

Jesus Encounters Two Disciples

SESSION IN A SENTENCE: When Jesus encountered the two disciples on the Emmaus road, He revealed to them that all of Scripture is about Him, and the passion this news stirred within them prompted them to action: telling others they had met the resurrected Savior.

BACKGROUND PASSAGE: Luke 24:13-49

Is there a wrong way to read a book? An article in *The New York Times* posed this question and discussed Virgil's *Aeneid*, a classic poem written in the first century BC, as a test case. It is likely that Virgil intended to make much of the Roman Empire in this work, but he could not foresee the way it would be used as a literary version of the Magic 8 Ball™. In the centuries that followed, this epic poem was used as a fortune teller; a question would be asked and a random verse selected for the answer. If Virgil had the chance to explain his work today, surely he would tell us there is a right and wrong way to read and engage with his work, and no doubt fortune telling would be a wrong way. No secret key “unlocks” the *Aeneid* except the intent of Virgil, its author.¹



What are some wrong ways to read the Bible?

Group Time

Point 1: The risen Savior confronts discouragement and confusion (Luke 24:17-24).

¹⁷ Then he asked them, “What is this dispute that you’re having with each other as you are walking?” And they stopped walking and looked discouraged.

¹⁸ The one named Cleopas answered him, “Are you the only visitor in Jerusalem who doesn’t know the things that happened there in these days?”

¹⁹ “What things?” he asked them.

So they said to him, “The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet powerful in action and speech before God and all the people, ²⁰ and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him.

²¹ But we were hoping that he was the one who was about to redeem Israel. Besides all this, it’s the third day since these things happened. ²² Moreover, some women from our group astounded us. They arrived early at the tomb, ²³ and when they didn’t find his body, they came and reported that they had seen a vision of angels who said 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 they didn’t see him.”

The two disciples were discussing Jesus’ arrest and crucifixion, two events that crushed their hopes Jesus would be the One to redeem Israel (Luke 24:14). Furthermore, they had heard confusing tales of angels, an empty tomb, and Jesus being alive. They knew some details, but they didn’t fully understand all that happened concerning Jesus. What should have thrilled their hearts only caused a disagreement and discouragement.



What are some unreasonable expectations of the Christian faith that cause people to become discouraged?

The two disciples felt anything but peace as Jesus joined them on the road. In their understanding of the Scriptures, the Messiah was supposed to reign, not die. He was to be king, not crucified as a criminal. But just as their eyes had not yet been opened to see Jesus’ true identity, their minds and hearts had not yet been opened to understand and believe the truth of Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection.



What are some ways Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection have brought you peace when life is confusing and chaotic?

Point 2: The risen Savior reveals He is the focus of all the Scriptures (Luke 24:25-27).

²⁵ He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Wasn’t it necessary for the Messiah to suffer these things and enter into his glory?” ²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted for them the things concerning himself in all the Scriptures.

Jesus, still veiled from their eyes, taught the two disciples that all of God’s Word points to Him. For example, the Messiah is the better **Moses** who leads His people out of the eternal bondage of sin and exile from God’s presence. He has reconciled us to the Father through His atoning death and glorious resurrection. The promised Messiah is the One the **prophets** taught would usher in the new covenant, which promised everlasting forgiveness of sin and new hearts (Jer. 31:31-34). This covenant was sealed with Jesus’ blood shed on the cross. Our good came from His suffering, and His resurrection confirms all of God’s Word is true.



What are some ways you have seen Jesus as the fulfillment of Old Testament Scriptures?

Through the Holy Spirit illuminating Scripture, we, like the early disciples, are enabled to read all of Scripture in light of Jesus’ life, death, resurrection, and ascension. The gospel message informs our reading of God’s Word from beginning to end. Scripture points forward to the One who would crush the serpent’s head (Gen. 3:15) and be the ultimate sacrifice to atone for sin as foreshadowed in Israel’s tabernacle and temple practices. He is the Passover Lamb (Ex. 12) and the Suffering Servant (Isa. 52:13–53:12). He is the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6) and the coming King of Glory (Ps. 24).

Clarity of Scripture: God’s Word was written in a way that can be understood with the _____ of the _____. Believing the Scriptures are clear does not mean that every part is equally easy to interpret, neither does it mean we will never make mistakes in our interpretation. It does mean that with God’s help, people are capable of understanding the biblical text for themselves as they employ correct _____ of interpretation.

Point 3: The risen Savior stirs affections and motivates action (Luke 24:30-35).

³⁰ It was as he reclined at the table with them that he took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, but he disappeared from their sight. ³² They said to each other, “Weren’t our hearts burning within us while he was talking with us on the road and explaining the Scriptures to us?” ³³ That very hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem. They found the Eleven and those with them gathered together, ³⁴ who said, “The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!” ³⁵ Then they began to describe what had happened on the road and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

After the Bible lesson, the disciples invited their guest to stay the night with them. At their evening meal, Jesus took the lead. When He took the bread and broke it, the disciples’ eyes were finally opened. Through Jesus’ interpretation of the Scriptures and His actions reminiscent of the Lord’s Supper, the disciples saw, for the first time, their risen Savior who had given His body to be broken for the salvation of sinners.

After Jesus disappeared, the disciples’ first comment was about His teaching of the Scriptures. Their hearts burned with excitement at what they had learned, and then they burned to tell others about what they had experienced. God’s Word is alive and active, and as we spend time with our risen Savior in His Word, our hearts will “burn” to carry His gospel to others.



Voices from Church History

“Tell of the cross where they nailed Him, Writhing in anguish and pain; Tell of the grave where they laid Him, Tell how He liveth again.”²

—Fanny Crosby (1820-1915)

The Gospel: The gospel is an event that took place at a specific point in history, the life, death, and _____ of Jesus Christ for the redemption of sinners. The gospel is also the story of redemption that God has planned since “before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4), which runs through _____. The event and story do not exist apart from or in conflict with one another, but together inspire us to a life of _____ and _____.



What are some actions the resurrection of Jesus should inspire in the lives of believers?

My Mission

Because we have been forgiven of our sin through Jesus, the Word of God, we read and interpret the Scriptures in light of Christ's death and resurrection, and out of grateful hearts, we join with Christ on mission.

- **Since Jesus has been raised from the dead, how will you respond in faith?**
- **What are some ways your group can better encourage one another with the truth of the Scriptures?**
- **What actions will you take this week to love others well out of the overflow of your love for Jesus?**



Voices from Church History

“Stay with us, O Christ! It is toward evening, and the day is now far spent. Abide with us, O Jesus, abide with us. For where you are not, there everything is darkness, night and shadow, but you are the true Sun, light and shining brightness. The one whose way you illuminate cannot go astray.”³

—Balthasar Hubmaier
(c. 1480-1528)

Notes

Daily Study

Day 1: Read Luke 24:13-16

Wouldn't you love to know the content of the disciples' argument in this passage? The conversation probably would have stopped much earlier had Jesus allowed them to recognize Him, but He did not. The disciples had heard the reports from the women who went to the tomb, but it seems they couldn't fully believe it because they hadn't seen it for themselves. They knew the Old Testament prophecies, but the One they thought was the Messiah had died. He wasn't ruling over other nations triumphantly, removing oppression from Israel. He was not the King they expected. He was humble.

Yet He also was risen! The events the two were discussing were the events the Israelites had waited generations to experience, and when it arrived, most didn't even realize it. He chose to appear humbly to the two disciples by walking with them on a journey, not parading by them in a fanfare. He was an unrecognized risen Messiah walking with them as they discussed the happenings in Jerusalem that centered on Him.



Why do you think Jesus didn't allow the two disciples to recognize Him?

Day 2: Read Luke 24:17-24

Jesus didn't insert His deity into the conversation by declaring He knew the content of their discussion and the disappointment in their hearts. One would think these men would be the most likely to be waiting eagerly on the third day outside the tomb for Jesus' body to regain life back into its limbs, but instead, they were discouraged.

They had heard the reports of the empty tomb but still hadn't put all the pieces together. Isn't this similar to our lives at times? Sometimes we know the truth, but it's far harder to live than simply to know. Sometimes we don't understand why an event occurs or we don't feel God's presence, and we immediately turn to question the God who sustains us. We forget that He wants us to know Him and to trust Him. He has given us His Word and displayed His character through the Word made flesh, and He asks that we believe Him.



When do you find it most difficult to trust God?

Day 3: Read Luke 24:25-27

Jesus' death and resurrection shouldn't have been a surprise to the two disciples. He met their discouragement and confusion with Scripture, revealing that it all points to Him. Jesus could have shown Himself to them and removed their doubt and questioning, but instead, He revealed the truth found in God's Word about the kind of Messiah He would be. He did not immediately deliver Israel from surrounding nations but instead had come to redeem the rebel through His sacrificial death.

They later recognized Him and came to know the truth by sight, but their hearts had been stirred to faith as Jesus taught them to understand rightly the Scriptures and the greater deliverance Jesus had come to secure.



Why do you think it was necessary for Jesus to suffer to atone for sins?

Day 4: Read Luke 24:28-35

The breaking of bread was to be a reminder of Jesus' death and resurrection. The dots all finally connected as Jesus opened their eyes to understand after what must have been the saddest days of their lives. They had wrestled with whether Jesus really was the Messiah or if they had given their lives to follow a man who wasn't who they thought He was. But having gazed upon the risen Jesus moved them immediately to travel to Jerusalem to proclaim what they saw and heard to the other disciples who were also discouraged and confused.

The truth of Jesus brings hope, and fixing our eyes on Him will move us to faith and to action. This reminder is good for us today—fixing our eyes on Jesus will move us to action.



What can you do to fix your eyes on Jesus today?

Day 5: Read Luke 24:36-43

Emotions bubbled over for the disciples. As verse 41 says: “But while they still were amazed and in disbelief because of their joy...” The doubting, the terrified, and the confused were the witnesses of the greatest truth in all of history, and despite their struggle to understand and their slowness to believe, they would soon be sent out by Jesus, in the power of the Holy Spirit, as witnesses of what they had seen and heard.

Jesus called disciples to Himself who were everyday people, and He also sent those same everyday people out to the ends of the earth. They would face martyrdom and difficulty, but as those who had seen their risen King and were empowered by the Holy Spirit, there was nothing they could not endure for the sake of the kingdom of God. They had seen the wounds in His hands and feet and believed.



What are some ways to remind yourself today that the Holy Spirit has empowered you to fulfill your calling, no matter your circumstances?

Encourage One Another

Join together with 2-4 people from your group, or with your family, sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and you are responding.

Share your thoughts and reflections on the truths from Scripture in this session:

- The risen Savior confronts discouragement and confusion (Luke 24:17-24).
- The risen Savior reveals He is the focus of all the Scriptures (Luke 24:25-27).
- The risen Savior stirs affections and motivates action (Luke 24:30-35).



How have you responded to these truths from Scripture?



Why is it important that we perceive our gathering together to study God's Word as a way of encountering the risen Jesus?



What are some tangible actions we can take together as a group this week to join Christ on mission?

Notes

UNIT 25

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3. David Wenham, *The Parables of Jesus* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1989), 101.

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1. Amanda Bible Williams, in *She Reads Truth*, by Raechel Myers and Amanda Bible Williams (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2016), 6-7.
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2. Athanasius, "Homily on the Resurrection of Lazarus," quoted in *John 11-21*, ed. Joel C. Elowsky, vol. IVb in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2007), 13.
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SESSION 2

1. Andrew Wilson, *Unbreakable: What the Son of God Said About the Word of God* (IOPublishing, 2014) [eBook].
2. Kim Huat Tan, *Mark*, in *New Covenant Commentary* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015) [Wordsearch].
3. Augustine, *Tractate on John* 40.9.13, quoted in *Mark*, eds. Thomas C. Oden and Christopher A. Hall, vol. II in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001) [Wordsearch].

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2. Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1967, reprint 2008), 73.
3. Anne Askew, *The Latter Examination of Anne Askew (1547)*, ed. John Bale; quoted in *Luke*, ed. Beth Kreitzer, vol. 3 in *Reformation Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015) [Wordsearch].
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SESSION 4

1. See "Diamonds Unearthed," by Cate Lineberry, *Smithsonian Magazine* (December 2006), www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/diamonds-uneearthed-141629226.
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SESSION 5

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SESSION 1

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SESSION 4

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