



Luke 24:13-35

Easter 3, April 19, 2026

Pastor Sam Rodebaugh

That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem,¹⁴ and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened.¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them.¹⁶ But their eyes were kept from recognizing him.¹⁷ 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.¹⁸ 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?"¹⁹ 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,²⁰ and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him.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.²² Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning,²³ 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.²⁴ 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."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?"²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.²⁸ So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther,²⁹ 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.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.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?"³³ And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together,³⁴ saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"³⁵ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

This is a great text. It is really exciting. It's filled with drama and suspense and delightful surprise after surprise. The two disciples are walking along the road, downcast. And then there's the risen Christ walking along with them, but they do not recognize Him! Their hearts are heavy as they describe their griefs and fears concerning *all* the events, the suffering and death of the one that they had *hoped* was going to redeem Israel—and look at who they're talking to! You can hardly stand the suspense!

And then *Jesus* begins to teach them from the Scriptures, their hearts are *burning* as He opens the Scriptures to them on the road. And then night falls, and He *pretends* that He will keep going, and they say, "No, stay with us!" And He says, "Ok, I will." Unexpected joy is lurking around every corner. And then He blesses and breaks the bread and they finally recognize Him—it doesn't get any better than this! There is drama and suspense and delight, and we get to watch it all play out!

But how much *better* it would be—rather than just *reading* these things—much better for something like that to *happen* to us. To trade places—how gladly we would trade places with these two disciples.

Because our lives, our faith-lives, they're not really like this at all. And it's not that our lives have no drama, no suspense, no delight. There is *some*. But there's a lot of ordinary living going on around here. Sure, two weeks ago was fun. An Easter celebration, a big meal, a day with family, that was all great. But that was *two weeks* ago. Now we're back to the ordinary day-to-day grind, a busy planting season has begun, and on top of that, Pastor is *still* standing up there talking about Easter.

We might think that the times of greatest spiritual vulnerability are the times of trial and adversity. But I'm not totally sure that's true. Rather, I think that it's the times of routine, when one long, dull, monotonous year follows another long, dull, monotonous year—when life is lacking any sort of surprise or suspense, when you're hard pressed to figure out what you should be looking forward to next—I *believe* those are the times of greatest spiritual vulnerability. Life starts feeling dull, faith starts feeling dull, and the message at the heart of this text moves me not at all.

And that's the danger for us. This text that is *full* of surprise and suspense and wonder—it *does* have a message for us, but that message is not new or surprising or suspenseful to *us*. No, here in this place, everything that we do is in some way connected to Easter, connected to Christ's resurrection from the dead. And so, the danger for us is *not* that our eyes would be kept from seeing Jesus or that we would be ignorant of His resurrection; the danger is that we hear these truths proclaimed so much that our eyes might glaze over so that even as we see Jesus, we don't really *see* Him; even as we hear the Scriptures, we don't really *hear* them. *That's* the danger for us.

And so, even though you've heard this many times before, there is a message at the heart of this text that you *really need* to hear. Here it is: ***"The Lord Has Risen Indeed."*** That's the message for you today, and that was the message for those two nearly-anonymous disciples on that day. And they *needed* that message. Listen to what they were saying, ***"Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel."***

"We *had* hoped." Does it get any sadder than that? They *had* hoped. Past tense—definitively. They *had* hoped that Jesus was the one to redeem Israel—in other words, they had *thought* He was the Savior, but now that hope was gone. Now that belief had abandoned them. No longer were they so deceived. Now they were just sad. And disappointed. They used to hope, but now they did not.

So, Jesus sought them out. Jesus came to restore their hope. But He doesn't just pop up and shout "surprise!" They don't *recognize* Him. Not because their eyes were so filled with tears that they couldn't see Jesus *clearly*. ***"Their eyes were kept from recognizing Him."*** In other words, this was a case of divine intervention; they were not *permitted* to recognize Jesus.

And that was because they needed something much more concrete to restore their hope, something much more rock solid than just what their eyes told them, something that could continue to assure them that ***"The Lord Has Risen Indeed,"*** even when their lives returned to the ordinary routine. And Jesus gave them just such a proof. ***"And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."***

He opened the Scriptures. He showed them that the thing that they believed *proved* Jesus was a fraud, the thing that *seemed* to put an end to their hope, was in fact the very *answer* to their hope. Even the *foundation* of their hope. It was not a failure but a necessity. **“Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?”** All those things that they believed Jesus alone was ignorant of, those things which filled their eyes with tears and darkened their face with shadow—these things were *necessary*. And why was that? Why was it necessary?

Because God loves you. And that love that He has for you took Him to the cross, so that He could be numbered among the transgressors, for you and for me. The God who made the heavens and the earth, the God who controls the course of the nations—it was necessary for Him to be condemned by a power He appointed, to be nailed upon wood He created. It was necessary, because God loves you. That’s His nature. And He can’t be changed. And so, to rescue you and to make you His own it was necessary that the Christ should suffer. Because He loves you.

And it was just as necessary for Christ to suffer these things as it is for Christ to reveal these things. Not only to these two disciples either. In *all* of the post-Easter accounts, no one recognized Jesus until *He* revealed Himself to *them*. Until He called Mary by name. Until He broke the bread. Until there was that great drought of fishes, and a Stranger on the shore invited them to come and have breakfast with them. It didn’t happen until Jesus opened their eyes.

And even though we don’t know much about these two disciples at all, Jesus *did* know them. And He did what was required for them, not only on the cross of Calvary, but also on that road to Emmaus. He sought them out, He walked with them, He opened the Scriptures, He led them down paths of righteousness, and He restored their souls. (cf. Psalm 23:3) And He now lives to do the same for you.

You’re probably familiar with the painting on our bulletin cover. It’s called “The Road to Emmaus” by Robert Zünd. It’s probably the most famous painting of this event. I’ve always loved this painting, probably because I used to stare at it every day in my pastor’s office when I was in confirmation.

In the painting, we see Jesus, walking between those two disciples. And *we* recognize it’s Jesus, it’s *obviously* Jesus. It looks just like Him! Long brown hair, tidy brown beard, fair skin, a white robe. How could anyone not recognize *Jesus*? *We* recognize Him, but of course, we know that they did not. No matter! Jesus was with them anyway. And I think that’s one thing I *love* about that painting.

They do *not* think the Lord is with them. They think He is *far* from them. But their eyes deceive them. Because there He is, right there with them. And that reminds me of some wonderful promises that Jesus has made to you. He says to you, **“Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”** (Matthew 28:20) He says to you, **“Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”** (Matthew 18:20) He says to you, **“Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him.”** (John 6:56) And so *that* you made feed and drink, He says to you, **“Take, eat; this is my body. . . Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the new covenant.”** (Matthew 26:28)

The point is: even at those times when it is hard to see it being the case, those times when it really doesn’t seem so, nevertheless, our eyes deceive us. Jesus *is* with us. There He is, walking alongside us

on our journey, *wherever* our path may take us. There He is feeding us and leading us. There He is present even in the things that seem so ordinary, like bread and wine or words on a page. There He is, so that He may do what is necessary and open *our* eyes, so that *we* may see and believe that ***“The Lord Has Risen Indeed.”***

Let this be the thing that breaks up your ordinary routine and breathes life into an existence that seems mostly dead. ***“The Lord Has Risen Indeed.”*** He has risen into glory. He has risen through the Father’s approval. He has risen to *intercede* for you. He has risen to forgive your sins. This *is* a fact. This is a fact even when people don’t know it. It’s a fact even when people don’t believe it. It’s the *truth*. God has done it. Today and every day, ***“The Lord Has Risen Indeed.”*** And there is peace, and there is the forgiveness of sins. And there is hope for us that just as in Christ sin and evil are completely overcome, so it will be for you and for me. We will rise. *We* will rise indeed.

Until that day, life will seem ordinary again. But *this* will never change: ***“The Lord Has Risen Indeed.”*** He lives for you. His love is for you. He sought you and He found you and He opened the Word to you. He has been with you every step of the way, and He will not go any further without you. He is with you now, and you *will* be with Him.

And so, I say, “Let those disciples have those surprises, just as it was appointed for them.” For *us today*, the same old news is good news once again. ***“The Lord Has Risen Indeed.”*** And ***“because [He] live[s], you also will live.”*** (John 14:19) Amen.

“And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:7) Amen.