



Apr. 23, 2023 Luke 24: 13-35 & Acts 2: 14, 22-33

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ENTERING THE SCENE:

Henri Nouwen says: "Life is God's initiative and can end or change suddenly, unexpectedly, and unpredictably. When we humans are ready to give up hope and resign ourselves to inevitability, God intervenes and reveals completely new beginnings. The resurrection of Jesus is God's sign breaking through every form of human fatalism and despair. In every critical event, there is an opportunity for God to act creatively and reveal a deeper truth than what we see on the surface of things. God also can turn around critical incidents and seemingly hopeless situations in our lives and reveal light in darkness." And Richard Rohr teaches: "Until we walk with despair, and still have hope, we will not know that our hope was not just hope in ourselves, in our own successes, in our power to make a difference, in our image of what perfection should be. We need hope from a much deeper Source. We need a hope larger than ourselves." Let us begin our walks!

Luke 24: 13-35

Now that same day two of them were going to a village called **Emmaus**, about **seven miles** from **Jerusalem**. 14 They were **talking** with each other about everything that had happened. 15 As they **talked** and **discussed** these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; 16 but they were **kept from recognizing him**. 17 He asked them, "What are you **discussing** together as you walk along?" They stood still, their **faces downcast**. 18 One of them, named **Cleopas**, asked him, "Are you only a visitor to **Jerusalem** and **do not know** the things that have happened there in these days?" 19 What things?" he asked. "About **Jesus** of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a **prophet**, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. 20 The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; 21 but we had **hoped** that he was the one who was going to **redeem Israel**. And what is more, it is the **third day** since all this took place. 22 In addition, some of our **women amazed** us. They went to the tomb early this morning 23 but **didn't find his body**. They came and told us that they had seen a **vision of angels**, who said he was alive. 24 Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the **women** had said, but he **did not see**." 25 He said to them, "How **foolish** you are, and how **slow of heart** to believe all that the **prophets** have spoken! 26 Did not Christ have to suffer these things and then **enter his glory**?" 27 And beginning with **Moses** and all the **Prophets**, he explained to them what was said in all the **Scriptures** concerning himself. 28 As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were **going farther**. 29 But they **urged him strongly**, "**Stay with us**, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to **stay with them**. 30 When he was at the table with them, he took **bread**, gave thanks, **broke** it and began to give it to them. 31 Then **their eyes were opened** and they **recognized him**, and he disappeared from their sight. 32 They asked each other, "Were not our **hearts burning** within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the **Scriptures** to us?" 33 They got up and returned at once to **Jerusalem**. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together 34 and saying, "It is true! **The Lord has risen** and has **appeared to Simon**." 35 Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was **recognized** by them when he **broke the bread**.

DISCUSSION QUESTION: Jesus moved the disciples from despair to hope by opening up the scriptures for them. Can studying the scriptures do the same for me?

PRAYER: John Shea writes: "Hope is never seen coming; but once it has arrived, everything else is seen in the proper perspective. Hope arrives on the heels of impossibility. Paradoxically put, only when all is lost is everything won." Traveler Jesus, now I join all my companions on the road to what you open before us in this new Easter season. Give us the joy of seeing you in a new and deeper way. Amen.

WORD STUDY AND QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

EMMAUS / JERUSALEM: Emmaus is about a two-hour walk from Jerusalem. (See map below)

Compare the feelings of the trip from Jerusalem to the trip back to Jerusalem after the breaking of the bread.

SEVEN MILES / THIRD DAY: Luke takes us completely (7 miles) away from Jerusalem, and distances us completely (3 days) from the crucifixion in this story.

In what way does this open the disciples receiving the new revelation of Jesus as the Christ?

TALKING / TALKED / DISCUSSED / DISCUSSING: The disciples were rehashing what had happened when Jesus invited them to tell the story to him.

Have I ever had someone ask me to tell my story once again, only to find a revelation happen as I spoke? How does this open the situation for something new to happen?

FACES DOWNCAST / HOPED / REDEEM ISRAEL: The disciples were heading away from Jerusalem with their shattered hopes and with downcast faces. Their longing to be released from the limits appeared to be a vain hope.

How does a limited vision of God's plan for my life get in the way of me realizing its fullness?

CLEOPAS / WOMEN / SIMON: Cleopas has no hope, the women have seen an empty tomb, and Simon has experienced the risen Christ. Jesus revealed himself so that everyone could discover himself or herself.

Where on the continuum of seeing am I right now?

DO NOT KNOW / FOOLISH / SLOW OF HEART: The disciples had not looked at all the scriptures. They only focused on the victorious Messiah ones and ignored the suffering servant ones.

Have I ever been 'slow of heart / foolish' like this? How did this keep me from knowing?

JESUS / PROPHET / CHRIST: The prophets often spoke of the way that God would reveal God's self in the scriptures. Jesus paid attention to all their words and in doing so became the Christ.

*In what ways am I paying attention to **all** the words of God in my life? Do I trust that this process will enable me to become fully what God intends me to be?*

AMAZED: To be amazed is to be greatly surprised, shocked or filled with wonder.

If I were one of the ones hearing their astonishing tale, what would I make of it?

DIDN'T FIND HIS BODY / DID NOT SEE / EYES WERE OPENED / RECOGNIZED: Only after everyone had their old expectations demolished they could be open to the new reality.

Why does it seem that my old hopes have to be destroyed before I am open to the new things before my eyes?

VISION OF ANGELS/ APPEARED When God chooses to reveal something new; we often find the gospels telling us of visions of angels.

Have I ever seen a 'vision' of an angel? If that way of explaining God's revelation does not work well, what other ways might I use?

ENTER HIS GLORY / THE LORD HAS RISEN: He is Risen was the first ever Christian creed in the early church. The Resurrection is the fullness of Christ's glory.

Do I expect that my Resurrection will be the fullness of my glory also?

MOSES / PROPHETS: Moses and the prophets prepared the way for Jesus. Jesus prepares the way for us.

How does my study of the Word enable me to deepen my faith? How does my faith enable others to do the same?

SCRIPTURES: Jesus found himself as he studied the scriptures. This enabled him to reveal more of God than had ever been revealed before.

How does my scripture study help me to see more of God than I have ever seen before? More of myself than I have ever seen before?

GOING FARTHER / STAY WITH US / STAYED WITH THEM: Jesus leaves the disciples free to stay stuck where they were when he appeared to be going on farther. Instead they opened themselves to more when they urged him to stay with them.

Have I ever asked Jesus to stay with me, only to find him taking me beyond where I was in my faith development?

URGED HIM STRONGLY / HEARTS WERE BURNING: We get the sense that something powerful was going on with these words. Jesus' presence once again ignites the hopes that were so crushed by the crucifixion.

Have I ever had my hopes crushed and someone helped me to hope again? Have I ever been the one to help another hope again? What does it take to make this happen?

BREAD / BROKE: When Jesus broke the bread and offered it to the disciples, their previous experience of Jesus cued them in to who this man was.

What cues do I use to recognize Jesus in my life?

PARALLEL TEXTS: Lk. 24:13 // Mk. 16:12f; Lk. 24:16 // Jn. 20:14; 21: 4; Lk. 24:19 // Mt. 2:23; Acts 2:22; Lk. 24:21 // Lk. 1:54; 2:38; Lk. 24:25 // Lk. 18:31; Acts 3:24; Lk. 24:27 // 1 Pt. 2:10f;

OTHER TEXTS OF THE WEEK: Acts 2: 14, 22-28; [Ps. 16:1-11](#); 1 Pt. 1: 17-21; Lk. 24: 13-35;
Revised Common Lectionary: Acts 2:14, 36-41; [Ps. 116: 1-4, 12-19](#); 1 Pt. 1:17-23; Lk. 24:13-35;

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION:

Your True Self is what makes you, you. It is like the Risen Presence that “comes up and walks by your side” while you are on the road to any Emmaus. (Lk. 24:15).Pg. 17.

In Luke’s account, he joins in an easy walk with two ordinary travelers, invites them to tell their story of heartbreak, and accepts their invitation to stay with them; when he leaves them, it is with “burning hearts.” He explains to them his own life narrative –he “opens up” as we say –and sure enough, “their eyes were opened up” too. Pg. 161.

Rohr, Richard. *Immortal Diamond*. San Francisco, CA. Jossey-Bass Pub. 2013.

Four different modern towns have been proposed as being this Emmaus. The one place, however, that accurately meets the descriptions given by Luke and by Josephus is a village now called El-Qubeibeh. It is situated on a prominent vantage point seven miles northwest of Jerusalem on the more northerly Roman road passing westward by Nebi Samwill. From it one can see several miles in every direction-- especially westward where the Plain of Sharon and the Mediterranean Sea loom large on the horizon. It is about 8 miles from Jerusalem. Near here, in 1099, Crusaders found an old Roman fort named Castellum Emmaus. When the Franciscans erected the church of Saint Cleophas here in 1878, they unearthed the remains of a church judged to be crusader. There stands here today a beautiful German church and hospice, whose garden is planted with pine, oak, and arbutus



Hammat, Hammatha, Hammei and Hammam, in Hebrew, Syriac, Aramaic and Arabic respectively, are variants of an adjectival noun meaning "hot springs" that is commonly part of the name of places with hot springs. Emmaus, where Jesus appeared to two of his disciples after his resurrection Luke 24 is a Hellenized version of Hammat. It, too, had a hot spring. Christian historians tell us that the hot springs at Emmaus are good for animals as well as people. A magic amulet discovered at Emmaus and dated to the third century A.D. is inscribed with an Aramaic incantation to cure the patient of afflictions of his head, muscles, phallus and ears. The amulet also depicts a snake, the attribute of Aesculapius, the Roman god of healing (known to the Greeks as Asklepios), which emphasizes the therapeutic qualities of the springs?

Hot springs were of great importance in classical medicine. Hippocrates (460-377 B.C.), the so-called father of medicine, systematically prescribed hot baths (the technical term is thermal balneology) to cure his patients, sending them to the Greek island of Kos. Other famous early doctors, such as Galen (129- 210 A.D.), developed and extended the ideas of Hippocrates and recommended hot springs for treating ailments of the urinary and digestive tracts, chest pains, weakness, nerve problems, joint pains, vaginal infections and diseases of the skin and eyes. When Herod the Great (37-4 B.C.) was dying, he went to immerse himself in the Kallirhoe hot springs on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea, pursuant to his doctors' recommendation. The ancient historian Josephus tells us its waters are also therapeutic to drink. Pliny the Elder notes that "the very name alone, Kallirhoe [which means a beautiful flowing], attests to its celebrated and renowned waters.

Dvokjetski, Estee. *Healing Waters: The Social world of Hot Springs in Roman Palestine*. Biblical Archaeology Review. 2004. Pages18-19.

The world needs witnesses, prophets, teachers, lovers. The human family needs people who claim God within them, and speak out by living lives of hope and compassion. Henri Nouwen

We are not perfectly free until we live in pure hope. For when our hope is pure, it no longer trusts exclusively in human and visible means, nor rests in any visible end. He who hopes in God trusts God, whom he never sees, to bring him to the possession of things that are beyond imagination. Merton, Thomas, *No Man Is An Island* (New York: Harcourt, 1955) 14

Our fascination with aesthetic beauty and with human gentleness and kindness and our openness to altruistic actions disclose the presence of God’s grace at the level of our psychic experience...the more efficient divine grace becomes in our personal growth, the more mature our actions become, and the more responsible the human person becomes. Consistently, the very term *divine grace* at the level of human existence denotes God’s presence in our life, through which we can actualize the aims determined for us in God’s plan for our growth to maturity.....In a certain respect, this form of interaction can be described as a persuasion in which God proposes and reveals the internal beauty of certain proposals but always leaves the final choice to us.

Zycinski, Joseph M. [God, Freedom, and Evil: Perspectives from Religion and Science](#), Zygon. September 2000. Pages 659-60.

Turning negative memories into positive ones comes with seeing everything as coming from God....There can be communal – as well as individual – negative memories that need to be healed. These community memories can hold people back from change and growth. The older of us need to watch that we don’t pass on unforgiven resentments and prejudices to new generations. Forgiveness and reconciliation are not isolated acts that end with themselves. They are like opening up a dam. They empower new life, give fresh hope to others, and release boundless energy. Pages 48-9. Fitzpatrick, Mother Gail, OSCO. [Seasons of Grace](#).

Sister wives were female disciples or missionaries who traveled with the protection of a male disciple. Beside the concern of being alone on the road in a male world of power and violence, a woman would also be seen by others as a whore. The unnamed disciples with Cleopas on the road to Emmaus would most likely have been a “sister wife,” a female disciple-companion.

Hays, Edward. [The Gospel of Gabriel](#). Easton, KS. Forest of Peace Books. 1996. 1996. Page 322.

And yet, from its very beginning Christianity has been the proclamation of joy, of the only possible joy on earth. It rendered impossible all joy we usually think of as possible. But within this impossibility, at the very bottom of this darkness, it announced and conveyed a new all-embracing joy, and with this joy it transformed the End into a Beginning. Without the proclamation of this joy Christianity is incomprehensible. It is only as joy that the Church was victorious in the world, and it lost the world when it lost that joy, and ceased to be a credible witness to it. Of all accusations against Christians, the most terrible one was uttered by Nietzsche when he said that Christians had no joy. Schmemann, Alexander. For the Life of the World. NY. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press. 1998. Page 24.

Spiritual consequences can be described in Lukan terms of "hearts burning" (Lk 24:32). Our fascination with aesthetic beauty and with human gentleness and kindness and our openness to altruistic actions disclose the presence of God's grace at the level of our psychic experience. Zycinski, Joseph M. God, Freedom, and Evil: Perspectives from Religion and Science. Zygon. 9/2000. Pg. 659.

A powerful article in the journal *Parabola* (Summer 1989. Pgs. 77ff.) begins with: "The Christian church in the West has never read its Bible in original languages. Transmission of the text has always depended on the translation of the text". It goes on to examine the various translations used down through history and their effects on those who read/heard the Word by way of their translation. On page 79 we find: "The natural mind cannot, so to speak, hear the voice of the Spirit directly. Only a larger, spiritual intelligence can work on such a level. As Origen put it in the third century: "For of a truth nobody can perceive and know how great is the splendor of the Word, until he receives dove's eyes –that is, spiritual understanding." To perceive the "splendor of the Word" is to perceive its source. Bauckham, Richard J. All in the Family: Identifying Jesus' Relatives. Bible Review. 4/2000. Pg. 28.

Luke-Acts seems to be a proponent of high literate culture. It is in Luke, for example, that we find the classic expression of Jesus opening the Scriptures on the road to Emmaus. Lk. 24: 13-27..... Jesus' detractors are those who find their authority in the Scriptures; Jesus turns their authority upside down. In Mt. 22:31, Jesus answers the Sadducees, who query him about the resurrection which they argue is not found in the Hebrew Scriptures: "You are wrong, because you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God." Their argument is derived from the written Scriptures, but Jesus' response implies that they have erred; both form their own perspective of the role authority of written texts and from the perspective of the greater authority of the oral tradition. Pg. 209. Schniedewind, William M. How the Bible Became a Book: The Textualization of Ancient Israel. Cambridge, UK. Cambridge Univ. Press. 2004.

The Emmaus story traces the gradual opening of the scriptures to an understanding of the necessity of the suffering and death of Jesus. It also deals with the significance of the shared reading of the scriptures in the context of the Eucharistic celebration. The hidden presence of Jesus among us is discovered in the sharing of the scriptures and the breaking of the bread. Pg. 104
The Jesus community, so overwhelmed by the crucifixion, began to study the Hebrew Scriptures and found in them images that were used to make sense of the death of Jesus. Jesus is the Suffering Servant of Isaiah who was pierced for our offenses and crushed for our sins. It was our infirmities that he bore and our sufferings that he endured. The Servant was to be a light to the nations that God's salvation might reach to the ends of the Earth. In the story of the appearance of Jesus on the road to Emmaus, Jesus says, "How foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" Lk. 24: 25-6. Paul also describes the meaning of the death of Christ. "For the love of Christ impels us, once we have come to the conviction that one died for all; therefore, all have died. He indeed died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised" 2 Cor. 5: 14-5. Gradually the catastrophe of the crucifixion of Jesus and the glory of his resurrection brought the early church to a belief that the death and resurrection of Jesus is the symbol of God's saving power which gives life to all people. Pgs. 189-90. Wessels, Cletus. Jesus in the New Universe Story. Maryknoll NY. Orbis Books. 2003.

Hope is never seen coming; but once it has arrived, everything else is seen in the proper perspective. P 129
Hope arrives on the heels of impossibility. Paradoxically put, only when all is lost is everything won. P 130
Shea, John. The Spirit Master. Chicago, Thomas More Press. 1987.

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Links to all the books mentioned in this guide are on The Ark web site: www.theark1.com

Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle A. 2014. Pgs.100-104. To order contact [Carol Oberfoell](mailto:Carol.Oberfoell@theark1.com)

Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle A 2007. Pgs. 69-72. To order contact [Carol Oberfoell](mailto:Carol.Oberfoell@theark1.com)

Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle A 2010. Pgs. 81-84. To order contact [Carol Oberfoell](mailto:Carol.Oberfoell@theark1.com)

Franke, Merle G. Lectionary Tales for the Pulpit CSS Publishing Company, Inc. Lima, Ohio. 1995. **After The Fires, Then What?:** Pages 55-6.

Shea, John. The Hour of the Unexpected. Thomas More Press, Chicago. 1977. **TWO YOUTHS:** Page 49.

Gill, Jean. Images of Myself. Paulist Press, NY. 1982. **HILLS TO CLIMB:** Page 71.

Wiederkehr, Macrina, OSB. Seasons of Your Heart. Silver Burdett Co, Morristown, NJ. 1979. **WALKING WITH STRANGERS:** Page 137.

Hays, Edward. The Gospel of Gabriel. Easton, KS. Forest of Peace Books. 1996. . 1996. **THE EMMAUS SUPPER:** Pages 276-7.

[Sermon on the Road gospel](#)