

Luke 24:13-35
October 25, 2020

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Q: Why do you think people experience disappointment with God? [Let people engage]

Transition: All of us at some point in our lives have experienced some disappointment with God. We may have held expectations of God that weren't aligned with His sovereign purpose. Perhaps we felt He was absent, but we just didn't recognize His presence in circumstances that were challenging to us. Or maybe we became disappointed in God simply because we perceived He wasn't working fast enough with concerns near and dear to our heart. Sometimes we become disappointed because heartfelt prayers "appeared" to go unanswered. Everyone experiences disappointment with God at times.

Two men, who were headed back to Emmaus, were no different. They were experiencing discouragement and disappointment. Jesus took notice of them and began walking alongside these men. He noticed that they were deep in conversation about the crucifixion and then hearing about the empty tomb. Let's observe the interaction Jesus has with these two men and see what we can learn from it. Let's begin.

BOOK:

On the Road to Emmaus

¹³ 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 him they 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 the 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.

Process Observations/Questions:

Q: What did you most like about this passage? What resonated with you? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you least like about this passage? [Let people engage]

Q: Is there anything in this text that causes you to struggle? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you find in this passage that you didn’t understand? [Let people engage]

Q: What do we learn about Jesus in this passage? [Let people engage]

LOOK:

These discouraged, disappointed men thought that Jesus was dead and gone, when in fact He was the one walking and talking with them as they trudged along that dusty road. He was near to them even though they did not recognize Him at first. When you are disappointed and discouraged, you may think that the Lord is a million miles away. But if you are one of His flock, even though you are being faithless and do not see Him, He is there with you. He has promised, “I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you” ([Heb. 13:5](#)).

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Vol. 1, pp. 278-279). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Discouraged Hearts: He Opens Their Eyes (Luke 24:13–35)

Emmaus was a small village eight miles northwest of Jerusalem. The two men walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus were discouraged disciples who had no reason to be discouraged. They had heard the reports of the women that the tomb was empty and that Jesus was alive, but they did not believe them. They had hoped that Jesus would redeem Israel (Luke 24:21), but their hopes had been shattered. We get the impression that these men were discouraged and disappointed because God did not do what they wanted Him to do. They saw the glory of the kingdom, but they failed to understand the suffering.

Jesus graciously walked with them and listened to their “animated heated conversation” (Luke 24:17, WUEST). No doubt they were quoting various Old Testament prophecies and trying to remember what Jesus had taught, but they were unable to put it all together and come up with an explanation that made sense. Was He a failure or a success? Why did He have to die? Was there a future for the nation?

There is a touch of humor in Luke 24:19 when Jesus asked, “What things?” *He had been at the heart of all that had happened in Jerusalem, and now He was asking them to tell Him what occurred!* How patient our Lord is with us as He listens to us tell Him what He already knows (Rom. 8:34). But we may come “boldly” (“with freedom of speech”) to His throne and pour out our hearts to Him, and He will help us (Ps. 62:8; Heb. 4:16).

The longer Cleopas talked, the more he indicted himself and his friend for their unbelief. What more evidence could they want? Witnesses (including Apostles) had seen the tomb empty. Angels had announced that Jesus was alive. Witnesses had seen Him alive and heard Him speak. The proof was there!

“Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). This explains why Jesus opened the Word to these two men as the three of them walked to Emmaus. Their real problem was not in their heads but in their hearts (see Luke 24:25 and 32, and note v. 38). They could have discussed the subject for days and never arrived at a satisfactory answer. What they needed was a fresh understanding of the Word of God, and Jesus gave that understanding to them. He opened the Scriptures and then opened their eyes, and they realized that Jesus was not only alive *but right there with them!*

What was their basic problem? They did not believe all that the prophets had written about the Messiah. That was the problem with most of the Jews in that day: they saw Messiah as a conquering Redeemer, but they did not see Him as a Suffering Servant. As they read the Old Testament, they saw the glory but not the suffering, the crown but not the cross. The teachers in that day were not unlike some of the “success preachers” today, blind to the *total* message of the Bible.

That was some Bible conference, and I wish I could have been there! Imagine the greatest Teacher explaining the greatest themes from the greatest Book and bringing the greatest blessings to men's lives: eyes open to see Him, hearts open to receive the Word, and lips open to tell others what Jesus said to them!

Perhaps Jesus started at Genesis 3:15, the first promise of the Redeemer, and traced that promise through the Scriptures. He may have lingered at Genesis 22, which tells of Abraham placing his only beloved son on the altar. Surely He touched on Passover, the Levitical sacrifices,

the tabernacle ceremonies, the Day of Atonement, the serpent in the wilderness, the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53, and the prophetic messages of Psalms 22 and 69. *The key to understanding the Bible is to see Jesus Christ on every page.* He did not teach them only doctrine or prophecy; He taught “the things concerning Himself” (Luke 24:27).

These men had talked to Jesus and listened to Jesus, and when He made as though He would go on alone, they asked Jesus to come home with them. *They had been won by the Word of God,* and they did not even know who the Stranger was. All they knew was that their hearts were “burning” within them, and they wanted the blessing to last.

The more we receive the Word of God, the more we will want to fellowship with the God of the Word. The hymn writer expressed it perfectly: “Beyond the sacred page/I seek Thee, Lord.” Understanding Bible knowledge can lead to a “big head” (1 Cor. 8:1), but receiving Bible truth and walking with the Savior will lead to a burning heart.

Jesus opened the Scriptures to them, and then He opened their eyes so that they recognized Him. *Now they knew for themselves that Jesus was alive.* They had the evidence of the open tomb, the angels, the witnesses, the Scriptures and now their own personal experience with the Lord. The fact that Jesus vanished did not mean that He abandoned them, for He was with them even though they could not see Him; and they would see Him again.

The best evidence that we have understood the Bible and met the living Christ is that we have something exciting to share with others. The two men immediately left Emmaus and returned to Jerusalem to tell the believers that they had met Jesus. But when they arrived, the apostles and the others *told them* that Jesus was alive and had appeared to Peter! What a difference it would make in our church services if everybody who gathered came to tell about meeting the living Christ! If our services are “dead” it is probably because we are not really walking with and listening to the living Savior.

The “breaking of bread” (Luke 24:30, 35) refers to a meal and not to the Lord’s Supper. As far as we know, the Apostles were the only ones Jesus had instructed about the Lord’s Supper; and it was not likely that our Lord would celebrate it at this time. Jesus revealed Himself to them during a common meal, and that is often how He works. We must learn to see Him in the everyday things of life. However, as we do celebrate the Lord’s Supper from time to time, we want Jesus to reveal Himself to us in a new way, and we must not be satisfied with anything less.

Martin, J. A. (1985). Isaiah. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 263-264)

a. *Jesus’ appearance to the two men (24:13–35) (Mark 16:12–13).*

24:13–16. Two of Jesus’ followers were walking to **Emmaus**, which is **about seven miles** (northwest) **from Jerusalem**. **They were talking ... about the things that had happened**, that is, the report that Jesus had been resurrected (vv. 19–24). When **Jesus** joined them, they did not recognize **Him**.

24:17–24. When Jesus asked them to tell Him what they were **discussing**, the men related the view about Jesus that most of the nation believed at that time. The men, **one of** whom was **Cleopas**, said they were talking **about Jesus of Nazareth**. Cleopas commented that their fellow companion must be **the only one living in all of Jerusalem who** did not **know** what had **happened**. By this question Luke got across the point that Jesus’ ministry and death were known to everyone in the city and in most of the nation. The entire nation was responsible to accept the Messiah.

The two men added that **the chief priests and our rulers handed Him over to ... death**. Along with many others these two men thought that Jesus **was the One who was going to redeem Israel**, that is, be the Messiah and bring in the kingdom (cf. Simeon's words in 2:30 and Anna's in 2:38). They even related that they had heard a report of the Resurrection directly from **some ... women**. But despite all this, **their faces were downcast** (24:17).

24:25–27. Jesus chided them for not understanding and believing. He explained from **Moses and all the Prophets** what had been **said** about Him. He implied that these disciples should have understood from the Old Testament what had happened.

24:28–35. It was not until after **Jesus** had broken **bread** with them that **their eyes were opened and they recognized Him**. Their experience with Jesus caused them to hurry back to **Jerusalem** (seven miles) and affirm the Resurrection to **the Eleven** and others who were meeting together. The two men now acknowledged the truth of the reports about Jesus' resurrection for they had recognized Him themselves. The disciples who were meeting together now had at least three reports of the Resurrection: the women, Peter, and Cleopas and his companion. But still they did not understand (cf. v. 38).

Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J. P., & Powell, D. (2007). *The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith* (pp. 1563-1564). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

24:13–35 Though Luke told this story in his characteristic style and emphasized themes important to him, several factors argue that the story itself is historical and that he received it from an earlier source. (1) It presents the first resurrection appearance as happening to two otherwise unknown, non-apostolic Christians, but (2) it names one of them. (3) The appearance was less than spectacular or immediately convincing, and the travelers were hardly anticipating it—both facts difficult to reconcile with a theory of purposeful invention (see note on Mt 28:17). (4) The wealth of detail (such as the location of Emmaus) is not consistent with a story invented to prove the resurrection but is in keeping with an eyewitness account (Lk 1:2).

24:16 It is not clear why the travelers could not recognize Jesus (see Jn 20:14–15; 21:4), but the text suggests they were prevented from recognizing Him.

24:19, 21 The characterization of Jesus as a prophet was common during Jesus' ministry (see notes on 7:16; 13:33), and that assessment would not have been overthrown by His death. These men had hoped He was more than a prophet (1:68–79), but their hopes ended with His crucifixion.

24:27 “In all the Scriptures” does not mean that every verse of the OT is a prophecy about the Christ but that the entire scope of Scripture prophesies about Him. Some passages are directly prophetic, others are typological; but the whole thing is “messianic.” The OT says little about a Messiah per se, but read progressively, it has much to say about God's plan to reconcile humanity to Himself and establish His rule over the earth. And it refers frequently to various “messianic” characters, both divine and human, who play a role in this plan. Jesus explained them as culminating in Himself.

Butler, T. C. (2000). *Luke* (Vol. 3, pp. 416–419). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

C. Jesus Reveals Himself on the Road to Emmaus (24:13–35)

SUPPORTING IDEA: *In the interpreting of Scripture and the breaking of bread, Jesus revealed himself as the resurrected one to two disciples who were walking to Emmaus.*

24:13. Perhaps still on the first day of the week, two disciples were going home to Emmaus after having been with the disciple band in Jerusalem. Modern scholars have no consensus about the precise location of Emmaus, although several sites have been suggested.

24:14. The two disciples had one topic of conversation—the events of the day. We will learn shortly what these events were.

24:15–16. Their conversation was interrupted by a new traveler. Jesus joined the pair on the way to Emmaus. As he walked quietly with them, they did not recognize him. But walking with strangers along the roads of Jerusalem must not have been unusual. Their lack of recognition did not come from his being a stranger. It came because God kept them from recognizing him until God was ready for the Son to be known.

24:17. For one entering into the middle of a conversation, Jesus asked the natural question: What are you talking about? His question halted their progress. Their immediate response came from their faces, not their mouths. Sadness and grief were inscribed all over their faces.

24:18. Finally, we learn the name of one of the disciples—Cleopas. Knowing the name does not do us a lot of good. It sounds and looks a lot like the Clopas of John 19:25, but the two should not be identified as the same person. We know nothing more about either person. Luke’s church certainly knew Cleopas, but we do not share their information.

Cleopas was amazed that someone could have been in Jerusalem during the last couple of days and not heard the news. This must be a visitor, new in town today, he thought. Everyone knows about the crucifixion and rumors of angels and an empty tomb.

24:19. Jesus continued his probing, noticing how the disciples were reacting. They identified the central figure of their conversation: Jesus of Nazareth. They described him as a prophet whose words and actions showed he possessed unusual power. Jesus’ actions were not hidden. He performed miracles and issued authoritative teaching in the open where both God and the people could witness. The implication is that both God and people saw, heard, and approved Jesus’ words and actions.

24:20. Cleopas placed all the blame on the Jewish leaders for Jesus’ death. They took the initiative to arrest and accuse him. They took him to the Roman authorities. The Romans shared guilt in that they carried out the crucifixion that the Jews demanded. Here is another strong piece of evidence for the death of the Messiah. His death was not in secret, hidden from the public. His death came at the hands of the leaders, very much in the public eye, who would later try to disprove his resurrection.

24:21. Christ’s death ended apostolic hopes. Here Cleopas in a very important passage summarized the hopes of Jesus’ disciples before Jesus’ death. They thought Jesus would redeem Israel. This Greek verb for redeem (*lutroo*) appears only here and in Titus 2:14 and 1 Peter 1:18 in the New Testament. It has a strong Old Testament background, appearing ninety times in the Septuagint, usually as a translation of Hebrew *gal’al*, “to set free, redeem.” It is rooted in the Exodus story of God redeeming Israel from Egyptian slavery (see Exod. 6:6). Luke used a related noun as Zechariah prophesied the work of his son John. God is coming to redeem his people. Anna explained the significance of the child Jesus to those who waited for the “redemption of Jerusalem” (2:38).

The term is often used in the process of paying a ransom or price to gain the freedom of a slave. Luke sees Israel in captivity just as they had been in the time of the Exodus. In sending John and Jesus, God had repeated the miracle of the Exodus. He had paid the ransom price and freed his people from slavery. But the freedom was not through military victory as in Egypt but through the work on the cross, paying the price for the slavery to sin. Paul used a related verb to confess that by Christ's death we are set free, redeemed, ransomed from our slavery to sin and death. Christ is the one who sets us free, that is, redeems us (Acts 7:35). He came to give his life as a means of liberating or redeeming us (Matt. 20:26).

The disciples saw in Jesus the one who would bring a new Exodus and free the nation from its Roman captors. Instead Jesus proved to be something much more—the Redeemer who freed them from sin and death. But at this point the two on the road to Emmaus had no idea of this.

The third day was important in many ways for the disciples in this context. By the third day the body would start to decay (cf. the four days of John 11:39). Three days should have given the news about Jesus time to circulate for all people to know about it. And three days was the time Jesus set for his being raised from the dead (Luke 9:22).

24:22–23. The disciples had not believed the women, but looking back on their story, they admitted their amazement at what the women said. They said Jesus was alive. Still, the disciples did not go out looking for Jesus. They did not stay together waiting for the risen Jesus to come to them. The disciples simply left Jerusalem for the safety and familiarity of Emmaus. Telling the story of resurrection did not elicit faith immediately from the disciples. It simply brought astonishment.

24:24. The women's story was verified. Some of the men went to check it out. This would probably include Peter's experience. The tomb was empty as the women said. But no Jesus. Stories of resurrection but no resurrection sightings. What did one do? What could one think? Could one believe?

24:25–27. Jesus had heard enough. He called the disciples foolish just as Paul referred to his Galatian readers (Gal. 3:1, 3). The evidence stood before them, and they would not believe. They had not even placed this evidence over against the greatest source of knowledge they had. Scriptures pointed to Messiah's suffering before entering his glory. The disciples had it all reversed. They wanted Messiah to establish the glory of David's kingdom on earth before he died, his death probably marking the beginning of a new Davidic dynasty in Jerusalem. Jesus read Scripture in an entirely different way. He started with Isaiah 53 and saw suffering as the first necessity for Messiah. Only after suffering and death would glory be achieved, and this would be a glory entered after death, not a glory established on earth.

Then these two disciples received what each of us would give anything to have: Jesus' own interpretation of Scripture. Jesus showed just how the intention and wording of the Old Testament Hebrew Scriptures perfectly prepared the way for Jesus to come, minister, teach, heal, exorcise, be betrayed, suffer, die, and enter glory. What happened to Jesus was nothing new and unexpected. God had been preparing Israel for this all along. Scripture was full of Jesus. Any educated Israelite should be able to read Scripture and see Jesus.

24:28. Jesus started to leave the two disciples just as the conversation got interesting. He would let them go on home, and he would continue his journey.

24:29. The disciples would have none of that. They had a good excuse. Evening was falling. He could not go farther. He needed a place to stay. They had one. "Come on in. Let us continue the discussion. We want to hear more of what you say." Still, they did not recognize him or realize that his interpretation of Scripture pointed to no one but himself.

24:30. A major component of any meal was bread. Jesus acted as host, broke the loaf of bread, and distributed it to his disciples, just as he had often done, and especially just as he had done during the Last Supper. He said a prayer of thanks over the bread. The way he did it caught their attention. Now they focused on him.

24:31. Recognition came. It was Jesus. Immediately, he was gone, disappeared into thin air. This he could do in the resurrection body. He was now different from the way he had been before the crucifixion and resurrection.

24:32. They began immediately to share their thoughts and feelings with each other. Their grief had blinded them. Their attention to their own loss and sorrow prevented them from focusing on God and finding what God was doing for them at that very moment. And all this was a part of what God was doing, so they could hear Jesus out before they realized what was happening. A disciple could see the risen Lord without knowing he was seeing the risen Lord. Resurrection faith depended on more than just physical presence and physical sight. It depended on spiritual presence and spiritual sight. That came in the breaking of bread, a symbolic act that took them back to the night of the Lord's Supper. They knew their hearts burned. They knew something special was happening as they heard Jesus explain Scripture. But they did not know him until they broke bread together.

24:33. The two disciples had to share their experience. No one in Emmaus would understand. They had to go back to the other disciples. They found them in their gathering place in Jerusalem. The eleven apostles were there. This means the two going to Emmaus did not include an apostle.

24:34. The two from Emmaus were not the first. Their story was not unique. The several women could not convince them that Jesus was alive. Simon could. What was the difference? Jesus had appeared personally to Simon and revealed himself to him. Luke does not tell the story of revelation to Simon Peter. He simply reports that Simon's story had convinced the others of the reality of the resurrection. People could believe without seeing the risen Christ. Personal appearance was not necessary to make people believe. Strong personal testimony about being with the risen Jesus was the necessary ingredient to make the resurrection story believable.

24:35. The Emmaus Road walkers added their testimony. They emphasized that recognition came only in breaking of bread. Physical presence was not enough. They needed the spiritual presence of the supper with the Lord. In so doing they left the ongoing church a reminder. Jesus is present with his people as they break the bread of his supper and remember his body and his blood.

The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). (Lk 24:13-35). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.