

# **LUKE**

Part 83: "It's All About Jesus"

Luke 24:1-32

By David A. Ritchie

Sunday, April 12, 2020 (Easter Sunday)

## **Welcome**

Welcome and good morning! My name is David Ritchie, and I have the honor of serving as the Lead Pastor of Redeemer Christian Church. Whether you are a member of the Redeemer family, a regular attendee, or if this is your very first time joining us, I want to wish each and every one of you a happy Easter!

If you are a guest, and this is your first experience with Redeemer's ministry, we are delighted that you tuned in, and we would love to have the opportunity to know you. Please consider sending us an email or a text at the address or number listed below, and we would love to get in contact with you.

If you are looking for a local church to connect to, I hope you would consider becoming a part of Redeemer. *Redeemer Christian Church exists to declare the gospel of Jesus Christ with our words and to display the gospel of Jesus Christ with our lives, to our neighbors and the nations.*

We are in a time during which many of the ways that we engage that mission have changed. We can't gather together as a church family. We can't go on a mission trip to build a house in Mexico. But even though the methods of our mission have changed, our mission continues.

We are meeting online to worship and connect in gospel community. We are looking for ways to serve our city by making masks and face-shields, donating blood, caring for the children of first responders, and providing food for our medical professionals. Every day we are checking in on people and praying for people and looking for opportunities to both declare and display the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We are still supporting local and international missions and ministries around the world whose efforts are more important than ever. If you want to support that mission financially, you can give online at [RedeemerChristianChurch.com](http://RedeemerChristianChurch.com), or mail a check to our physical address at 3701 S. Soncy in Amarillo, Texas 79119.

The mission continues. The light shines in the darkness. And we have been invited to participate in what Jesus Christ is doing in the world.

So without further ado on this Easter Sunday, I want to look a passage of Scripture that gives us a foundation of true hope, even in uncertain times such as these.

If you have your Bible, I would invite you to turn to the gospel of Luke, the twenty-fourth chapter.

### **Scripture Reading**

*“But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, ‘Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.’ And they remembered his words, and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened. That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. 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. 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?’ 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, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. 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. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, 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. 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.’ And he said to them, ‘O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 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. So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, but they urged him strongly, saying, ‘Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.’ So he went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight.*

*They 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?'"(Luke 24:1–32, ESV).*

## **Prayer**

Let's pray together: *Our Father in Heaven, we thank you and praise you for the glorious resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ, by which you have defeated death and darkness and given us hope for everlasting life! Today, as we behold your Scriptures, I pray your Holy Spirit would give us open eyes to behold the risen Christ; that in seeing him, the power of his life would flow in us and through us. We pray this in Jesus's mighty name. AMEN.*

## **Introduction**

Long before I ever became a pastor, I was always highly amused by church signs, especially the ones that were trying to be funny or clever. Like "Honk, if you love Jesus. Text while driving if you want to meet him." I've always wondered about the person and the process responsible for writing what goes on the church sign. Is it the pastor? If so, was that a part of his job description when he was hired? Practically, does he have a time carved out on his calendar every week to write a new sign? Or maybe it is some type of a church committee that throws out ideas and votes on the best one? The best one that I ever saw in Amarillo was one that said, *"I'm all about that grace, 'bout that grace – no devil!"*

However, as many of you well know, for the last eight and a half years, we have very intentionally not tried to be clever with our church sign out on Soncy. Instead, for almost a decade, our sign has said the same thing day after day, week after week, year after year, which is: *"It's all about Jesus."*

And the reason this phrase has been on our sign day after day, week after week, and year after year isn't because we're lazy in the clever-department. It is because that one statement is *the deepest core value of our church*. We really do believe that it's all about Jesus. *We believe that the Bible is all about Jesus; that the church should be all about Jesus; that all of life exists because of Jesus; and that all of history points to Jesus.*

And the reason "It's all about Jesus" is because of Easter Sunday and what it represents: Jesus Christ has risen from the dead. In fact, our sign only makes sense if the resurrection actually happened. If Jesus only died on the cross, he really wouldn't be that special. Sure, he would have been a nice guy and an inspirational teacher, but he would have just been another human, because, after all, everybody dies. But 2000 years ago, Jesus did something that no one else in history has ever done – he rose from the grave, never to die again. Right now, as we speak, he is enthroned in heaven and the right hand of the Father. And one day he will return to heal everything that is broken and make all things new!

And if that story is true, then it truly means *everything is about Jesus*. But it all hinges on the resurrection. As one theologian rightly said, the resurrection is the lynchpin on

which Christianity turns. If the resurrection didn't happen, then Jesus doesn't matter. But if the resurrection did happen, nothing else matters.

The passage of Scripture that we read today (Luke 24:1-32) is a text that perhaps more than any other text in the Bible shows us how and why *"It's All About Jesus."*

Jesus has risen, and because of everything changes.

So for the rest of our time today, I want to talk about three personal implications of the resurrection that we see in this text: *1.) Because of the resurrection, Jesus walks with us in our pain – even when we can't see him, 2.) Because of the resurrection, we can understand what the Bible is all about, 3.) Because of the resurrection, we can personally know and have a relationship with the risen Jesus.*

## Exposition

### **1.) Because of the resurrection, Jesus walks with us in our pain – even when we can't see him.**

Verse 13 begins with the phrase *"That very day."* That day is the very first Easter Sunday. Three days earlier, Jesus Christ of Nazareth was crucified and killed on a cross and afterwards laid in a tomb. In the early dawn hours, several women who followed Jesus went to visit his tomb. But to their astonishment, the large stone, which had sealed the tomb, had been rolled away. They stooped inside the tomb, and the body of Jesus was gone [*"Why do you seek the living among the dead" (1896) John Roddam Spencer Stanhope!*]. Just at that moment, as these women are trying to get their bearing, two angels in dazzling white robes greet them to tell them that Jesus is not dead – but rather, he has risen from the dead!

Immediately, these women run back to the disciples to tell them what they saw. And were they greeted with joy and excitement? No. They were met with disbelief. Even the disciples thought they were hysterical and imagining things. However, some of them go back to the tomb, and sure enough, they find it empty.

And this is where verse 13 picks up. It is that "that very day." There are two followers of Jesus, walking on a road from the city of Jerusalem to a little village named Emmaus. These two disciples aren't famous people. In fact, we only know one of their names – "Cleopas." Cleopas may be walking to Emmaus with a friend. He may even be walking with his wife or son, who were also key early members of the church.<sup>1</sup> But whatever the

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<sup>1</sup> This is assuming that Cleopas is the same "Clopas," whose wife witnessed the resurrection Jn. 19:25. The early church historian Eusebius states that this couple's son later became the bishop (or lead pastor) of the church of Jerusalem after "James the brother of Jesus was martyred: "AFTER the martyrdom of James and the conquest of Jerusalem which immediately followed, it is said that those of the apostles and disciples of the Lord that were still living came together from all directions with those that were related to the Lord according to the flesh (for the majority of them also were still alive) to take counsel as to who was worthy to succeed James. They all with one consent pronounced Symeon, the son of Clopas, of whom the

case, these are not members of the original twelve disciples, but they were followers of Jesus.

And as they walk, they are talking about all of this. And as they are talking, *Jesus himself* begins to walk right next to them on the road. But for whatever reason, their eyes are “*kept from recognizing him*” (16).

So, from the two disciples’ perspective, what happens next is a stranger interrupting their conversation: “*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*” (Luke 24:17, ESV).

In that moment, they stop dead in their tracks, with expressions of grief on their faces [“*Christ on the Road to Emmaus fragment*” (1311) by Duccio]. Maybe they were trying to figure out who this man was and why he was asking this question. After all, it would have taken some level of courage to say they followed a man who had just been executed as an enemy of the state.<sup>2</sup>

But whatever the case, they respond with a sense of bewilderment. They begin to let this stranger in on the insanity and emotional roller coaster of the last few days. They tell them about how this man Jesus of Nazareth, was a mighty prophet who spoke the word of God and performed miracles with the power of God. They had hoped that he was the one who would deliver the nation of Israel from oppression and bring about the kingdom of God.<sup>3</sup> But instead, Jesus was arrested. He was tortured. He was murdered. Their hopes were crushed. Now they are in a place of disappointment, doubt, and despair. And to make things weirder, now people are saying that he’s not dead but alive.

They tell this to the stranger. And there is a sense of deep irony in the question they ask him: “*Are you the only visitor in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?*” (Luke 24:18).

Now think about it. *In reality, there is literally no one else who knows more about what has happened in Jerusalem in the last few days than the person standing right in front of them.* In reality, Jesus understands their pain more than they understand it themselves.

Some of you might be in a place of deep disappointment. Life hasn’t turned out the way you wanted or expected. Perhaps the global pandemic has caused you to be isolated,

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Gospel also makes mention; to be worthy of the episcopal throne of that parish. He was a cousin, as they say, of the Saviour. For Hegesippus records that Clopas was a brother of Joseph.” Eusebius of Caesaria, “[The Church History of Eusebius.](#)” in *Eusebius: Church History, Life of Constantine the Great, and Oration in Praise of Constantine*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, trans. Arthur Cushman McGiffert, vol. 1, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1890), 146.

<sup>2</sup> Fred B. Craddock, [Luke](#), Interpretation, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1990), 293.

<sup>3</sup> I. Howard Marshall, [The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text](#), New International Greek Testament Commentary (Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1978), 895.

fearful, stressed, or in financial need. Maybe you're bitter at God. Maybe you're bitter at the church. Maybe you're in a place of doubt or depression.

What I want you to know today is there is a risen Savior who is willing to walk right next to you even in your disappointment, your doubt, and your despair. Because of the Cross, he understands your pain better than you could ever know. He is not immune to suffering. He has tasted rejection and betrayal and humiliation and even death. But because he is alive, you can worship a God who knows your pain and walks with you in the midst of it. He is there with you, even when you don't yet have eyes to see him.

## **2.) Because of the resurrection, we can understand what the Bible is all about.**

It is clear from what he says here, Cleopas thinks because Jesus died on the cross, he cannot be the redeemer they hoped for. But in reality, it was *only* because he died on the cross that he is the redeemer.

So, Jesus corrects them with what I can only assume is the very best Sunday school lesson in the history of the world: *"And he said to them, 'O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 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 24:25–27, ESV).*

Now, this is a profound section of Scripture. Jesus is point-blank stating that his death and resurrection should not be a surprise to anyone. Why? Because, he says, *the entirety of the Old Testament – the book of Genesis to the book of Malachi – points to the life, death, and resurrection of the Messiah.*

In other words, the Bible really is all about Jesus. However, that's not the way we are tempted to read Scripture, is it? We tend to think the Bible is all about us. We think it is filled with "good advice" how we can try harder to make ourselves better people so that we will be good enough for God to love. *But in reality, the Bible is not good advice about how we can get to God; it is Good News about how God has come to us in Jesus!*

And I pray you really get this because it is a revolutionary idea that will transform the way you see the word of God. For example, we are oftentimes tempted to see the famous biblical story of David and Goliath about how we – if we are good people who really trust God – can beat the giants that face us. And, certainly, there is a component to that story that is meant to inspire us to have faith in God. However, that is not the ultimate point of the story because we are not the ultimate heroes of the story. The deeper meaning of David beating Goliath is that there was another who stood to fight the real giant of death in our place. Jesus is the true hero, the true David. We are simply the people of Israel who get to stand as our savior wins the battle for us that we could have never won ourselves.

I don't know exactly what Jesus said to the disciples on the road to Emmaus. But I do know that his lecture covered the entirety of the Old Testament, showing how he was on every single page, in every single image, in every single story. So I imagine it would sound a little bit like this quote from one of my favorite pastors, Timothy Keller:

*"Jesus is the true and better Adam who passed the test in the garden and whose obedience is imputed to us.*

*Jesus is the true and better Abel who, though innocently slain, has blood now that cries out, not for our condemnation, but for acquittal.*

*Jesus is the true and better Abraham who answered the call of God to leave all the comfortable and familiar and go out into the void not knowing wither he went to create a new people of God.*

*Jesus is the true and better Isaac who was not just offered up by his father on the mount but was truly sacrificed for us.*

*Jesus is the true and better Jacob who wrestled and took the blow of justice we deserved, so we, like Jacob, only receive the wounds of grace to wake us up and discipline us.*

*Jesus is the true and better Joseph who, at the right hand of the king, forgives those who betrayed and sold him and uses his new power to save them.*

*Jesus is the true and better Moses who stands in the gap between the people and the Lord and who mediates a new covenant.*

*Jesus is the true and better Rock of Moses who, struck with the rod of God's justice, now gives us water in the desert.*

*Jesus is the true and better Job, the truly innocent sufferer, who then intercedes for and saves his stupid friends.*

*Jesus is the true and better David whose victory becomes his people's victory, though they never lifted a stone to accomplish it themselves.*

*Jesus is the true and better Esther who didn't just risk leaving an earthly palace but lost the ultimate and heavenly one, who didn't just risk his life, but gave his life to save his people.*

*Jesus is the true and better Jonah who was cast out into the storm so that we could be brought in.*

*Jesus is the real Rock of Moses, the real Passover Lamb, innocent, perfect, helpless, slain so the angel of death will pass over us. He's the true temple, the true prophet, the true priest, the true king, the true sacrifice, the true lamb, the true light, the true bread.*

*The Bible's not about you – it's about him.*"<sup>4</sup>

### **3.) Because of the resurrection, we can personally know and have a relationship with the risen Jesus.**

Now I imagine by this point, the disciples were amazed at the words of Jesus. But if they had wanted to, they could have stopped with the incredible Bible lesson and then let the stranger go on his way as they turned in for the night. The reason I say this because the Scripture seems to make an explicit point that *"He acted as if he were going farther"* (28). Even though Jesus initiated this conversation, it seems like he is not going to force further interaction. If they had not pursued Jesus at this moment, he might have passed them by. However, the text says, *"...they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us'"* (29).

They invite Jesus into their lodging place, and there they share a meal together [**Supper at Emmaus**] (1602-03) by Caravaggio].<sup>5</sup> It is here in this moment of communion and fellowship that, at last, their eyes are opened, and they recognize Jesus for who he is.<sup>6</sup>

Now there is really so much to talk about in this passage. We could talk about how Christ's presence was revealed in the breaking of the bread, and how that relates to the Lord's Supper. We could talk about how here in Luke 24, we witness the two basic pillars of Christian worship – word and sacrament – functioning together to reveal Christ. But today, on this Easter Sunday, I want to simply emphasize that Christ is alive, and because he is alive, you can know him personally. You can have a real relationship with him.

It was possible, I believe, for these disciples to have heard a phenomenal lesson that would have helped them understand the Bible better and then to completely miss truly knowing and recognizing and having fellowship with Jesus.

And sadly, I know that there are thousands and thousands of people in West Texas who know a lot about the Bible, but they have zero relationship with Jesus. There are people who know a lot about Jesus. But they need to truly know Jesus. Today, I pray by the grace of the Holy Spirit, that if that is you, that today would be the day that you take a step toward Christ; that you would respond to his gospel; that you wouldn't let him pass by, but rather you would invite him to come home with you; that you would enter into a

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<sup>4</sup> Timothy Keller. *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism*. (New York: Viking, 2015) 77-78.

<sup>5</sup> "The similarity between this and the Lord's Supper (22:19) is striking. There is also a similarity with the account of the feeding of the five thousand (see comments on 9:16). Luke purposely portrayed this meal as a kind of Lord's Supper."

Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, vol. 24, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 613.

<sup>6</sup> "Bultmann...comments that the early church associated the resurrection appearances with meals (24:41-43;? Acts 1:4; 10:41; Jn. 21:12f.; cf. Mk. 16:14), since it expected Jesus to 'appear' at the Lord's Supper. The connection between the two types of event is rightly observed, but the wrong inference has been drawn; it was because Jesus had appeared at meal times that the church expected his presence at the Lord's Supper." Marshall, 898.



real relationship with him.

Today, I extend the invitation of the gospel to you. Repent and believe. That simply means turning away from sin and selfishness, and turning to a God who is so much better. Believe in Jesus. Believe in his death and resurrection. Receive and rest in his grace. In fact, if you need to become a Christian today, I pray you would contact us right now at the number or address listed below. We'd love to help you in this journey.

But for all of us, on this Easter Sunday, let us be a people who do not respond neutrally to the victory of God. Jesus is alive! Let us then be a people who draw near to him, as he has drawn near to us. May we be people who live like *"It's all about Jesus!"*

Let's pray together.

### **Prayer**

*Heavenly Father, we thank you and praise you for the triumphant resurrection of your Son the Lord Jesus Christ. Through Jesus that you have entered into our pain and suffering. And through Jesus you have overcome the power of death itself.*

*In this time of great trial and uncertainty, thank you that you are the Shepherd of our souls. You walk with us even through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. You walk with us even when our eyes are prevented from recognizing your presence.*

*As we enter into Easter season, may your Spirit give us eyes to see Jesus in all of life and all of Scripture so that our hearts would burn to draw near to you and you, O Lord, have drawn near to us. We pray this in Jesus's mighty name, AMEN.*

### **Gospel Community Discussion Starters**

- 1.) *Read Luke 24:1-32 and summarize this passage in your own words.*
- 2.) *Luke 24:13-16 shows the risen Christ walking with two of his disciples, even though their eyes are prevented from seeing him. If you are a Christian, have you experienced times of disappointment, doubt, and/or despair in your journey with Christ? When you look back on these times, can you see evidence of Jesus walking with you even though you didn't "see" him at the time?*
- 3.) *In Luke 24:24-27, Jesus indicates that the entirety of Old Testament Scripture (Genesis through Malachi) actually prophesied his death and resurrection. What difference does it make if we read the Bible as being all about Jesus? How else are we tempted to read the Bible?*
- 4.) *In Luke 24:28-32, the two disciples invite Jesus to share a meal with them, even though he indicated he would have gone further on the road they were on. At this communion-type meal their eyes are opened, and they see Jesus for who he*

*is. In this Easter season, how might you draw closer in your personal relationship with Jesus?*

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