

Acts 2:14a, 36-41

Psalm 116:1-3, 10-17

1 Peter 1:17-23

Luke 24:13-35



“STAY WITH US”

A well-traveled dirt road wound from Jerusalem down through the hills to a village called Emmaus, seven miles to the northwest. The two men walking down this road on Sunday afternoon had been among the disciples of Jesus, and had witnessed his crucifixion. “We had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel,” they said. But now there was no hope, unless you wanted to believe the impossible. Some of the women were beginning to say Jesus had risen from the dead! “How could this be?” they wondered.

We all wonder about this at times, and feel lost. And often at these very times Jesus draws near. He has promised to do so: “*The Son of man came to seek and to save the lost.*” (Luke 19:10).

Luke 24:13-27. *That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem,* ¹⁴*and talking with each other about all these things that had happened.* ¹⁵*While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them.* ¹⁶*But their eyes were kept from recognizing him.* ¹⁷*And he said to them, “What is this conversation which you are holding with each other as you walk?”* *And they stood still, looking sad.* ¹⁸*Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?”* ¹⁹*And he said to them, “What things?”* *And they said to him, “Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,* ²⁰*and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him.* ²¹*But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since this happened.* ²²*Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning* ²³*and did not find his body; and they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive.* ²⁴*Some of those who were with us went to the tomb, and found it just as the women had said; but him they did not see.”* ²⁵*And he said to them, “O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!* ²⁶*Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?”* ²⁷*And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.*¹

• *Their eyes were kept from recognizing him* (v.16). They had seen and heard Jesus. They had even heard a report that he was alive. Yet they did not recognize him. Was it the setting sun in their eyes, or something else? What keeps us, at times like this, from knowing Jesus is present? Is it lack of faith?

They had thought he was a great prophet – even great enough to redeem Israel. Like the prophets of old, he had been a threat to the rulers. So they had crucified him, and that was the end of it. Other prophets had met this fate, and no prophet had ever been seen to rise from the dead.

These things they were saying about Jesus were essentially true. What gospel verses or events would you choose to show Jesus was *a prophet mighty in deed and word* (v.19), and *the one to redeem Israel* (v.21)? (For example, look at Matt 14:5, Luke 4:22-30 and 13:33, and John 3:16-18 and 9:16-17.)

But here comes the point: These things about Jesus are all true. Many people believe them. Muslims believe them. Atheists believe them. His teachings are known everywhere. But in themselves, they cannot save you from your mortality and your sin. There is something far greater than these things about Jesus.

Their eyes were kept from “recognizing” him, that is, seeing Jesus as “*the sacrifice that atones for our sins – and not only our sins but the sins of all the world*” (1 John 2:2, NLT). We have no idea what Jesus really “looks like,” but for us, Jesus is seen with the heart, not the eyes. People say, “We see him through eyes of faith.” In other words, what Cleopas and his friend did not see – and many today do not see – is the

¹ Bible quotations are from the RSV.

fact that Jesus was a *prophet* pales in comparison with the fact that Jesus Christ is the *fulfillment* of prophecy – that he is the promised Messiah – the Christ – the Risen Son of God – and the Savior of the world.

• *He interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself* (v.27). Are you not yet sure of the identity of Jesus Christ? Do you wonder how Jesus can be both human and divine, as he is described in the gospels? After his resurrection, many, especially Jews, were convinced after realizing how exactly he fulfilled OT prophecy. The sermons of Peter, Stephen, and Paul recorded in Acts are full of assertions that the crucifixion was ordained – that Jesus was “*delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God*” (Acts 2:23), and “*When they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a tomb. But God raised him from the dead ...*” (Acts 13:29-32). Among the many OT passages that were “written of him” are the following:

Gen 3:14-15, 22:7-8; Ex 12:21-24, 13:3, 13:17-18a; Num 21:5-9 with John 3:12-15; Deut 18:15-16 with John 1:19-23, Job 19:25-27, Ps 2:7-9, 3:1-4, 16:1-11, 18:4-19, 22:1-31, 23:5-6, 45:1-15, 69:1-21, 110:1-7, 119:105 with John 1:14 and 8:12; Isa 7:14, 9:6-7, 30:19-22, 40:10-11, 53:1-12, 61:1-3, 65:17-25, 66:10-17; Jer 31:31-34; Ezek 34:23-24 with John 10:14-16; Dan 7:9-14; Joel 2:28-32; Mic 5:2; Zech 14:1-9; Mal 3:1-4.

On the other hand, if you have come to the point where the prospects in life seem slim to none, “fulfillment of prophecy” is not going to do it for you. Note (v.15) that *Jesus himself drew near and went with* these men. By interpreting the things written of him, he was able to restore once again the hope they had felt previously. In other words, Jesus did what needed to be done. Likewise, he will do what needs to be done for you, if you will “constrain” him to stay with you, as these two men did in the following verses.

Luke 24:28-35. *So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He appeared to be going further, ²⁹but they constrained him, saying, “Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.” So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹And their eyes were opened and they recognized him; and he vanished out of their sight. ³²They said to each other, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?” ³³And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven gathered together and those who were with them, ³⁴who said, “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” ³⁵Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.*

• *He appeared to be going further, but they constrained him, saying, “Stay with us ...”* (v.28-29). After Jesus had *interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself* (v.27), Cleopas and his friend wanted to hear more, and they invited Jesus to stay with them. How different their day would have ended if they had let him go on!

Every person has this opportunity. God’s desire to reveal himself, as Jesus did in this passage, is seen throughout Scripture: “*You will seek me and find me; when you seek me with all your heart, I will be found by you, says the Lord ...*” (Jer 29:13). But the prince of this world, being the sworn enemy of God, puts plenty of other choices before us, and we find ourselves seeking other gods. If I am to be saved, the request of these men who constrained Jesus and said, “*Stay with us ...*” must become mine as well.

• *He was known to them in the breaking of the bread* (v.35). *The breaking of the bread* may have caused these men, who had been disciples of Jesus, to recall the day he did so and fed the five thousand.

But the scripture says, *their eyes were opened*, as if Jesus meant it to be this way, to cause them to understand how his resurrection was more than another great “sign” or sudden demonstration of God’s power – that the coming of Christ into the world, his crucifixion, and his resurrection, were all ordained from the beginning – that God had always known about sin and death – these great enemies of all life – and had planned from the beginning to conquer them in this way, and redeem his creation, once and for all.

After seeing Jesus risen, *they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem* (v.33). There they met with the other disciples. In these latter days you are likewise called to share this gospel message – and yourself – with others. The gospel means less to us when we share it less, and more when we share it more – with friends who have believed, as well as with friends who are yet to be convinced.