

“Seeing Jesus”
Luke 24:13-35
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North Presbyterian Church

Scripture Readings

Luke 24:13-35

Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognizing him. He asked them, “What are you discussing together as you walk along?” They stood still, their faces downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, “Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?” “What things?” he asked. “About Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn’t find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.” He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. But they urged him strongly, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?” They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together and saying, “It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.” Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

“Seeing Jesus”

The story is told of a young boy who decided to go look for God. He packed a lunch and got as far as the park before he got hungry. He sat on a bench next to an old woman. They sat together for an hour. He offered her a Twinkie. She offered him a huge smile. When the boy got home he announced to his mother, I met God today, and she has the most wonderful smile! When the elderly lady got home, she said to her son, I met God today, and he is much younger than I had imagined!

Teilhard de Chardin wrote, “The whole of life lies in the word seeing.”. Our vision slogan is Know Christ, Show Christ. We strive to perceive God and make our perceptions of God know.

In the Emmaus story two people were transformed, renewed and resurrected when **Luke 24:31** **“their eyes were opened and they recognized Jesus;”**. We are all invited into the Emmaus story to see, perceive and know Christ so we can enjoy abundant life.

Luke is usually very precise. Luke filled his gospel with specifics to historically prove the validity of the life, miracles and resurrection of Jesus. The Emmaus account is an exception. There are two people, one unnamed, the other Cleopas (KLEE uh fus) is mentioned nowhere else in the Bible. Cleopas was likely male however we have no idea if the other person was male or female. The town of Emmaus does not exist on any map or historical record. Emmaus also only appears just this one time in the Bible. It appears Luke is inviting you to be the unnamed person on a journey to any town. You are invited to see Jesus, to perceive God, to Know Christ and Show Christ. You are invited to be nourished by the mysterious bread of life for passionate living.

Pastor Annette Evans invites us to see God in our life through the Emmaus story as God takes us on a journey from confusion to clarity. It is a four step practice for everyday problem solving. These steps include recognizing the problem, focus, listening to the advice of others and finally recognizing the truth and achieving clarity and certainty about what to do.

Jesus death left these two people confused, sad and restless so they walked and discussed their problems. Jesus joins them and the discussion, however they do not recognize Jesus. Through the Holy Spirit Jesus is always with each of us no matter where we go yet often we fail to recognize God in us and around us. Numerous times God has promised to always be by our side with steadfast, everlasting love. Hebrews states, **Hebrews 13:5-6 “God has said, ‘I will never fail you, I will never forsake you’. That is why we can say with confidence, ‘The Lord is my helper so I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?’”**

Jesus interprets scripture for them, but they still are confused. Jesus himself leads the Bible study and nothing happens. Jesus preached a sermon and their eyes glazed over. This aspect of the story is a great comfort for you if you have ever taught and it seemed that your listeners perceived little.

At the end of the journey they invited the stranger to stay with them for the night. Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Jesus. Suddenly in hindsight everything made sense. They journeyed from confusion to clarity. Evans concludes, “everyday problems can be solved in four steps: admitting our confusion, getting our focus, listening to others and making the connection between the answer and ourselves.”

Pastor Joseph Driskill invites us to see God in our life through the Emmaus story as God takes us on a journey from disappointment to resurrection. God spiritually and literally turned those two peoples’ lives around as they shared their feelings, wrestled with their questions, recognized Jesus and experienced God’s transformative love.

On the way to Emmaus they became in touch with their emotions and honestly communicated them to each other and the stranger. They were candid about their grief and disappointment. They shared their frustrations openly, though unknowingly with God.

They shared their questions. They wrestled with their questions. They didn’t try to fix the situation or each other. They were not rushing to quick answers. Instead they probed deeper and deeper with more questions, more searching, more seeking, looking to see.

Perhaps it was their honest share of feelings, their questions; their vulnerability and openness that enabled them to see Jesus. The moment they saw Jesus their lives turned around. They went in a fresh direction, thought differently, perceived anew and were energized for a new journey.

Pastor Brett Younger invites us to see God in our life through the Emmaus story as God takes us on a journey of worship. The walk to Emmaus was a worship service. There was sharing of joys and concerns. The Bible was interpreted. The Lord’s Supper was celebrated. They prayed. They blessed each other.

Jesus explains your life and my life through scripture. Jesus joins us at the table. Jesus gives us his life and love so we are able to share life and love with each other. Worship is a gift in which we grow in our ability to see God.

Pastor John Buchanan invites us to see God in our life through the Emmaus story as God takes us on a journey of remembering. Those two people were doing what many people do in times of grief. They are remembering, telling stories and sharing tears and laughter. We encounter God in the ordinary. We remember our way through losses, then consider who we are and who we will become. Jesus is seen by those who try to remember and love Jesus. Faith, comfort and resurrection comes to those who remember ways in which God has loved.

Pastor Barbra Brown Taylor invites us to see God in our life through the Emmaus story as God takes us on a journey of support. Taylor writes, "When my faith limps, I lean on the faith of the church, letting "our" faith suffice until "mine" returns. Later, when I am able to say, "We believe...." with renewed confidence, I know that I am filling in for others who are indisposed for the time being, as they filled in for me. My decision to say the creed at all is a decision to trust those who have gone before me, embracing the faith they have commended to me."

Pastor Patricia de Jong invites us to see God in our life through the Emmaus story as God takes us on a journey from being lost, stuck in a story to guidance and freedom. All of us are on a spiritual journey and at times we will fall into some sort of spiritual back hole, a dark night of the soul. We will be disillusioned, lost, without much hope, full of doom and gloom. The two on the road to Emmaus were so stuck in their personal interpretation of the story they couldn't understand even as Jesus explained the story. It is their invitation, their hospitality, to Jesus that set them free. Perhaps Jesus is eager to meet you through another. Perhaps you need to let your guard down and welcome someone into your life. Perhaps you need to be courageous serving a stranger. Through another you will gain a new perspective on your story, see Jesus, be given companionship, hope and direction.

I have been blessed seeing Jesus through numerous Emmaus experiences. During seminary I was anxious about my future, unsure as to where I was going. I went backpacking and found myself hiking in dense fog for two days. At the height of my anxiety I sat on a boulder, where the trail guide said was a spectacular view, peered into the dense fog and prayed for clarity for my future. The breeze picked up, the fog lifted and I enjoyed a beautiful view. Suddenly, I was filled with peace about my future as I realized even though I can't see the future God can so if I trust and I follow scripture like I did the guide book God will lead me through everything and into some spectacular experiences.

I have a journal of God sightings and a file where I keep cards and notes from people who sent me words of thanks and appreciation. When I am down, I remember by reading some of them and God lifts me up.

When I have showed gracious hospitality and listened I have been inspired by how God worked in another's life. When I have opened myself up, became vulnerable, shared my feelings and loved boldly my heart has been warmed with love.

On my recent backpacking trip out West. I was emotional exhausted, frustrated and grieving. God helped me wrestle with that on step at a time. Some how in the end God lifted the burdens and filled me with joy once again.

The Emmaus story reveals how one can perceive God warming your heart, how you can see Jesus, then in hindsight see how God was with you, guiding you, all along, then that gives you the strength to go forward. The Emmaus story reveals that if you set out to see God, when the time is right, your heart will be warmed, your eyes will be opened and you will be invigorated to journey on. These experiences of God are gifts given to us by God. It is not a journey of our doing, following a process, or a program, rather it is a story about how God is with us. It is God's grace that enables us to recognize God. Perhaps the Emmaus story is all about seeing. Jesus said, **Matthew 7:7 "Keep on looking and you will find."** Amen