

## Three Roads

### *Road to Emmaus*

Luke 24:13-35

March 31, 2024

HDBC

Roads played a key part in the life and ministry of Jesus. Once he started His ministry it seems that He was always on the move, always on some road. The most important roads Jesus traveled were the ones directly connected with His death and resurrection. There are three key roads associated with these important events in His life.

**One took Him into Jerusalem.** It was a road that led to betrayal and arrest.

**One took Him to Calvary.** It was a road that involved suffering and death.

**One took Him to Emmaus.** It was a road to revelation and discovery.

**The last** two Sundays we've considered the first two of those roads. On this Easter Sunday we'll consider his walk along the ***Road to Emmaus***. Emmaus is not an important place when it comes to the Bible narrative. In fact, it is only mentioned in one verse in the entire Bible. It was a small village located about seven miles west of Jerusalem. Nothing happened in Emmaus, as far as the Bible story is concerned. But something really important happened on the ***road to Emmaus***.

**All four gospels** (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) wrote about the empty tomb on the Sunday morning after His crucifixion. They all reported encounters with the resurrected Jesus. These came to a variety of people in a variety of settings.

Paul verifies this in 1 Corinthians 15. Sometimes it was one person and at other times it was a group. Sometimes it happened in an enclosed space like the upper room and at other times it was outside. Sometimes it was in or near Jerusalem and at other times it was far to the north along the shore of the Sea of Galilee. There seemed to be no way to predict when He would show up and what He would say or do. Taken together these encounters provide overwhelming proof that Jesus was alive, even though everyone knew He had been killed.

One of those encounters happened on the **road to Emmaus**.

**A couple** of men who were followers of Christ were walking to Emmaus. Their hopes have been dashed. Their dreams shattered. Now it was time to pick up the pieces and move along with life. It had all sounded so promising, but they killed Him. And in doing so killed any thought that He was the Messiah. Then, the unimaginable happened. They met the king, very much alive and well. Let's walk through the text one part at a time. There are five.

### 1. The Conversation (13-14)

The two men are walking along the road to Emmaus. While they walk, they talk discussing the things that had happened over the weekend. Have you noticed that when you experience a life-changing, traumatic experience you cannot stop talking about. Even after you have said as much as you think can be said you come back again and again. **Experience a tornado. Meet a celebrity. You get the big buck you've been hunting for a few years. Find yourself in the middle of an active shooting situation.**

**These men** had seen their world turned upside down in a matter of hours. So, they talked about the details. Gethsemane, the arrest, and trials of Jesus. The scourging. The crucifixion and burial.

**They talked** of the events in Gethsemane, the arrest, and trials of Jesus. The crucifixion and burial. We can assume the sadness was easily seen on their faces as they tried to make sense of all that had happened. Maybe they wondered how they could have been so gullible. How could they have put such faith in Jesus.

**As they** walked and talked, they were in such deep thought that they probably paid no attention to others who were traveling the same road. They were just other people traveling the same road, but with a different history and perspective. At some point they noticed a stranger hanging close and listening.

### 2. The Stranger (15-24)

I'm calling Him a stranger because that's what He was to them. Luke makes it clear to us that this stranger is actually the resurrected Jesus. But they don't know this. There is an advantage to being on the outside, reading the narrative, rather than living it.

**After listening** for a few minutes, He asked the topic of conversation. They were surprised. How could anyone in Jerusalem not know about what had happened. The facts of the event should have been known by anyone there. **Cleopas**, one of the two who was named, quickly gave a summary of the events. Jesus, the Nazarene, who was a prophet, was framed by the religious leaders, and crucified by the Romans. No real details, just the facts.

**He then** shared why this was important to them. (21) They had hoped that Jesus was more than a man. Hoped that He was the messiah. But by now it is the third day. **It is interesting** that he made mention of the empty tomb that the women had found earlier that day. One of the great evidences of the resurrection of Jesus (the empty tomb) was not enough to convince these two disciples that Jesus was alive.

**Their hope was wounded**, and their faith fractured. But these were not completely dead. I see a glimmer of hope in the fact that they mentioned the empty tomb. I think this was more than a casual reference. There was a spark of hope that the empty tomb might yet be important.

**They did not** recognize the stranger as Jesus. Luke tells us their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him. This is a passive, suggesting that this was divinely caused. I think this is reinforced by Jesus' words. He didn't say, ***Hey guys, don't you know me? It's me, Jesus? What's wrong with you guys?*** Jesus had a reason for their clouded vision. He wanted to use the Scriptures to open their eyes.

### 3. The Teaching (25-27)

Jesus then comes to the rescue of these hurting, doubting disciples. He provided some clarity for them. Three parts.

#### 1) A Rebuke

He challenged these men for their lack of faith in not believing the prophets. He is rebuking them for not reading and trusting their Bibles. What was He speaking of? The Bible predicted the things that had happened. Where Jesus would be born. Where he would grow up. That he would be rejected, abused, and crucified. All that had happened as predicted. So, it was all part

of God's plan. Just because part of the plan is not as clear or easy to understand does not mean our faith should die.

## 2) A Question

Jesus then asked a question. Was it not necessary for the Christ to die? This was a discussion starter. Meant to make them think. It was also a reminder that the death of Christ was a part of God's plan. Not a mistake that needed to be fixed, but a significant part of the original plan.

## 3) A Survey

Verse 27 tells us Jesus began in Genesis and pointed out to them how their Bible (the Old Testament) pointed to Jesus. Jesus was helping them to see that all of Scripture points to Himself. It is all about Jesus.

If you open your Bible, you will always be able to find Jesus, either in the direct light, or at least standing in the shadows nearby. I would love to have been there when Jesus offered this exposition of Scripture.

## 4. The Revelation (28-32)

They arrived at the village and Jesus appeared to be moving on. As was the custom of that time and culture, they invited the stranger to spend the night with them. He consented. What can we glean from this? **Jesus will not force his way into anyone's home or life.** He comes in only when He is invited. If you have not invited Jesus into your life, please do so.

**Interesting thing** happened. He came into their home and became the host. Notice in verse 30. At the table He took the bread. He blessed it and shared it. At that point their eyes were opened, and they recognized him.

**Same thing happens in a life.** When you invite him to come in, he becomes the host. He takes charge. He comes in as Lord. You allow him to have full access to your life and full control over your life. It is when you invite him in that He fully reveals himself to you. There are some things that you will never understand about Him until He is on the inside. Once inside, Jesus revealed to these disciples just who he was. Note their response.

**They both began to talk at once.** Great excitement. Their hearts had been burning within them while on the road with Jesus and hearing him teach. They had been stirred, but just had not been able to identify the source.

### **5. The Confirmation (33-35)**

They had traveled 7 miles from Jerusalem. But they had to tell their fellow believers. They immediately made the return trip to Jerusalem. There they found the 11 disciples along with some other believers. When they got there, the place was a buzz with the exciting news that Jesus had appeared to Simon. They shared what they had witnessed.

Now there were multiple confirmations of the resurrection of Jesus. The news which at first began as a trickle was now flowing like a swift river.

They had trusted in Jesus and believed He was their Messiah, their King. But when a king dies his reign ends. At least that is the way it is with earthly kingdoms and human kings. As the darkness covered the land their King hung cold and lifeless on a Roman cross between two criminals. Their king was dead and with it were their dreams. And then they met the king, up close and personal; and very much alive. They would never walk that road again without remembering that life-changing encounter.

**Have you** had a similar life-changing experience? Have you met the risen Jesus? Not physically, of course, but in your hearts? He will come in if you ask Him. Maybe today for you has been like an Emmaus road. You have realized Jesus is indeed alive. If you cry out to Him to save you, He will. He will change your future destiny and your present life. Trust Him today, will you?

**Or maybe** you are like those two men. You are a Christ-follower, but your hope has been wounded and your faith fracture. Remember this.

*Because God is always in the picture, never lose hope. The things you hope for will often appear at unexpected times and in unexpected places. Our responsibility while walking on the road to Emmaus, after our hopes have been fractured and our faith challenged, is to watch and wait for Jesus to step in and bring clarity. He will.*

**An interesting thing happened** when then vice-president, George Bush represented the U.S. at the funeral of former Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev. Bush noticed what went unnoticed by many. It involved a silent protest carried out by Brezhnev's widow. She stood motionless by the coffin until seconds before it was closed. Then, just as the soldiers touched the lid, Brezhnev's wife performed an act that could only be seen as an act of courage and hope. It was a gesture that must surely rank as one of the most profound acts of civil disobedience ever committed: She reached down and made the sign of the cross on her husband's chest.

There in the citadel of secular, atheistic power, the wife of the man who had run it all, hoped that her husband was wrong. She hoped that there was another life, and that this life was best represented by Jesus who died on the cross, and was resurrected from the dead.

I don't know if her actions were a reflection of her heart. I hope they were. But this I know. Jesus is the only hope of life beyond this life. The only hope for her husband or anyone else to live beyond this life is Jesus. What she likely did not understand is that once you are in the coffin it is too late. Faith in the risen Jesus must happen on this side of death. It is never available on the other side.