

Reading

Luke 24:13-35 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

¹³Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, ¹⁶but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?"

¹⁹He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. ²¹But 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 took place. ²²Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, ²³and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. ²⁴Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him."

²⁵Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! ²⁶Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" ²⁷Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

"That same day" was Sunday – the day Jesus rose from the dead, the same day the women discovered the empty tomb first thing in the morning. It was now somewhere around late afternoon. The great Passover festival was over.

The risen Jesus appears only to followers, who have heard his claims to rise again. This reality would be frightening to non-believers. Faith is not something you can scare people into.

The risen Jesus isn't always recognizable, as we had seen last time, when Mary was at the tomb and didn't recognize him until he called her name.

The redemption of Israel in their minds was equivalent to getting rid of the Romans.

The disciples had all of this information and yet, they hadn't been able to put 2 and 2 together. They were walking as if in a fog. They had lost all hope.

Jesus's understanding of life is opposite to what the world thinks. Power is not in domination. Power is in love. Because Jesus loved so radically, the powers of the day couldn't take it – it contrasted sharply with their lack of love.

The Old Testament scriptures point to the coming of Jesus, the Messiah. There are many passages that tell details of Jesus' life and death, hundreds of years before they happened. Jesus is the key to understanding the prophecies.

²⁸As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. ²⁹But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.

³¹Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. ³²They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?"

³³That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. ³⁴They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" ³⁵Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

In their culture, hospitality was a key virtue. People went above and beyond, even or especially towards strangers. So this invitation wasn't odd, it was almost expected. Table fellowship was very important to Jesus. Jesus meets us in everyday moments and activities. Jesus is revealed in the breaking of bread – then and now.

There was no real surprise to their understanding – they had known the scriptures and Jesus' words. Everything just came together for them – the penny dropped!

Then, they are immediately drawn to sharing the good news – the Gospel – that Jesus is alive.

In God's design, death precedes resurrection. Always. Without death there is no *new* life. We see this in nature: decay leads to growth. Without a seed falling to the ground, there is no new growth. Without struggle, there is no victory. Without suffering, there is no overcoming. The disciples were hopeless and dejected before they rejoiced. As the truth about the risen Jesus begins to sink in, despair becomes delight. Without death, there is no resurrection. It is God's design. This gives us hope while we muddle through our imperfect lives, where we experience struggle, suffering and death. We do see glimpses of joy, beauty, and love. We can know that this is true.