

## Be Easter People (Luke 24:13-35)

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*10:00am The Third Sunday of Easter – 19<sup>th</sup> April 2026*

<sup>13</sup> Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, <sup>14</sup> and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. <sup>15</sup> While they were discussing, Jesus himself came near and went along with them, <sup>16</sup> but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. <sup>17</sup> And he said to them, ‘What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?’ They stood still, looking sad. <sup>18</sup> Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, ‘Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?’ <sup>19</sup> He asked them, ‘What things?’

They replied, ‘The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, <sup>20</sup> and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. <sup>21</sup> 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 took place. <sup>22</sup> Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, <sup>23</sup> and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. <sup>24</sup> Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.’ <sup>25</sup> Then he said to them, ‘Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! <sup>26</sup> Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?’ <sup>27</sup> Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

<sup>28</sup> As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. <sup>29</sup> But they urged him strongly, saying, ‘Stay

with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.’ So he went in to stay with them. <sup>30</sup> When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. <sup>31</sup> Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. <sup>32</sup> They said to each other, ‘Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?’ <sup>33</sup> That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. <sup>34</sup> They were saying, ‘The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!’ <sup>35</sup> Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

<prayer>

If I ask you to remember what wonderful thing happened on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2005, I would be impressed if you can recall that far back! (it was a Wednesday). That was the day London was awarded the Summer Olympics. There was a great deal of joy and leaping around in Trafalgar Square, as I remember. Can anyone else picture that day, now I mention it? My memory is of David Beckham being in on the act, again. But from that happy moment, it would yet be a further *7 years and two weeks* until the opening ceremony on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2012, and then for an event which would last just 16 days.

You can be sure that in the years between these two dates, a lot of other things would have happened to occupy the mind. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan continued all through that time, and a lot of political turmoil too. 2008 saw the dreadful global financial crisis, and the austerity which painfully followed. Over such a long time, keeping the vision and plan going all the way to the end would have been a real challenge for the organising team.

So, Easter has come and gone it seems. The big build-up, and then it happened. I think of Jesus coming nearer to His critical final dates – the

events of what we call Holy Week and Easter. But the closer His time came to end, it seems **the less** his disciples understood what he had been intending from the start. The gospels tell of their incomprehension all the way to the cross and beyond. Even in the forty days of the resurrection appearances, to more than 500, yet some still doubted.

If you want to achieve anything really big, and to take a long time over it, then planning, timing and understanding must play a merry dance together, and it's usually a bit messy. **The longer it takes, the less we remember the original point.** Many need to see and feel the final result of something, before they understand what the original idea was, and that may not be until after the end.

**The approach to the cross is almost total perplexity by everybody.** That Jesus's death is essential for God's plan, and that the big point shall be in His final rising again at the resurrection – well that does not even begin to make sense *until after it has happened*. The four gospels all say the same thing - **that basically no one really understood what Jesus was intending before the cross, but that still did not stop it from happening anyway.**

We are in a special gospel time now - a time to seek to understand what has happened in Christ, and why. We might think that Easter is done and finished, but the Easter season continues for 50 days until Pentecost. These days are important for Christians, because without faith in the risen Lord, we shall hardly be Christians at all.

The Road of Emmaus is one of the most essential resurrection appearances of Christ. It sort of links everything together.

Here is reminder to Jesus's disciples of all which had happened at Calvary, and why. Apparently, everyone in Jerusalem knew what had happened –

a great uproar in the temple, the authorities challenged, and then crucifixion. The astounding news that apparently Jesus had been seen alive. This pair are on a journey away from Jerusalem towards Emmaus, on the day of the resurrection, when they are joined by Jesus who is unrecognized. They are reviewing with sadness what seems to have been a bad ending and, an end to their greatest hopes. Then comes this apparent stranger amongst them:

‘Jesus himself came alongside them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, ‘What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?’ They stood still, looking sad.’

**Their response is almost irritation: ‘Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?’** But that does tell Jesus what he needs to know – it’s like a bit of a test and they seem to have failed. After all that Jesus had said when he was with them, **they still didn’t realise what God’s plan was.**

Jesus now knows that his work is to get the disciples ready to be The Church of all future. *How much do they really grasp* of what Jesus had said must happen and did happen? **If the mission of the church is to begin now, then they need to be clear on that.** They didn’t understand it before it happened, **but they must understand it now.**

All they seemed to be sure of was that Jesus was ‘**a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people.**’ That’s fine, but it’s only half the story. **The new church shall need to be able say much more about what Jesus had done if they are to spread the good news and increase the Kingdom.**

Jesus seems also a bit irritated: ‘**Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?’**

Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

I think the minds of these two disciples were still set only upon the tumult of those last days in Jerusalem, which to them seems the wrong outcome, considering all the promise of Jesus's earthly ministry. **How could the brutal death of Jesus be any sort of right-ending to all that seemed possible and hopeful?** These disciples seem almost angry with this veiled stranger who asks: *'What things happened?'* **But Jesus, as we know, is taking them on a different journey – a journey to a fuller understanding.** And we shall need that too.

I'm sure you all recall the Jesus who turned water into wine, who walked on water and who calmed the storm. **This is the Jesus who seems to have power over all creation.** Perhaps you remember the Jesus who healed the blind, deaf and lame, who cured diseases and even raised the dead. **This is the Jesus who has power over life itself.** Then of course there is the Jesus who welcomed everybody: the sinners, the outcasts the people who were considered untouchable and abandoned by God – **the Jesus of justice and compassion.** He also corrected sharply those who considered themselves perfect, and he just showed them how wrong they were. Most importantly he taught us that we should love our neighbours and enemies, just as we love ourselves. **This is the Jesus that taught us about the most important things of life.**

All that is wonderful humanity and a great example for Christian discipleship, **but it's not enough.** **These things begin, but do not complete the Christian faith in us.**

**In the wake of Easter, which comes quickly and goes again, we must remember the Jesus who died for us, to take the punishment for all the imperfections of mankind.** This is the Jesus who gave us everything, even his own life! Let us remember that he overcame death and rose again, so that we too can have hope in life everlasting. Let us be clear that nothing in the bad old world can separate us from the love of God in Christ. **This is the Jesus who wishes to stop us in our tracks and remind us of *all* he done, who both teaches us good life and transforms our destinies too.**

Simply put, Jesus makes us **look again** as we travel along the road of life. We are Easter people; **the resurrection is the Christian faith.** Christ reminds us of the entire purpose of his life, so that we might be the full-proper church of hope and salvation, not merely a crowing, moralizing pressure group telling people how to live.

**When Jesus cried out ‘It is finished’, he meant his saving work, not our understanding of it.** Those two disciples on the road went immediately back to Jerusalem, to help the others to finally see all which Christ had intended from the beginning, years before. **So think of yourselves as Easter people at all times,** try to keep on realizing and coming to see all which Christ has done. Don’t stop trying to get it.

Amen