



## LUKE 24:13-35 | All Hope is Restored in Christ

Sunday, April 19, 2015 — The 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter

<sup>13</sup> That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, <sup>14</sup> and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. <sup>15</sup> While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew 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 is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?” And they stood still, looking sad. <sup>18</sup> Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?” <sup>19</sup> And he said to them, “What things?” And they said to him, “Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, <sup>20</sup> and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up 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 happened. <sup>22</sup> Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, <sup>23</sup> and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even 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 him they did not see.” <sup>25</sup> And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup> Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” <sup>27</sup> And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

<sup>28</sup> So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, <sup>29</sup> but they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.” So he went in to stay with them. <sup>30</sup> When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. <sup>31</sup> And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. <sup>32</sup> 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?” <sup>33</sup> And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, <sup>34</sup> saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” <sup>35</sup> Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

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People don't like to be thrown for a loop. It is something that is in our DNA that likes to be in control, that likes to be “in the know” when it comes to events in our lives. And people can have a lot of different reactions to being thrown for a loop. Anger, frustration, apathy, or even

determination can result from confusion. And it seems that these disciples on the road to Emmaus were able to display the most common of all of them—sadness.

It's true. These men were disappointed. "And [Jesus] said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And [the disciples] stood still, looking sad." Their walk from Jerusalem was not as they had planned. They had been thrown for a loop. What they expected from their time in Jerusalem did not meet up with reality. And their faces and their demeanor showed it.

And it's at this point that we marvel at Jesus' love. "'Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?' And [Jesus] said to them, 'What things?'" It's hard to see, but love is there. Perhaps every time we read this we want to reach into the pages of Scripture and shake Jesus: "Just show them! Just reveal yourself! Why do you let them sit in their disappointment? What love is that?" But it is love, because like every lesson in life, the most effective way for a person to understand truly and completely what has happened is to experience it first-hand. So Jesus played "dumb." He wanted them to come to the realization that hope was not gone. That standing in front of them was the walking, talking, living epitome of hope. And so Jesus heard what they had to say.

"Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people..." They knew who Jesus was. They had seen the miracles. The widow's son, the bread and fish on the seashore, the wine from water. In fact, they were walking past Lazarus' hometown on this journey. How could someone miss the fact that Jesus was someone special, that he was someone that God had sent to his people? He had power over sickness and death...

"And how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him." But apparently not strong enough to stand up to these men. It was appalling! How could a man of God be put to death by God's men? It made no sense. Were they wrong about who Jesus was? Was Jesus simply a puppet, a tool of Satan that lured them into a sense of false security? The religious leaders of the day certainly didn't join the throng of worshippers. They wanted nothing to do with Jesus...did that make these disciples' devotion to the Christ that much more worthless?

"But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel." Perhaps, so. He certainly couldn't have been the Christ. How foolish they had been to follow this man. The Romans were still in charge, the oppressive laws of the Pharisees and Scribes still weighed down on them. And their hope was gone. They had nothing to show for it. There was no hope of life under this man whom they thought was the Messiah. Like so many before him, he was a sham, a crook, another phony looking for fame and fortune at the expense of the people. And they had been thrown for a loop.

“Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened.” They had held out hope. They had heard his prophecies. They still expected this man to rise—one last kernel of hope in such a difficult week. But even that didn’t come to anything. How foolish they must have felt! How could one man defeat death? How could one man possibly have done such things?

“Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive.” And to make matters worse, their very best friends had even encouraged the foolishness. The body was gone! It was heaping gasoline on the fire. Not only were their hopes dashed, but now someone had stolen the body. Could he not even have a decent burial? Was the agonizing and humiliating death not enough? Was the farce of a court proceeding too little? Now they couldn’t even honor their friend and teacher with a proper burial. And their hope became less and less...

“Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.” They were so desperate, so downtrodden that they didn’t even believe their good friends. And they had to see the disappointment for themselves. And it was true. His body was gone—and so was all hope in Jesus being the promised Messiah.

These men truly had been thrown for a loop! Think of the week they had had. Following their Lord into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, watching him as he turned over the moneychanger’s tables in the temple, sitting with him at the Seder Meal. Prayers and hymns in the garden. And then everyone was thrown for a loop. Betrayal by one of their own. Condemnation of the Son of God by men of God. Approval by the revolting Romans. And a humiliating death on the cross. What hope could there be?

And they looked at Jesus with sadness. And Jesus’ response: “You nitwits...” That’s really what the Greek says. “You feeble-minded...” “[You are] slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.” And there is Christ’s love. And there is where we are thrown for a loop! Think about it...for three years Christ had taught and preached about these three days. For three years these men had listened to Jesus point them to the Scriptures about who he was and what he was going to do. For three years Jesus had patiently taught them and led them. And then, at the fulfillment of all that needed to happen, these men—and his closest 12 disciples!—walked away from it all disappointed, dejected, and depressed. Could we have blamed Jesus for simply vanishing at this point and never coming back? Could we have blamed Jesus for giving these men a tongue-lashing for their unbelief? Could we have blamed Jesus for simply giving up and not making himself known? But he didn’t. He took these “nit-witted” men

and patiently pointed them again to Scripture. He allowed them to figure it out on their own. He gave them guidance through the Word. And he allowed the hopeless to find hope again.

He had them hooked. They kept walking and talking. They kept searching and seeing that what the Christ had done had fulfilled all of what was written about him. And they wanted more. “So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, but they urged him strongly, saying, ‘Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.’ So he went in to stay with them.” Again, Jesus’ love! He could have kept going. He could have let them figure it out completely on his own. But he didn’t. He wanted his disciples, his loved ones, to know exactly what the Scriptures said about himself. And he wanted them to see him for who he was.

“When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight.” Talk about being thrown for a loop! The man to whom they had opened their hearts, to whom they had been visibly disappointed, toward whom they had shown such hopelessness—it was this man who had been talking to them the whole time! What guilt they would have felt! What shame could have swamped them! What hopelessness they could have fallen into after talking directly to their risen Lord! After all, how nit-witted could they truly have been?!? How simple-minded and foolish were they, really?

But they didn’t fall into despair or depression. Instead, they were filled with excitement and joy: “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?’ And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, ‘The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!’ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.” They found comfort in Christ. They found hope in his Words. They found forgiveness in the meal he shared with them. They found love in his actions. There was hope in their hearts.

Dear Christians, have you ever experienced something like the Emmaus disciples? Have you ever been thrown for a loop? I know I have. If you’re anything like me, you like to be in control of your life. You like to have everything in order and planned out. And when someone or something gets in your way, it upsets you. It makes you angry, frustrated, or upset. And when plan after plan falls apart in your life, do you begin to lose hope? Do you begin to question God? Do you begin to think that something is wrong with your relationship with God? Do you begin to doubt whether God truly does care for you? It can be easy to fall into this snare of Satan. And do you ever wonder why? I know I do. And I’m sure you do, too. Too often we put the blame on someone else. It’s the situation that caused this to happen. It’s the people that were involved. It’s the timing. But the answer to the question “why?” is sitting right here, today. It’s you. It’s me.

Why do these things happen to us? It's because of us. It's because we're "nit-witted." It's because we're foolish and short-sighted. It's because we so quickly forget what God's Word says about so many things in our lives. And when we lose sight of those words, we lose sight of what God wants for us. And we lose hope.

Who could blame God at this point if he would look at us and say, "You nit-witted people. I'm through with you. You're on your own." We couldn't. We would have no right and God would be completely within his bounds to do such a thing. But he doesn't. Like Jesus with the Emmaus disciples, he comes to us patiently and carefully. He comes to us through his Word. He patiently instructs and lovingly admonishes us. He looks us directly in the eyes and through the prophet Nathan says, "You are the person who has sinned." He comes to us through the prophet Ezekiel and says, "The soul who sins will die." He comes to us through the apostle Paul and says, "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." And it is at that point that we could lose hope. We could fail to remember everything that our Lord has taught us. We could walk away from this place with despair and doubt and never seek God out again.

But our God doesn't leave us in our sins. He doesn't leave us hopeless and despairing. He comes to us through his meal. In very real means he pronounces grace to us. In his son's body and blood he makes you whole again. In the holy meal he forgives the sinful souls of his children. Through the water of the font he makes the unclean clean again. Through his called servant he audibly pronounces the forgiveness of sins upon you. With the sign of the cross he reminds you again of the price paid for you, not to infer guilt on your hearts, but to give hope to the hopeless. Because it is through that cross—more importantly—through the one who died on that cross that you received the forgiveness of sins and the hope of life in heaven.

My dear Christians, listen to your risen Lord. Taste and see that he is good. See the cross for you. Believe with fire-filled hearts that Christ has died, Christ has risen, and that Christ will come again. Don't be thrown for a loop! Have hope in the risen Christ!



*Soli Deo Gloria!*

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