

# ***“Road to Emmaus”***

**LUKE 24:13-35**

**Baxter T. Exum (#1203)  
Four Lakes Church of Christ  
Madison, Wisconsin  
March 3, 2013**



If you were with us for the adult Bible class last week, then you know that we studied the appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalene on the morning of the Lord’s resurrection. As we studied that account and as the week progressed, I kept thinking about some of the other accounts, and several days ago it hit me: When we look at the four gospel accounts, it is actually a little bit surprising that we have such a small amount of information about those appearances of the Lord after his resurrection. In the book of Matthew, for example, we have one chapter out of 28. In the book of Mark, we have one chapter out of 16. In Luke, we have only one chapter out of 24, and in the book of John (as we studied last week), we have only two chapters out of 21. Now obviously, we have exactly what the Lord wants us to have. We have some very powerful eyewitness testimony. This week, then, as I looked back at the pile of sermon request cards that have been turned in by various members of this congregation, I kept coming back to a request for a lesson on Luke 24:13-35. This morning, then, I would invite you to turn with me to Luke 24 (p. 1651).

In Luke 24, we read the account of two disciples who are discouraged and confused, they leave Jerusalem headed for the village of Emmaus, and as they travel, the Lord joins them on that road. It is a thrilling account, and one of only two appearances in the book of Luke. In the opening verses of Luke’s account, he tells us that his account has been carefully researched. In other words, Luke himself was not an eyewitness. That tells me that as someone who never actually saw the Lord, Luke, doing all of his research and interviews years later, was especially touched by what happened between the Lord and these two men. It was powerful, and so (by inspiration of the Holy Spirit) Luke decided to include the testimony of these two disciples in his written record of the good news.

As we begin, I would point out that the journey between Jerusalem and the village of Emmaus was approximately 7 miles. To put this in some perspective, I pulled up Google maps and tried to find a landmark that was roughly 7 miles away from this building where we are right now, and I discovered that Camp Randall Stadium is almost exactly 7 miles from our church building. I clicked on the “walking” directions, and Google gave us a map for our little journey, and if we were to walk from here to Camp Randall, they estimate that the trip would take 2 hours and 17 minutes. So, I wanted to get that out of the way here at the beginning to give us some idea of the little journey that these two disciples were making. They left Jerusalem and were headed for Emmaus, a trip of about 7 miles, or about the distance from here to Camp Randall, a trip that would have taken roughly 2-½ hours.

This morning I would like for us to put ourselves in the place of these two disciples as they set out on this 7-mile trip from Jerusalem to Emmaus, and I would like for us to pay special attention to the progression of their faith in this journey. This is the day of the Lord's resurrection, and these two disciples are among the very first ones to see the Lord. And again, what makes this story especially interesting for us is that we as the readers know something that the two disciples did not know at the time. These men were actually walking with the Lord! So, as we study, let's see what these men can teach us – Luke 24:13-35 – the tomb is empty on the first day of the week, and we pick up with verse 13,

***<sup>13</sup> And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> And they were talking with each other about all these things which had taken place. <sup>15</sup> While they were talking and discussing, Jesus Himself approached and began traveling with them. <sup>16</sup> But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him. <sup>17</sup> And He said to them, "What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?" And they stood still, looking sad. <sup>18</sup> One of them, named Cleopas, answered and said to Him, "Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?" <sup>19</sup> And He said to them, "What things?" And they said to Him, "The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people, <sup>20</sup> and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to the sentence of death, and crucified Him. <sup>21</sup> But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened. <sup>22</sup> But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning, <sup>23</sup> and did not find His body, they came, saying that they had also 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 exactly as the women also had said; but Him they did not see."***

***<sup>25</sup> And He said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup> Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" <sup>27</sup> Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.***

***<sup>28</sup> And they approached the village where they were going, and He acted as though He were going farther. <sup>29</sup> But they urged Him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is getting toward evening, and the day is now nearly over." So He went in to stay with them. <sup>30</sup> When He had reclined at the table with them, He took the bread and blessed it, and breaking it, He began giving it to them. <sup>31</sup> Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight. <sup>32</sup> 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?"***

***<sup>33</sup> And they got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found gathered together the eleven and those who were with them, <sup>34</sup> saying, "The Lord has really risen and has appeared to Simon." <sup>35</sup> They began to relate their experiences on the road and how He was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread.***

Again, I would like for us to study this trip with the goal of learning something from the progression that takes place.

I. **And with that in mind, I would like for us to notice, first of all, that THESE TWO DISCIPLES WERE INCREDIBLY DISCOURAGED (verses 13-24).**

And please notice: This is what should have been (by far) the happiest day in the history of mankind! From the Garden of Eden all the way through until the Lord comes to take us home, the day of the resurrection is indeed the most positive day in human history. And yet instead of being thrilled, we find that these two disciples were having a rather serious (and actually rather sad and somber) discussion. They should have been discussing the good news from Mary and the apostles that the Lord had been raised from the dead. But instead, they are clearly discouraged. Now remember: From our point of view, we have the big picture, but as they are walking along this road, they are right there in the middle of it. They are overwhelmed with grief and despair. It has been said that the longest walk we will ever take is the walk away from the grave of someone we love. If you have never done that, then maybe you don't know what these disciples were going through, but most of us have had to bury a close friend or loved one. And we know that as the funeral wraps up and as we turn to leave the cemetery, that is a difficult journey. Our minds are racing. Maybe we are thinking about what we should have said to that person. Maybe we are overwhelmed with grief over what might have been. Perhaps we go over in our minds all of the good times that we had with that person. And then we realize that that person is never coming back. And so we have to turn and walk away. We weep and mourn, but ultimately we realize that there is nothing we can do about it, and we leave that cemetery to reenter a world that has no idea what we are going through. We reenter a world that doesn't really care. That is the kind of journey that these two disciples were making. They were discouraged. They were disillusioned. They had lost their focus. Their faith had been shattered. In fact, their discouragement was so severe that it caused them to walk away. We notice in verse 13 that they were heading away from Jerusalem. They were leaving the fellowship of God's people because they were so discouraged by what had happened. They were heading in the wrong direction.

On top of this, we find in the next few verses that these two disciples were basically having some kind of argument with each other. The Greek scholars tell us that there are three different words used here to describe the kind of conversation these disciples were having. They "**conversed**" (the Greek word for homily, or homiletics, or talking), they "**reasoned**" (the Greek word for arguing or discussing), and then there is a third word, which describes strong debate. The word is translated as "**exchanging**" in the NASB. It carries the idea of throwing words back and forth like a ball (anti-ballo, you can even figure that one out in English). And in the middle of this word-slinging discussion, the Lord Jesus approaches and starts traveling with them, and the Lord has a question "**What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?**" The Bible says at that point that the two disciples "**stood still, looking sad.**" And in the rest of their discussion, we see why they were sad. Notice: They kept on referring to Jesus in the past tense – he "**was**" a prophet, he "**was**" mighty in word and in deed, they "**were hoping**" that he "**was**" the one who "**was**" going to redeem Israel. They were thinking of Jesus in the past tense, as a man who was dead and was not coming back. These disciples were discouraged.

And one thing most of us find interesting in this chapter is that the men had no idea that they were talking to the Lord. Of course, there are all kinds of theories out there as to why – some have suggested that they were just overcome with grief, some have suggested that they failed to see the Lord because they were not expecting the Lord, some have suggested that the Lord's resurrected body was in some way different and was not really recognizable, some have suggested that it was too dark outside, but let us notice again what the text actually says. Notice verse 16, "**But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him.**" Based on that, I believe that the Lord miraculously and supernaturally kept these two disciples from recognizing him. But why? Was the Lord just playing some kind of mean joke? I don't think so. But instead, as we step back and look at what actually happened here, it seems that the Lord just wanted to be with these two. The Lord wanted to lead

them out of their grief. He wanted them to figure out some of these things on their own. The Lord wanted to enjoy this fellowship. He wanted to see their faith develop. And so, as the disciples traveled from Jerusalem to Emmaus, they were discouraged.

I would suggest that we as Christians also have a way of getting discouraged today. Maybe we hoped that God would fix some situation in our lives. Maybe we've wondered why God hasn't fixed our financial situation. Maybe we've wondered why God hasn't solved the conflict in our families. Why did God allow this or that to happen? I would suggest, first of all, that it is not a sin to get discouraged. It is not a sin to question God. It is not a sin to discuss our doubts with each other. But we do need to realize that the Lord travels with us and He is able to listen in on our conversations.

**II. As these two disciples continue to travel, as they head down Milwaukee Street and turn left on East Washington Avenue, there is a second step in their progression, and it comes in verses 25-27 as we find that the Lord turns things around and he uses this crisis of faith as an opportunity to point these two disciples BACK TO THE SCRIPTURES.**

Again, the Lord could have revealed himself right there at the beginning, "It's me! I'm back!" But instead, he walks with them for a while, and he takes these two disciples to the scriptures. Jesus knew that the word of God is able to take us from being discouraged to having our hearts on fire, and so, that is what he did. He took them to the scriptures.

And I would point out: These two disciples only had bits and pieces. As far as they were concerned, they were dealing with gossip and rumor. And as they were bouncing these ideas back and forth among themselves, the Lord steps in with a gentle rebuke (verses 25-26). And then, ***"...beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures."*** What a great lesson for us! Instead of listening to what other people say about Jesus, we need to keep on going back to the Scriptures. Ultimately, it does not matter what we hear about Jesus on the Internet or in the daily newspaper or on the nightly news. All that matters is what we can actually read in the Bible, and so between here and Camp Randall Stadium, the Lord took them to the Scriptures.

Luke tells us that Jesus started with Moses. In other words, he started with the book of Genesis. He took them all the way back to the beginning. We remember the sin of Adam and Eve and how the Lord God promised that the offspring of the woman would crush Satan's head and that Satan would strike his heel. We remember how Abraham was promised that through one of his descendants all the nations of the earth would be blessed. We remember the Passover lamb in the book of Exodus, and how the lamb was to be perfect, with no broken bones, it was to be offered for the sins of the people. We remember from the book of Deuteronomy how the Lord promised that at some point in the future he would raise up a prophet like Moses (perhaps as they cross the Yahara River). We remember some of those prophecies from Psalm 22 – ***"My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?"*** We remember the prophecies in that chapter concerning the ridicule at the cross, the piercing of the hands and feet, the casting of lots for the clothing. We remember the prophecy in Isaiah 7, that the Messiah would be born to a virgin and that his name would be called ***"Immanuel."*** We remember from Isaiah how the Lord predicted that the Messiah would be despised and rejected, that he would carry the sins of the people, that he would be led like a lamb to the slaughter. We remember from the book of Amos how that ***"...in that day,"*** God would ***"make the sun go down at noon and make the earth dark in broad daylight"*** (Amos 8:9), (perhaps as they round the Capitol building). We remember the prophecy in Micah, that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. We remember the prophecy from Zechariah concerning how the Messiah would enter Jerusalem on a donkey. Over and over again, we have prophecies from the

Scriptures – the Messiah would be preceded by Elijah, he would be called the Son of God (Psalm 2:7), he would be called a Nazarene (Isaiah 11:1), he would bring light to Galilee (Isaiah 9:1-2), he would speak in parables (Psalm 78:2-4), he would be sent to heal the brokenhearted (Isaiah 61:1-2), he would be called King (Psalm 2:6), he would be praised by little children (Psalm 8:2), he would be rejected by his own people (Psalm 69:8), he would spend time in Egypt (Hosea 11:1), he would be betrayed (Psalm 41:9), he would be given vinegar to drink (Psalm 69:21), he would be spat upon and struck (Isaiah 50:6).

Over and over again, Jesus took them to the scriptures. And looking back on it, the men said that as he took them to the Scriptures, their hearts were **“burning”** within them (verse 32). We remember what would happen a few weeks later on the Day of Pentecost as the crowds heard Peter’s message from the Scriptures and were **“pierced to the heart”** (Acts 2:37). The word of God has a way of touching us in the heart. **“The word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edge sword...”** (Hebrews 4:12). These two disciples needed the word of God applied to their situation, and that is exactly what the Lord did. He took them to the scriptures.

In the same way, today also we as Christians, every time we open the scriptures, we bring ourselves, we bring our lives, we bring our sins, and we compare ourselves to what we read. We apply God’s word to our lives. From time to time we might be discouraged, but when we open the word, when we assemble for worship, when we come together for a class, we walk with God and our confusion is clarified. We look at all of these prophecies that Jesus must have mentioned on their walk to Emmaus, and we realize (as we studied several weeks ago) that the Scriptures are truly **“...profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness”** (2 Timothy 3:16). These disciples had been corrected and encouraged by the word of God.

III. **There is something else I’d like for us to notice in this chapter (it comes in verses 28-32), and that is: THESE TWO DISCIPLES TREASURED OPPORTUNITIES FOR FELLOWSHIP.**

As they are coming down University Avenue and about to turn left on Breese Terrace, notice what happens in verse 28: As these three individuals approached the village, the Lord acted as if he were going farther. We know what that looks like today, “Well, see you later, have a great evening, it was nice to meet you today,” and so on. In other words, the Lord was not pressuring, he was not manipulating, he did not invite himself over, but we find here that he pretty much kept on going, but the disciples **“urged him”** to stay. And notice: They wanted him to spend the night. They point out that it was getting toward evening and that the day was at that point **“nearly over.”** So, the sun is going down, the disciples beg him to stay, and the Lord stays. They go inside to eat dinner, and notice what happens next: Although Jesus was the guest, he takes on the role of host. He takes the bread, blesses it, breaks it, and begins giving it to them. Imagine me inviting you over for dinner, and you take the food out of the oven and start leading the prayer at the dinner table. That would be a little strange, but that is what the Lord does here. And in that act of sharing a meal, the disciples suddenly realize that they have been served by the Lord. Remember: The fact that they were not able to recognize the Lord was miraculous – they were kept from recognizing the Lord – but now that veil has been lifted, and they are able to clearly see the Lord for who he really is. Their eyes were opened, and the Lord immediately vanished from their sight.

I find it interesting that these disciples only realized who Jesus was when they shared a meal. It is no coincidence that the early church followed the same basic pattern. Often, the early church met together for meals. They loved having that time together. From time to time, someone will ask me why I refer to our congregational meals together as “Fellowship Dinners.” Many years ago, I looked up the origin of the word “potluck.” The term “potluck” goes back to the idea that you go to a group dinner, and you reach in a pot, and you are pretty much lucky if you come out with something good. If someone wants to go on referring to

“potluck dinners,” that is fine with me, and I will still love you and everything, but I personally refer to our meals together as “Fellowship Dinners.” Years ago, someone complained and said, “I saw “Fellowship Dinner” in the bulletin, and I didn’t know what that was, so I didn’t go.” Really? Fellowship refers to sharing. And by the way, I should point out that eating is not necessarily fellowship. Sometimes we might think that fellowship equals eating, but that is not the case. Not all eating is fellowship. When I go out to eat at Hometown Buffet, I am not really fellowshiping with those people, but when we come together to eat as a church, fellowship is the reason why we eat together. We get together to share. In my opinion, luck has nothing to do with it. “Potluck” puts the emphasis on the food (you’re lucky if you get something good), but “Fellowship” puts the emphasis where it needs to be. “Fellowship” emphasizes the reason why we come together. The early Christians came together for meals, not just to hope they got something good, but for the purpose of sharing with each other. And that is something we see here. These disciples were eager to share with this stranger. They longed for the fellowship. And just imagine: What if they had not insisted on inviting this stranger over for dinner? If they had allowed the Lord to just keep on walking, he would have just kept on walking! They would have missed out on knowing that they had met the Lord on the most important day in world history. So we see in this passage an emphasis on fellowship. These disciples longed for it, just as we should also long for it today.

**IV. There is something else to consider here, and that is: At the end, these two disciples immediately drop what they are doing and turn around to GO TELL THE OTHERS.**

They don’t just go to bed thinking, “Oh, wow, that was a great day!” But instead, once they realize that they had talked to the Lord, they immediately get back out on the road and start walking back to Jerusalem. Now remember: They are worn out after a long weekend, the sun has now gone down, and they are now basically at Camp Randall Stadium trying to make their way back here! After all that they’ve been through, they now have a 2-½ hour walk in the dark. This news is so life-changing, there is no way that they could possibly hold it in. They have to tell somebody, so they get on the road and they book it back to Jerusalem.

In the following verses, we find that they arrive in Jerusalem, and as they are telling these things to the apostles, the Lord appears to them again (this time to the entire group), he gives them some words of encouragement, he eats some broiled fish with them, and by the end of the chapter we have the Lord giving the Great Commission and heading back up into heaven (not all in the same night, but this is the thrust of the chapter – the importance of telling others about the resurrection).

As we think about our own lives, we have no problem telling people about what is truly important to us. We talk about our children or grandchildren, we talk about what we do for a living, we talk about sports or politics or whatever – the point here is: The resurrection means everything to us (just as it did to these two disciples). That means that we have the privilege of speaking up just like they did.

**Conclusion:**

This morning we have studied one of just a small handful of appearances that Jesus made after his resurrection. We looked at two disciples who got so discouraged that they left Jerusalem and started heading home. This was a 7-mile journey that probably took about 2-½ hours, but along the way, they met the Lord. They didn’t know he was the Lord at the time, but he took them to the Scriptures, they invited him in for dinner, and once they discovered who he really was, they turned around to go back to Jerusalem to tell the others.

As I look back over this account, I am thankful! I am thankful for the resurrection. I am thankful that we have the scriptures. I am thankful for the fellowship that we have here. I am thankful for those here today who love telling others. And I am thankful for this passage in particular.

Our goal as a church is to do the best we can to follow Jesus. If you are not a part of this congregation, we would invite you to investigate. Following the Lord's example here, we don't want to invite ourselves into your home, but if you would like to know more, we would be glad to meet with you during the week. Give me a call or send a message, and I would be glad to talk with you about our understanding of the scriptures.

The Bible teaches that Jesus died in our place. He willingly offered himself as a sacrifice, and in response, we react with love and obedience. We must repent of our sins; that is, we must have a change of mind about sin. And following that change of mind, we are commanded in the scriptures to be baptized (immersed) in water for the forgiveness of our sins. If you have something we need to pray about, we would invite you to write it down and let us know, but if you are ready to be baptized right now, please let us know as we sing this next song. Let's stand and sing...

To comment on this lesson: [fourlakeschurch@gmail.com](mailto:fourlakeschurch@gmail.com)