

Encounters with Jesus

Week 1 — Jesus on the Road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35)

Context:

Two disciples, Cleopas and another (possibly Cleopas' wife), are walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus, a village about seven miles from the city. Reeling from recent events — the arrest of Jesus, the sham trial where he was convicted, and his crucifixion at the hands of the Romans — these two disciples are discussing all that they had witnessed as they grieve the loss of Jesus. But there were also strange reports of angels appearing to announce that Jesus was alive! They had even seen themselves that Jesus' body was missing. As they are walking, they are met by a stranger on the road who appears ignorant of all that has happened, but there's far more to this stranger than meets the eye.

1. The Pain of our Broken Story

- a. The story they believed would end in triumph only ended in despair, defeat, and loss
 - (1) Only one week before this, Jesus was welcomed into the city as the people cried out "Hosanna" and laid palm branches before him
 - (2) The promised King and Savior had finally come — the one promised since the beginning — but now all was lost
- b. The Story of the Bible
 - (1) God creates humanity in his image, for relationship with him, and with an eternal purpose in serving God, but we rebelled — the amazing story ends in apparent despair and loss, but there is hope for a Savior
 - (2) But Jesus, it appeared, had failed like everyone else before
 - (3) *They are grieving the loss of this story — all their hope was placed in the story that Jesus was finally the one*

2. The Broken Story is Made New

- a. With only two travelers on the road, there would be no hope for their story, but they are joined by a third — Jesus himself
 - (1) Garden of Eden —> God sought out Adam and Eve after they sinned, removed their fig leaves and clothed them himself, and offers them a story of future redemption
 - (2) Jesus—God with us—came to not only meet us when we experience brokenness, but in order to take our brokenness upon himself in order to make all things new
- b. Jesus opens their eyes to understand that the Scriptures all point to him
 - (1) "Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" *And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself*" (Luke 24:26-27)
 - (2) The Bible is *God's Story* which points directly to Jesus in all things — He is the greater prophet than Moses, the greater King than David, the greater priest than Aaron or Melchizedek, and the greater Adam who brings life where there was only death
- c. They recognize him when he breaks bread
 - (1) As Jesus told them "do this in memory of me," it is when they receive the bread Jesus gives to them that their eyes are finally opened and they understand he was with them all along

- (2) Communion is always an encounter with Jesus, who gives to us bread and drink so that we each may know that the promises made in the Scriptures are promises made and given to us all as one body

(this is one of the reasons the Protestant Reformers referred to the Lord's Supper and baptism as a "visible word" — it communicates the gospel through a different kind of "speech")

3. Response

- a. Their hearts burned within them (Luke 24:32)
 - (1) In the midst of their great grief, God's word caused their hearts to burn with passion and zeal
 - (2) The Word made flesh — Jesus — meets us through his word made text (scripture) and his word made bread, in order to make us
- b. They knew their identity and their purpose
 - (1) Knowing the truth about Jesus caused them to immediately proclaim the good news, even against all dangers they could face back in Jerusalem
 - (2) Their hearts which burned for God resulted in their immediate concern for others around them

Takeaways

1. Our story will never make sense until we understand it in the context of God's Story which points us to Jesus, the Word made flesh
2. Jesus encounters us in his word, which results in a transformed life — new hearts, new minds, new passions, and new purpose
3. When we encounter Jesus we're able to say, "I know who I am, I know what I'm here for, I know where I'm going"
4. When we are without God's word, we easily become confused and hopeless

(Discussion questions on next page)

Discussion Questions

1. Put yourself in the shoes of the disciples on the road to Emmaus. What must they have been feeling? (Remember, all this happened after the triumphal entry, Jesus' arrest and trial, his crucifixion and burial, possibly even after hearing that Peter had denied Jesus, and no doubt believing Jesus was dead)

Personally, how do you experience times of grief and confusion? (Does it cause you to close up and hide from others? Do you throw yourself into distractions? Do you lash out? Put a fake, "game face" on?)

How do times of grief affect your relationship with God?

2. Consider how Jesus addresses them and the situation. What does he show them about the Scriptures? How should this passage change our understanding of what the Scriptures are for?
3. In light of what Jesus teaches here, what would we be missing if we fail to consider how a passage relates to Jesus when we read the Bible? What story of the Old Testament stands out to you (could be your favorite) as being an amazing picture of Jesus?
4. The disciples did not recognize Jesus until he broke bread with them—a clear allusion to Jesus breaking bread on the night he was betrayed and a picture of communion, which Jesus left for us as a gift and practice.

In what way is communion a visible picture of the Gospel? How might our experience of the Lord's Supper become even more precious if we took it with the road to Emmaus in mind?

5. Share with one another, what was your moment when you "recognized" Jesus for the first time?