

April 22/23, 2023

## The Resurrected Jesus and Our Confusion

*Here & Now Series*

**Luke 24:13-35**

Pastor Matt Meyer

Good morning. It's so great to sing about our risen King and what the church worldwide calls Eastertide, this time after Easter where we kind of *ride the wave* is how I think about it. And we've chosen, as a church, over this course of these weeks, to look at the resurrection appearances of Jesus, right? And how does the resurrected Jesus come to us in many different facets of life?

Last week, Jeff walked us through how Jesus came and met Mary Magdalene in the garden, in the midst of her sorrow, in the midst of her grief. And it's such a beautiful story in the way Jesus comes, and when He speaks her name, she recognizes Him. Speaks! It's such a personal, relational way that Jesus comes to Mary Magdalene in her sorrow.

Today we get to look at what's considered the second kind of chronological order of resurrection appearances. This is in Luke, Chapter 24. That's where we're going to be if you want to turn there in your Bible or look it up on your phone. It's one of my favorite stories. If you don't have a Bible, I'd invite you to look on with someone next to you. I'm sure someone would be happy to share with you.

I'm going to kind of set the scene for you because we're jumping into the middle of Luke 24, and it's probably—if you've been here the last couple of weeks—going to sound very familiar to you. In the beginning verses of Luke 24, we find out that it's the third day since Jesus was buried, and some women are on their way to the tomb with spices early in the morning to anoint Jesus' body. They find out that He's not there. The tomb is empty; Jesus is gone! And while they're trying to figure this out, sorting through it, two angels appear to them in Luke's account and tell them, "Jesus isn't here. He's risen!" So they go back to tell the other eleven disciples, and immediately upon hearing it, Peter jumps up and runs to the empty tomb to confirm their story. And Jesus is not there. All he sees are the linen wrappings that Jesus was buried in. It sounds very familiar if you've been here the last couple of weeks. We're going to move on from that story and pick up our story in verse 13:

**And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. And they were talking with each other about all these things which had taken place. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus Himself approached and *begun* traveling with them. But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him. (\*NASB, Luke 24:13-16)**

So here we have two disciples, two followers of Jesus, walking on a road. Some people think that these could be two men, but some scholars also think—there's a line of thought—that it could be a married couple. We'll find out in another couple of verses that one of them is named Cleopas. And there's a line of thought that Cleopas is the same as a man named Clopus from John Chapter

19, verse 25, in John's account of the crucifixion. And in that verse, we're told that Mary, the wife of Clopus, was watching the crucifixion with Mary Magdalene, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and several others. So there's some thought that Cleopas and Clopus could be the same individual. So perhaps this is Cleopas and Mary who are walking on this road. Perhaps it's just two men. It doesn't really matter; we can't really know. But what we do know is that they're followers. They are disciples. They had been with the other twelve, as we find out as the story goes along.

And they're walking along a road to Emmaus. Now there are several different towns by the name of Emmaus during this time, so we're not sure which one. There was one that was known to be three and a half miles northwest of Jerusalem. So maybe the seven-mile reference here is a round-trip figure. We don't know; we just know they're on their way to Emmaus. And as they were walking, they were **talking and discussing** the things that had happened. And the word for **discussing** in verse 15 is a word that means *debate*. It means *an intense discussion* is going on. They're trying to figure this out...sorting through this. And as they're doing this, Jesus comes along, approaches, and begins to walk with them...but they don't recognize Him!

Now, I want us to stop for just a moment and ponder this. This is somewhat similar to many of the stories where Jesus is not recognized in his post-resurrection appearances at the beginning. But I think that this is where this passage begins to come into our lives in the *here and now*. This is where many of us live. We walk down all kinds of roads in life, and Jesus is right there traveling with us, and we don't even know it. I find myself in that place often, where I forget, "Oh yeah, Jesus is here. It seems like He's not. I don't always recognize Jesus is with me." But it's a beautiful thing about Jesus, that He's willing to walk down any and all of the roads that I choose, or you choose, in this life. He might not like where the road leads, but He's willing to walk down it with you.

But how can these disciples not recognize Him? They saw Him alive, two, three days ago. They saw Him. Now the passage says **their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him**. I think you could read that in a couple of ways. One way that I used to read it is that God Himself, or Jesus, prevented them from recognizing Him. I don't think that's what's happening anymore. I think our passage will bear some of that out.

I think there are three potential reasons besides that, that may be why they couldn't recognize Him. The first one is this: They're not looking for Him. They don't expect Him to be alive, even though they already had a report. The second one is this: There's possibly something different about Jesus' resurrection body, which we're going to find out there is, as we go on, and there are some differences in other passages. And maybe that makes it hard for Him to be recognized. The third one, though, I think is key. They're lost and confused in the circumstances of their lives, and it's hard for them to see past it. It just doesn't seem like things are the way they're supposed to be.

But even though they're not looking for Jesus, He's looking for them. And even though they don't recognize Him, Jesus is content to travel this road with them. So let's look and see what happens in their conversation. Verse 17:

**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. 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?” 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.**

(Vs. 17-19)

So, apparently the discussion is so intense that Jesus wants to know what they're talking about. So He asks, “Hey, what are you guys talking about?” And literally, it stops them in their tracks. I just picture that they're walking along, Jesus and the disciples, and as He asks this, He just keeps walking, and they're standing back here because they're so stunned. Maybe they're picking their jaws up off of the ground. They cannot believe that this guy does not know. “*Are you the only one? How can You not know? Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem in these days and don't know what has happened?*” And Jesus says, “**What things?**” which, sometimes when I read this passage, I think there's got to be a hidden camera somewhere, right? And Jesus is going to say—in modern speech for the young people—“You just got punked.” For the older ones in the crowd, He's going to say, “Smile. You're on Candid Camera.”

Okay. What's the deal with the way He's acting here? Now some scholars think that He's just being playful, that it somehow reveals how joyful Jesus is. And I think there's some merit to that. If anyone at this stage in the game, at this place in history, has reason to be joyful, it's Jesus.

John Eldridge describes it this way. He says, “*Just a few hours ago, Jesus walked out of the grave with the keys to Hell swinging on His belt and the salvation of humankind in His back pocket. Jesus is about as happy as anyone has ever been in the history of the world.*” And I think that's true. I think Jesus is joyful. I think He has reason to be joyful.

But when I stop and think about it, I think there's more to this than Jesus just playing dumb, being playful. I think it reveals to us how Jesus comes to us in the *here and now in our confusion about life*. I think He's seeking to enter into these disciples' circumstances right where they are. It's a really beautiful thing. He wants to understand how they're feeling, what's going on in their heads. So He asks questions, and He listens. He wants them to tell Him about these things. And so they do. We'll start in verse 19:

**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, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to the sentence of death, and crucified Him. 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. But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning, and did not find His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive. 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.”** (Vs. 19-24)

So we find out what it is that they're discussing. They're trying to figure out, “What does all this mean? The tomb is empty! Where is Jesus? He was the One we thought was going to redeem Israel. We had put our hope in Him.” I think these disciples had probably given a portion of the last three

years of their lives to following Jesus. They may have sacrificed, given up a job, to follow Jesus into His kingdom dream. They had placed their hope in Him. But now all that's gone because Jesus has died. He was delivered over to the rulers. They crucified Him. These disciples don't know what to make of this. It's as if they say—and now here's the really confusing part. “It's the third day since that has happened, and some women went to the tomb this morning, and His body was gone! And they saw angels, and the angel said He was alive. Then some others went to confirm that story, but they could not find Jesus. All they saw were grave clothes.”

Put yourself in these disciples' place for just a minute. They don't know what we know. They don't have the rest of the New Testament. They don't even know it's Jesus who is talking to them. They're just trying to figure out the circumstances of their lives. It's confusing, and they're discouraged. We were told earlier that **they stood still, looking sad**. They're confused and they're discouraged because things did not work out the way they thought they were going to work out.

I wonder this morning if you've ever found yourself in a place like that, where things didn't work out the way you thought they were going to work out. Maybe you wanted to get into a certain school, and you applied. You had good grades, did everything correctly, but you didn't get in. Or maybe you needed to get a certain score on your ACT so you could get the scholarship that would allow you to pay for college. You studied hard, and you did one of the online courses and all of that stuff, but you just never quite got that score. Or maybe you're interested in someone romantically, and you thought things were going pretty well. You've gone on a few dates, but now you're finding out that that person thinks differently than you. See, there are as many stories like that as there are people. And perhaps you're thinking about your own situation where things did not work out the way you thought that they would. It can be so confusing when dreams and plans don't work out the way we desire.

And it gets even more confusing when we bring God into the mix. Because most of us, I think as followers of Jesus, as we're making our plans, following our dreams, we're submitting to Jesus and we're saying, “Would You lead me in this? Would You guide me in this? Would You help me figure out the right way to go?” And we think He is, but then it doesn't work. Isn't that true for these disciples? They thought Jesus was the One who was going to redeem Israel. They had made certain decisions, to follow Him, perhaps sacrifice things, and now it's all gone. You can feel like all hope is gone, and God is absent. But the beautiful thing about Jesus is that He is willing to come find these disciples who are lost in their confusion and in their discouragement about life. He comes and He asks questions, and He listens, and He walks with them. And now He's going to go a step further. Verse 25:

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

So, how does he enter into their circumstances? He brings the truth of the Scriptures to bear on their situation. He gives them what I would consider a mild rebuke. And then He begins to explain to them from the writings of Moses, all the way down through the rest of the Old Testament, how it was necessary for the Christ to suffer before entering into glory.

This is one of the things Jesus will do for us all through our lives. He will bring the truth to bear on our circumstances. And if you're going to live your life as a follower of Jesus, He will seek to bring the truth to your circumstances. He's willing to walk down whatever roads you choose in life. He's given you free-will to make your decisions and your choices, and He'll walk those roads with you. But as He does, He's going to bring the truth of the Scriptures into your circumstances and your attitudes and your beliefs and your thoughts and your actions. What will that look like? We just saw what it looks like for these two disciples.

Jesus did this with almost everyone He met when He was walking on the earth. He did it when He met the rich young ruler. He did it when He met the woman at the well. He did it when the woman caught in adultery was brought before Him. I think multiples of the disciples had multiple opportunities, interactions, experiences with Jesus, where He brought the truth to bear on their circumstances and into their lives.

But here's the deal. When Jesus shines the light of truth into our circumstances, a lot of times it can be like these bright lights that are shining on me right now. And if I were to look right into them, it's really bright, and it's hard for me to see. That's what it's like, sometimes, when Jesus brings truth and reality.

Isn't that true for these two disciples? They can't see Jesus. They don't recognize Him. They can't see the ultimate truth about Jesus' death and resurrection, even though they had probably been told. We know Jesus predicted His death and His resurrection multiple times to His followers, and it just went right over their heads. But now they're living in the midst of it. Supposedly, that's what's happening. That's what they were told, but they still can't figure it out. I think that's why they don't recognize Jesus when He comes to them. Not because their eyes are prevented, but because this whole idea of Jesus rising from the dead is so foreign to them. This couldn't possibly be Jesus; they're not even looking for him.

One Bible teacher says it this way. "Many times coming to terms with the truth and reality is like coming out of a dark room into bright sunlight." Think about this with me for a minute. So, you went to the movies in the afternoon—a matinee—and took the half day off, right? And you're in there for two and a half hours. And then you leave, and you don't walk out into the lobby. You go out that little door down in the corner that leads to the alley right outside, right? And what happens the moment you get outside? The first thing you do is shield your eyes because it's so bright. You've been in the darkness for over two hours, and it's hard to see.

A lot of times when Jesus reveals truth to us, that's what it feels like. It's hard to understand. Sometimes I'm not sure I like what I'm seeing. But Jesus is going to do this for us over the course of our lives, all through our lives. So, if that's true, then I would start asking myself the question as a follower of Jesus, "If I'm confused, if I'm discouraged, if I'm not sure that I like my current circumstances, or what Jesus might be saying to me about them, what should I do?" Well, I think Jesus gives us the answer to those questions in another passage where he's talking about truth. So, I'm going to invite you to put your finger in Luke 24 because we're going to come back there. And now I want you to flip with me over to John, Chapter 8. In John chapter 8, Jesus is teaching. He's debating with the Jewish leaders—and a lot of people are listening to Him. And particularly right now, they're described as Jewish. So, in verse 31, Jesus makes this statement:

**So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” (John 8:31-32)**

Now that last part of the verse—actually, verse 32—you've probably heard it; it's quoted all the time, but often quoted out of context. Without verse 31, it doesn't make any sense. It's the second half of a sentence. You need verse 31 where Jesus says, **If you continue in My word.** That word **continue**, it's the same word that's translated in other places, John 15, as *abide*. It means *to stay, to live in, to obey, to live according to*. So Jesus is saying here, *“If you continue in My word, if you stay in the truth, if you live according to it, then you will be a follower. And then you will know the truth in a different way, an experiential way, and the truth will set you free.”* It's like the idea of leaving a dark room and going out into the sunlight when you leave the movie theater, and you put your hand up. Eventually, if you stay there, what happens? Your eyes adjust and you can see and no longer need to go back into the darkness.

Jesus sets up a cause-and-effect relationship in John 8: “If you do one thing, then the next thing will happen. But if you don't do it, then it won't. If you don't stay in the truth, then you won't really know it and it won't set you free.” I think Jesus is saying to these people, “If you'll just stay in the truth, if you'll just sit in it for a little bit; if you'll just consider it; if you'll just try changing your mind according to what I'm saying, if you'll just start to live according to it, you'll see how it works. If you'll just begin believing that Jesus is actually active in your confusing and discouraging life, if you just let that thought work on you for a little bit, and if you just stay there, you just might start looking for Jesus in your situation. Now I want you to notice how the Jews that are listening to Him respond in John chapter 8. Look at verse 33:

**They answered Him, “We are Abraham’s descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, ‘You will become free’?”**

So it says if Jesus is saying, “Hey, **if you will continue in My word, you'll know the truth and the truth will set you free.**” And they're saying, “Well, that's a little bit bright. Freedom? We're Abraham's descendants. We've never been enslaved to anyone. We don't need freedom.” To which Jesus could have said, “Hello. You're enslaved right now to the Romans. What about 400 years in Egypt? I guess that wasn't Abraham's descendants that were down there. What about 70 years in Babylon? What about the Persian Empire?” But that's not what Jesus says. He doesn't talk like that. He's not nearly as sarcastic, right? But if you were to read further in John 8, He continues to teach the truth, but those who are listening, refuse to even consider it. They just continue to argue. There's no place for them to stay in the truth, to abide, to consider it, to think about it, to try to live according to what Jesus is telling them.

Now, jump back to our story in Luke chapter 24. I want us to see how these two disciples respond. Remember, He's just finished walking them through from Moses down through the prophets, how everything testified about Jesus and His death and His resurrection. Verse 28:

**And they approached the village where they were going, and He (meaning Jesus) acted as though He were going farther. 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.** (Vs. 28-29)

What are they doing? They’re saying, “Stay with us,” and remember, they still don't know it's Jesus. But something has caused them to want to hear more from this strange man who, though He didn't know anything about what's happened, certainly has a way of putting it into perspective. One of the things that Jesus is doing for these followers, and we can learn from it, is that He's teaching His followers how to recognize Him when they can't see Him. Meaning when He comes to them as the Holy Spirit in just a few short weeks, they will see the nature of their relationship with the Holy Spirit will be different. And if we wanted to know more about that this morning and we had more time, we would go to John chapter 14 and we would go to John chapter 16 where Jesus talks about how the Holy Spirit will come and how He will minister and what He will do. And just quickly, He says He's going to take from what is Mine and bring it to you. He's going to remind you of everything that I've said to you. He's going to show them how the Scriptures testify about Jesus, the same way that these Old Testament Scriptures testified about Him. And it seems like they're catching on. Look at verse 30.

**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. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight. 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?”** (Vs. 30-32)

Now, I'm not sure exactly what happens when **their eyes were opened**, but I think one way of looking at it is this: They had remained in the truth long enough that their eyes begin to adjust, and pieces begin to fall into place. And then Jesus takes the bread, and He blesses it, and He breaks it, something, by the way, they had probably seen Him do many times, whether it was at the Last Supper, or the feeding of the 5000, or the feeding of the 4000. So, when Jesus takes the bread and He blesses it and He breaks it and He reaches out to hand them a piece, perhaps His sleeve gets caught and they see His scars, and it clicks, and they recognize Him. And then immediately, Jesus is gone. He disappears! I don't know what to do with that. I told you there were differences about His resurrection body, right? You're going to see in a future story, He walks through locked doors.

But I think verse 32 tells us why they wanted Him to stay. We see the light beginning to dawn. What do they say when Jesus opened the Scripture to them, when He applied the truth to their circumstances? Their hearts were **burning within them**. You can interpret that in a lot of ways, I think. Maybe it means their hearts were excited. Maybe it means they were amazed. Maybe it means they were convicted. Maybe their hearts **burning** means it started to make sense. Maybe it's all of those things combined, and more. And then the last verses of our passage tell us that they get up immediately and walk all the way back to Jerusalem, whether it's three and a half miles or seven miles, it doesn't matter. You don't walk and travel at night in this time period. That's when

robbers come out, when wild animals come out. It's not safe, but they cannot wait to tell somebody about their experience with Jesus.

So what can we take from this passage for our lives? I have 3 suggested principles for you. The first one is this: When we are not necessarily looking for Jesus, He's looking for us. When we're confused and discouraged and life is not necessarily working out the way we thought it was, Jesus is not absent. He's present, He's come looking for us. We may not be able to recognize Him or understand what He's doing in our circumstances, but He's present. When we're not necessarily looking for Jesus, He's looking for us.

Secondly, there's always a larger picture than what we can see. One of the things Jesus does when He applies the truth for these disciples is, He explains the larger picture of what's going on. There's always a larger picture than what we can see.

Thirdly, as Jesus walks with us, He will always, always seek to apply truth to our circumstances. Truth might be hard for us to see; we might have trouble grasping it, and it may not change the challenge of our situation really at all. I just love the way Jesus applies the truth for these two disciples. What does He do? He walks with them. He asks questions. He doesn't come lecturing. He listens. He speaks the truth, and then He waits for their reaction. He waits; He doesn't keep ramming truth down their throat. He acts like He's going further, waiting to see their reaction. Their reaction is very different than the Jews that Jesus was arguing with in John chapter 8. They say, "Stay with us. We want more." And those are all good principles to remember when you find yourself in confusing circumstances, but what's the application? Is there anything besides remembering those things for me to do? And I would say in its simplest form it's, "Take your own Emmaus walk with Jesus." You can do that in a lot of ways. I'm going to talk about two this morning. I'm going to talk about it missionally and then I'm going to talk about it in terms of your personal relationship, and your situation.

Let's talk about missionally first. One of the things we'll notice in all the resurrection appearances over the course of these next weeks, is that Jesus comes to us in the challenging circumstances of life, right? Sorrow, grief, doubt, fear, confusion, and we need Jesus to meet us in those places. But Jesus' desire to meet us in those places isn't just for us. It's also for the sake of the world. In every passage there is a sense of mission. You can see it as the two cannot wait, and so they get up in the middle of the night, and they go all the way back to tell others about their experience with Jesus. And if we were to read on in Luke 24, you would see that Jesus appears to all of them again. He expounds the Scriptures to them again, and then He says that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be preached to the entire world starting in Jerusalem. Jesus comes to find us in our confusion, to care for us. But also He comes so that we can take His message to everyone, and I would say particularly to our circle of influence, which is what Jerusalem was for them and their immediate vicinity.

So, take an Emmaus walk with Jesus around your neighborhood. Before you go, take a little piece of paper or a card, and write a list of names of your neighbors, and we're going to expand the view



of neighbors. You can write down the names of people that live next door to you, or across the street from you, and that's good. But also think about people you're close to: your friends, your family, people you work with, people that you are in regular contact with. Write those names down, and then jot down just a few things you know about these people that would help guide you in your prayers. And then go for a walk, and remember, Jesus is with you. Ask Him to reveal to you the larger picture of what's going on in these people's lives. Ask Him to speak to you about how you could serve and care for these people. Ask Him to give you opportunities to share with them about your life with Jesus.

This relates to how we're doing Serve Day as a church this year. This year Serve Day is about caring for and reaching out to our neighbors, serving them with the love of Jesus. If you're in a Life Group, you're going to get the chance to do this together in a couple of weeks. It's not this week, but in week 5. So, you're going to get to talk about it in Life Group these next couple of weeks and get used to the idea. I know it may be out of the comfort zone for some of us in different ways. That's why I'm talking about it now. And you're not going to do it for three more weeks, so you can get used to the idea, and you can pray, and you can ask Jesus to help you. And you can make your list.

But if you're not in a Life Group, you can do this on your own. You could do this with a few friends, and walk around your neighborhood. Imagine with me for a minute how our city and the people in our city could be changed if, over the course of this year, thousands of us from Lincoln Berean were just walking and praying and listening to what Jesus has to say. Imagine how that might change our city and surrounding communities. Imagine how it might change us. It would be transformational. So, take an Emmaus walk with Jesus around your neighborhood. That's one way to think about it.

There's another way though. This is for when life's not working out the way you thought it would. It could be when you're discouraged, when you're confused, when you've made mistakes, and you're feeling ashamed, maybe. When you've spent several months giving your heart and your life to a relationship, and now you're broken up. When you've tried to reach out to your neighbors, and everything that you do just seems to fall flat, and you don't know what to do. When maybe you, or someone you know and love, has serious health problems and the prognosis isn't good. What do you do then? You take an Emmaus Road walk with Jesus, and then in those types of situations, I would say you take a couple of things with you. Number one, you go back to what you know to be true. You go back to the truth that you know to be true about God and about yourself. When things are confusing for me, and I'm discouraged, and I have a hard time seeing Jesus or understanding what He's allowing in my life, I go back to the Scriptures that have been particularly meaningful for me at other confusing times in my life.

So, if I'm walking with Jesus on this walk, I would probably take Psalm 56 with me, and I'd quote it to myself, or I'd read it to myself because Psalm 56 is a psalm that was meaningful to me when my wife—my first wife—battled cancer and then passed away. It reminds me of who Jesus is, that God is for me, not against me, that He's with me, that I am His child. So you go and take a Scripture

where God has been meaningful to you, and you go back and you stay in what you know to be true when life is confusing and discouraging. And if you don't have one of those passages, ask Jesus to give you one, because He's certainly willing. He's coming to find you in your confusion.

And then secondly on that walk, you ask Jesus to help you see Him because, even though you might not be able to see Him, He's present. You might not be seeking Him but He's seeking you. He's coming to find you the way He came to find these two disciples who were walking away from Jerusalem, maybe never to return. And then you ask Jesus to help you see your circumstances from His perspective.

Now just practically for a minute, when I say go for a walk with Jesus, I mean, literally, go for a walk outside with Jesus. I don't mean sit down and pray and picture in your head yourself going for a walk with Jesus and talk about it. That's okay, but part of the struggle that I think we have as we pray about situations that are confusing and discouraging, is that our minds get caught in cycles and circles of worry and frustration. We try to reason it out, and it just spirals downward. But if we were to get outside and walk, the perspective is different. We've sung about it this morning—all creation. Right now, Spring is showing us new life if you were to get outside now. If you are not able to walk, I understand that. Go outside and sit on your porch or go for a drive or have someone take you for a drive. Because the change of scenery as you talk with Jesus, and you recognize all that's going on and what's around you, it will change the way you see things. So go on your own Emmaus Walk with Jesus and allow Him to bring truth into your confusion. That's how He comes to us. Let's pray.

*Heavenly Father, Jesus, thank You for how You don't leave us alone. We thank You for how You come in this passage to these two disciples gently, relationally, not lecturing, but speaking what's true. And I pray for my brothers and sisters here this morning who have their own places of confusion and discouragement, and some maybe, Lord, that are facing devastating circumstances. Jesus, may they recognize that You're coming to find them if they can't see You. And we pray that You will enable us to see You. Would You open our eyes? Would You help us to see reality from Your perspective? Would You reveal to us the things that You're doing, even when it seems like You're absent? And, God, would You remind us of what's true: that You love us, that Jesus rose from the grave, that life is full of possibility, and You are present. We pray this in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen.*

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## SPRING 2023 // WEEK 2

### Life Group Questions

Easter Here and Now // April 22-23, 2023

The Resurrected Jesus and Our Confusion // Luke 24:13-35

## Serve Day – Prayer Walk

This year for Serve Day we are asking all of our Life Groups to participate in a Prayer Walk together during Week 5 of this Life Groups Session. On that week, you will venture outside as a group and take time to pray for those in your sphere of influence which includes, but is not limited to, your family, neighbors, those you work with and those you see on a regular basis. **Imagine what God may do when over 1000 of us from Lincoln Berean are praying for thousands of others in our city!**

There are several things you can do to prepare for this time together.

1. Discuss this with your group. We realize this may be a little out of our comfort zones. Take a few moments to share about that with the people in your group and pray together.
2. Make a list of those in your circle of influence (as defined above).

What do you know about these people that could lead you in your prayers for them?

Ask God to begin revealing to you the needs in their lives.

## Introduction

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This week Jesus joins two confused disciples on the road to Emmaus, yet they don't recognize him. As they explain their confusion to him, he joins in the discussion and applies the scriptures to their situation in a way that makes their hearts burn within them and eventually their eyes are opened, and they recognize him. This passage has profound implications for how the resurrected Jesus comes to us in our confusion!

To think through the main ideas in the sermon and prepare for your discussion together, we invite you to look over all the questions on the following pages and write your thoughts down before you meet with your group. Due to preferences over a wide range of groups, we do not expect you will cover every question each week.

## Warm Up *(Suggested time: 30 min)*

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1. If you had to change your first name, what name would you choose?
2. Do you tend to save everything or toss everything? Why?

## Getting Started

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Transition into group discussion.

- 1) Open group discussion with prayer. Here are a few potential prayer items:
    - a. For the Spirit of God to lead you in truth
    - b. For the fruit of the Spirit to be cultivated in your lives
    - c. For grace to hear and apply what the Spirit says to you
  - 2) Choose someone to read the passage aloud for the group.
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## Study Questions *(Suggested time: 40 min)*

- 1) What specific point or idea in the sermon has stuck with you this week?
- 2) In *Luke 24:13-16*, Jesus approached two disciples who are processing the events of their lives and yet their eyes are prevented from recognizing Him. Pastor Matt mentioned that often times we don't recognize Jesus is right next to us in our situations, because we aren't looking for Him. **How often would you say you are aware of Jesus' presence in your everyday life?**

**What are the things in your life that might prevent you from recognizing Jesus as you go about your everyday life?**

- 3) In *Luke 24:17-24*, we find out the source of the disciples' confusion and sorrow. They had expected Jesus to be the one who would deliver Israel. They had put a lot of hope in Jesus. But things had not worked out the way they had planned. **Have you ever found yourself in a place like this - where you put a lot of hope into a person or event and then things did not turn out the way you had hoped or expected? Or have you ever felt like God has let you down? If you are willing, share your situation and feelings with your group.**
- 4) In *Luke 24:25-27* Jesus explains the circumstances of these disciples from the point of view of the scriptures. He brings the truth to bear on their circumstances. In verse 32, we hear what was happening inside the disciples during this: "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while he was explaining the scriptures to us?" **Have you experienced Jesus doing this in your own life? If you are willing, share about this experience with your group.**

What are the specific scripture passages that Jesus has used to encourage you in times like these?

- 5) In *John 8:31-32* we see the idea of staying (abiding) in the truth. Staying in the truth means living in the truth, obeying the words of Jesus, and following His way which is what sets us free. Pastor Matt mentioned that many times coming to terms with reality and the truth is like coming out of a dark room into bright sunlight; we need time for our eyes to adjust. We need to stay (abide/obey/live) in the truth long enough that our eyes begin to adjust. **Have you ever had an experience like this in your life where you began to live according to the scriptures and it felt awkward at the beginning but when you stayed in it long enough, it set you free?**
- 6) Pastor Matt mentioned that one of the things Jesus was doing was teaching His followers how to recognize His voice when they can't see Him (i.e. when He comes to them as the Holy Spirit). Take a look at *John 14:16-21, 25-26* and *John 16: 7-15*. **What do you see in these passages that will help us recognize the leading of the Holy Spirit?**

How have you experienced the leading of the Holy Spirit in your own life?

## Personal Spiritual Exercises

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Just like physical exercises help strengthen and stretch our bodies for healthy living, these spiritual exercises are meant to move us spiritually in ways that may be new so we might experience inner growth. Since God longs for us to experience Him with our whole selves—mind, body, spirit—we invite you along each week to strengthen your souls with suggestions and prompts. **Next week in Life Group, take a few moments to share how the Lord may have used this exercise in your life.**

**Prayer Focus:** Consider going on your own walk to Emmaus with Jesus.

1. Take a walk in your neighborhood.
2. Talk to Jesus about a confusing situation in your life.
3. Ask Him to show you how He is present in this situation.
4. Ask Him to bring truth to bear on your circumstances to help you see it from His perspective.
5. Listen to what He has to say to you.
6. Continue looking for Jesus in your situation and for Him to reveal more truth to you as you read the scriptures during the next week.

**Scripture Focus:** Read *Galatians 5:13-26* each day this week. Consider reading it in several different translations throughout the week – The Message paraphrase is particularly descriptive and beautiful.

**What might God be saying to you through this passage about walking by the Spirit or keeping in step with the Spirit?** Consider writing your responses to this question in a journal.

## Prayer *(Suggested time: 20 min)*

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A significant part of “coming together” is being open and honest with our lives. Sitting in a group of people for prayer may be new or it may be familiar to you. If you would rather not pray aloud when it is your turn, feel free to pray silently and then say “Amen” aloud signaling the next person in the group to pray. Whether or not you choose to verbalize your prayer, everyone is a participant in sharing this time before God together.

Take a few moments to prepare a prayer request. What did the message, working through the above questions or the discussion cause you to notice about your own relationship with Jesus? Would you be willing to share your prayer request with the group?