.

<sup>22</sup> "Then some women from our group of his followers were at his tomb early this morning, and they came back with an amazing report. <sup>23</sup> They said his body was missing, and they had seen angels who told them Jesus is alive! <sup>24</sup> Some of our men ran out to see, and sure enough, his body was gone, just as the women had said."

<sup>25</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "You foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures. <sup>26</sup> Wasn't it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his glory?" <sup>27</sup> Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

<sup>28</sup> By this time they were nearing Emmaus and the end of their journey. Jesus acted as if he were going on, <sup>29</sup> but they begged him, "Stay the night with us, since it is getting late." So he went home with them. <sup>30</sup> As they sat down to eat, he took the bread and blessed it. Then he broke it and gave it to them. <sup>31</sup> Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And at that moment he disappeared!

<sup>32</sup> They said to each other, "Didn't our hearts burn within us as he talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?" <sup>33</sup> And within the hour they were on their way back to

Jerusalem. There they found the eleven disciples and the others who had gathered with them,<sup>34</sup> who said, **“The Lord has really risen!”**

## **What Happens When You’ve Lost All Hope?**

1. You get **STUCK** in the story.

*“They were deep in conversation, **going over all these things** that had happened.” (Luke 24:14, MSG)*

2. You can’t see that God is **WITH YOU**.

*“In the middle of their talk and questions, Jesus came up and walked along with them. But **they were not able to recognize who he was**.” (Luke 24:15–16, MSG)*

3. Your heart is **TORN APART**.

*“Jesus said to them, “What are you talking about to each other, as you walk along?” **They stood still, with sad faces**.” (Luke 24:17, GNB)*

4. You tend to pull others into your **SUFFERING**.

*“Then one of them, Cleopas, replied, “You must be the only person in Jerusalem who hasn’t heard about all the things that have happened there the last few days.” “What things?” Jesus asked. “The things that happened to Jesus, the man from Nazareth,” they said. “**He was a prophet** who did powerful miracles, and he was a mighty teacher in the eyes of God and all the people. But our leading priests and other religious leaders handed him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified him.” (Luke 24:18–20, NLT)*

5. No matter how hard you try, you just can’t see how things **COULD CHANGE**.

*“**And we had our hopes up** that he was the One... **BUT** it has already been three days since all this happened.” (Luke 24:21, MSG/CEV)*

*“Some of the women from our group...went to the tomb early this morning and didn’t find his body. **They told us** that they had seen angels who said that he’s alive. Some of our men went to the tomb and **found it empty**, as the women had said, **but they didn’t see him**.” ” (Luke 24:22–24, GW)*

## **How to Find Hope**

1. **ADMIT** that I am my biggest problem.

*“Then he said to them, “So **thick-headed!** So **slow-hearted!** **Why can’t you simply believe** all that the prophets said?” (Luke 24:25, MSG)*

*“For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard.” (Romans 3:23, NLT)*

**2. BELIEVE that God had a plan before you ever had a problem.**

*“Don’t you see that these things had to happen, that the Messiah had to suffer and only then enter into his glory?” Then he started at the beginning, with the Books of Moses, and went on through all the Prophets, pointing out everything in the Scriptures that referred to him.” (Luke 24:26–27, MSG)*

**PETER:** *“But God knew what would happen, and his prearranged plan was carried out when Jesus was betrayed. With the help of lawless Gentiles, you nailed him to a cross and killed him. But God released him from the horrors of death and raised him back to life, for death could not keep him in its grip.” (Acts 2:23–24, NLT)*

*“All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God’s paths to follow our own. Yet the Lord laid on him the sins of us all.” (Isaiah 53:6, NLT)*

*“But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.” (Romans 5:8, NLT)*

**3. CRY OUT for God’s help.**

*“By this time they were nearing Emmaus and the end of their journey. Jesus would have gone on, but they begged him to stay the night with them, as it was getting late. So he went home with them.” (Luke 24:28–29, The Living Bible)*

*“As they sat down to eat, he took the bread and blessed it. Then he broke it and gave it to them. Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And at that moment he disappeared!” (Luke 24:30–31, NLT)*

*“But in my distress I cried out to the Lord; yes, I prayed to my God for help. [And] He heard me...” (Psalm 18:6, NLT)*

**4. DECIDE to follow Jesus!**

*“They said to each other, “Didn’t our hearts burn within us as he talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?” And within the hour they were on their way back to Jerusalem...” (Luke 24:32–33, NLT)*

*“...Peter’s [sermon] moved them deeply, and they said to him and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?” And Peter replied, “Each one of you must turn from sin, return to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; then you also shall receive this gift, the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:37–38, The Living Bible)*

*“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us  
**NEW BIRTH INTO A LIVING HOPE** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1  
Peter 1:3, NIV)*

## **NEXT STEPS**

**Receive the Hope of Easter!  
Celebrate Hope through Baptism!**