



HICKORY GROVE

BAPTIST CHURCH

Easter in Exile

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Luke 24:13-27

Clint Pressley

¹³ That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴ and they were 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 that 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, a man 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 these things happened. ²² Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, ²³ and when they did not find his body, 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 ones, 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.

(Pastor prays)

Let's get right to it this morning! In this story, Jesus is alive.

Now He *was* dead, so dead, cold, and lifeless and dead in what felt like defeat. He cried out, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” The women wept, the disciples ran, and His enemies celebrated. You can hear it in this story. It felt as if the movement was crushed. It felt like that ancient serpent Satan wins! The glorious son of God was dead.

The old song says, “Low in the grave he lay, but death cannot keep its prey. He tore the bars away and up from the grave he arose!” And all Heaven sings Hallelujah, Christ arose!

But, while Heaven celebrated, the stench of death still hung like a foul odor in the disciples’ hearts. And the way Luke tells it in chapter 24, the women saw angels, Peter saw an empty tomb, but nobody has actually seen Jesus. Could He really be alive? In all of the post-resurrection confusion, Luke does something to bring great clarity. He takes us on a journey with two previously unnamed disciples. When we meet them here in the text, they are crestfallen and downcast as they meander down the road back to a nowhere town named Emmaus.

This story is unusual. This story is not set at resurrection morning. This story takes place as the sun is going down on resurrection afternoon. In fact, our passage starts out in verse 13 with the phrase, “that very day.” It’s interesting to me that Luke is the only Gospel writer to tell this fascinating story. I love this story. There’s something moving and helpful and inspiring and uplifting in Christ appearing to these two broken-hearted and humble men.

And I think it’s especially fitting for our situation right now. Just think of it, on a day when the angels were rejoicing, when death had been defeated and the wrath of God that punishes sin had been completely absorbed at the cross and a son of God was raised from the dead. On that day, Jesus comes to two depressed and lonely believers. They are two hurting people who couldn’t put the pieces together, couldn’t figure it out. It was on a day when they needed the most help and Jesus comes and interprets all of it to them. As I studied this, it occurred to me that you and I are no different, especially right now. I can’t figure out why this is happening. We need the crucified resurrected Jesus to interpret everything!

For the last five weeks I have felt like these two guys walking the Emmaus road. And we need to hear what they needed to hear. We need the grace-filled Gospel of Jesus. Today it’s my job to tell you!

Christ is King and All Your Joy Can Be Found in Him

What does the resurrection promise? What does it show us? Here are a few things to consider.

When you hurt, Jesus is there

Let's get back to the story. There are two men here in the text and they are walking to a nowhere village called Emmaus. Verse 14 says that they are having a conversation that's heavy with pain and frustration and disappointment. This is not what they signed up for, not what they expected and certainly not what they wanted when they started following Jesus. I mean, just a week ago, Jesus came into Jerusalem with a ticker tape parade. And now He's dead. They never expected life to be like this.

Have you ever felt like that? I've been going to Easter services at Hickory Grove Baptist Church for 35 years and I never dreamed it would be like this. I mean that's where we are all right now. We never expected life to be like this and it's maddening because we don't know when it's going to end. Graduations are being canceled, sports are gone, weddings are moved, and funerals are reduced. We can't visit loved ones or those dying in the hospital. Our income, we don't know what the future holds, and then Jesus shows up. Just when you don't think you can take any more of it, there He is. The Lord comes alongside. I like the way Luke says this in verse 15. *While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them.* Jesus Himself. You need to hear something right now. In your darkest hour Psalm 46:1 says, *he is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.* When you hurt, He's here.

He's here but you don't always know it

Let's look at the story again in verses 15 - 16. Jesus joined these two in their darkest hour and they didn't even know it was Him. 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.* Providentially, they were hindered from knowing it was Jesus. Why would God do that? Why would God let these two disciples stay in their despair? Why would He let that happen while the resurrected Jesus was walking right beside them? I think there is something here that doesn't play well in prosperity gospel circles. Way down in verse 27, after the two disciples tell Jesus everything that happened, Jesus Himself is going to teach them profound truths from the Bible...truth that they couldn't learn any other way.

David Platt spoke on this a couple of years ago at Secret church. Sometimes the Lord keeps us under the weight of the struggle so that He might lovingly and sometimes painfully teach us. I mean, these two disciples struggled for a while walking down the road and that's while Jesus was walking with them. Let me give you a resurrection promise right here. You will not always feel Him, but He is always there. Because of the cross and the resurrection, He will never leave

you or forsake you. Christ is King and all your joy can be found in Him. When you hurt Jesus is there. He's here, but you don't always know it!

I am thankful for this third point.

Jesus Loves Nobodies!

Let's read verse 13 and then jump down to verses 17 - 18. ¹³ *That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem,*

¹⁷ *And he said to them, "What is this conversation that 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?"*

Here are two disciples we never heard of before this and will never hear from again. In verse 18 we are introduced to one of them, Cleopas. But otherwise we don't know anything about these two! Of all the followers mentioned in the New Testament, isn't it fascinating that Jesus would join two nobodies on a back road headed to a town that archaeologists can't even find? The resurrection, no matter where you are or who you are, the risen Christ comes to you. You think you are alone on a dark trail headed nowhere and Jesus has you engaged. If you are watching this morning, it is for me to tell you that at the cross of Jesus, the resurrected Lord offers hope and forgiveness and new life. But there's something we need to be clear on.

A dead Jesus doesn't save people

Without the power of the resurrection, we don't have the forgiveness of the cross. Let's go back to the text. In verses 19 - 21, Jesus asks what are they talking about and the disciples tell the story as they understand it. ¹⁹ *And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man 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 these things happened.*

This is the gospel according to Cleopas. And his gospel has no hope in it. When you read verse 19 it sounds like Jesus is just a man. "He was a Prophet, mighty in deed and word." There's no resurrection there. If Christ is not raised from the dead, a bodily resurrection, then we are like these two guys and we have no hope. If the resurrection is not real, then we are to be pitied.

Isn't that what Paul said when he was correcting doctrine in first Corinthians? Listen to what Paul writes in first Corinthians 15 : 14. *And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.* He will go on to say in verse 17 that you are still in your sins.

A dead Jesus doesn't save people. The Jesus who was born of a virgin, lived without sin, died on the cross as a substitute and was raised from the dead on the third day, that's the Jesus who saves people!

Salvation takes faith

That's always the hang-up. Let me show you what I mean from verses 19 - 24 when the two disciples tell Jesus their story. ¹⁹*And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man 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 these things happened.* ²²*Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning,* ²³*and when they did not find his body, 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."* As far as these two disciples were concerned, they knew Jesus was dead and it was over.

Now look at how Jesus answers them in verse 25. ²⁵*And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!* I don't want to spend too much time here except to say that arguments and evidence, worldviews, only get us so far. At some point it comes down to the question: Do you believe that Christ died on the cross for your sins and that He was raised on the third day for your salvation? You have to believe that by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, you are saved. Jesus always addresses the problem and it's always faith. Do you believe? Faith in what?

At the heart of the Gospel is the cross and an empty tomb

In verse 25, Jesus gives them a fairly sharp rebuke and then He asked them a rhetorical question in verse 26. Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory? Jesus is telling those disciples that all of this was God's eternal plan from the beginning. The death of Jesus was not a tragic accident but a foreordained act of God's eternal plan. In verse 26 Jesus says it was necessary. The suffering and the glory -- two things were necessary. That's the Gospel.

Listen, the cross and resurrection is the very heart of the Gospel, and if you pull this out or smooth it over or dilute it in the least, then you have taken the power of God out of Christianity and you have no hope or joy. Christ is King and all your joy is in Him.

Then something amazing happens in verse 27.

Jesus is the key to understanding the Bible

Let's read verse 27. *27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.* Now just think about that. How would you have liked to have listened in on that Bible study? On the greatest day in mankind's history, the greatest teacher ever to live, teaching the greatest themes ever to exist. He's explaining the greatest book ever written. He's pointing to the greatest hope ever given and verse 27 says that He teaches things concerning Himself in Moses and the prophets.

In Genesis 3: 15, God tells the woman that the serpent's seed will strike his heel. That's the crucifixion. "Your seed will strike his head." That means a Redeemer is coming. Jesus says, that's me. In Genesis 22, Abraham is placing his only son on the altar. Jesus says, that's me. The bronze serpent, that's me. The scapegoat? Me. The Passover lamb; that's me! The Levitical sacrifice, me. The High Priest, me. Melchizedek, me. The ceremonies, the Day of Atonement, the blood on the altar, they all point to me! The life of David points to me. Psalm 22, talks about me. Psalm 69, me. Isaiah 53, the suffering servant, is me. When Job says he knows his redeemer lives, he speaks of me. Jonah in the fish for 3 days, that points to me. In Joel, Amos, Hosea and Micah, they all point to me! Every page in the Bible calls out, "Jesus is Lord!"

Look unto Christ to find life and hope, joy, and forgiveness. We must preach Christ! We must preach Him crucified, dead and buried. And on the third day He arose again from the dead. And Christ alone gives us joy and forgiveness. Will you, today, turn from your sin, and believe in the life and death and resurrection of Christ? Romans says: If you confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

God is our holy creator who created everything. He created you in His image. But because you are a sinner, the sin that you have has marred the image so much so that it keeps you from God. You might believe in God, but you can't know God because of your own sin. That sin separates us from God in such a way that it takes an unbelievable miracle. It took God Himself, in Jesus, being born of a virgin, living a perfect earthly life, and dying on the cross, taking the wrath of God for our sins and giving us His righteousness. When you believe in Jesus, you believe you get His righteousness and He takes your sin at the cross. Dying on the cross, they

laid Him in the grave. What we celebrate today is that God has received the sacrifice of Jesus but also we have hope beyond this life, because of the resurrection of Jesus. The Bible says that if you believe that, you will be saved.

There are two things I want to happen today. For those of you who are Christians, I want you to be strengthened today. This Gospel puts iron into our constitution that makes us able. I want the joy of the Lord to be your strength. For those of you who have resisted the Gospel, it's not enough for you to believe in God, it's not enough to believe in Jesus. I want you to believe in the life, death and resurrection of Christ. May the Joy of the Lord be your strength.

(Pastor prays)