



At Home Worship for Faith and Hope

Second Sunday of Easter

April 11, 2021

“Then the two from Emmaus told their story of how Jesus had appeared to them as they were walking along the road, and how they had recognized him as he was breaking the bread.”

Luke 24:35 (NLT)

*Call to Worship

We had hoped.

Lord, we voice our despair.

We had hoped you were our victory

We had hoped you were our earthly leader.

*We had hoped you would remove the pain and the sorrow
once and for all.*

But then we saw suffering.

Then we saw injustice.

We saw blood on the ground.

We saw death.

***And doubt swelled in our throats
and choked off our praise.***

We had hoped.

Risen Lord, revitalize our hope.

Open our eyes to see your victory.

*Opening Prayer

Living Jesus, whose presence on our daily road we often fail to see; warm our hearts with fresh confidence in your Word, so that, in making room for the stranger beside us, we find your hospitality awaiting us, and the reassurance of your presence to inspire us to tread the road again and to share the good news of your resurrection life. Amen.

No Children’s Moments This Week

Share How You Can Present Your Offering to God

Make your offering personal...through a donation or an act of service...bring to God an offering of praise and gratitude!

Sing the Doxology Together

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

A Prayer for the Easter Season (From the Church of Ireland Website)

Risen One, like those disciples on the road to Emmaus, we struggle to recognize you in the everyday journey of our lives. We seek your wisdom in the midst of the questions we have about the circumstances we find ourselves in—circumstances sometimes beyond our control, but often of our own making.

Open our eyes, Light of the World, to your work of transformation in and around us. As we walk with you day by day, may your new life be made manifest in what we say to others. Help us to understand the power of our words to hurt or to heal; give us the graciousness to make all our conversations holy.

Just as we desire that our speaking be holy, may our seeing be holy as well. We are bombarded with images everyday, O Christ, that shape our attitudes and behaviors. As you opened the scriptures to the disciples and taught them everything, open our eyes to behold you in your Word, in the beauty of nature, the beauty of another human being, and the beauty of sacred art. And in our seeing, help us to recognize and welcome the stranger in our midst.

May our welcome be a celebration of the gifts and graces of persons who are different from us and not merely some token tolerance of an outsider. You were known to the disciples in the breaking of the bread. May your resurrection presence guide us in the decisions we make about

what we take into our bodies—especially what we eat and what we drink. Help us to understand our eating and drinking as sacred events, not to be abused or approached mindlessly. So often we forget, Holy One, that you invite us to abide with you; to have our lives hidden in you. We thank you that you travel with us in our joys and our concerns. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

God's Word

Luke 24:13-35 (NLT)

(see below)

The Word of God for the people of God...Thanks be to God!

Introduction to New Worship Series ***Jesus' Last Words: Encounters with the Risen Christ***

Message

"What Are You Discussing?"

Pastor Clark

...when disappointments blind us

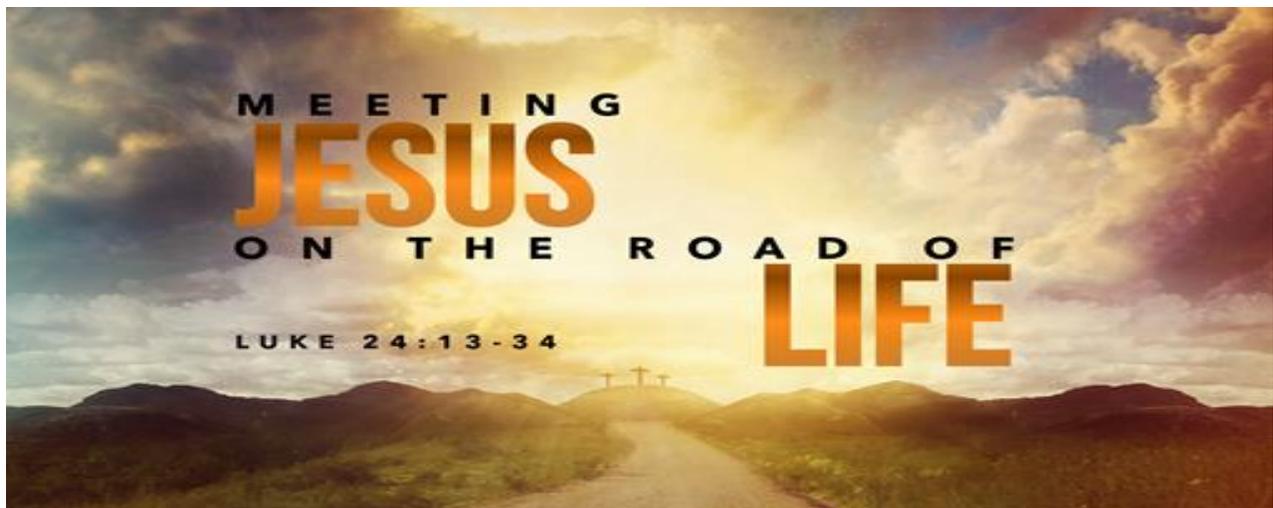
*Hymn of Faith

"He Lives"

UMH 310

Blessing

*May the truth of Easter
The joy of Easter
And the blessings of Easter
Be with us this day and all days
Amen*



Luke 24:13-35 (NLT) The Walk to Emmaus

¹³ That same day two of Jesus' followers were walking to the village of Emmaus, seven miles^[a] from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ As they walked along they were talking about everything that had happened. ¹⁵ As they talked and discussed these things, Jesus himself suddenly came and began walking with them. ¹⁶ But God kept them from recognizing him.

¹⁷ He asked them, "What are you discussing so intently as you walk along?"

They stopped short, sadness written across their faces. ¹⁸ Then one of them, Cleopas, replied, "You must be the only person in Jerusalem who hasn't heard about all the things that have happened there the last few days."

¹⁹ "What things?" Jesus asked.

"The things that happened to Jesus, the man from Nazareth," they said. "He was a prophet who did powerful miracles, and he was a mighty teacher in the eyes of God and all the people. ²⁰ But our leading priests and other religious leaders handed him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified him. ²¹ We had hoped he was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel. This all happened three days ago.

²² "Then some women from our group of his followers were at his tomb early this morning, and they came back with an amazing report. ²³ They said his body was missing, and they had seen angels who told them Jesus is alive! ²⁴ Some of our men ran out to see, and sure enough, his body was gone, just as the women had said."

²⁵ Then Jesus said to them, "You foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures. ²⁶ Wasn't it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his glory?" ²⁷ Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

²⁸ By this time they were nearing Emmaus and the end of their journey. Jesus acted as if he were going on, ²⁹ but they begged him, "Stay the night with us, since it is getting late." So he went home with them. ³⁰ As they sat down to eat,^[b] he took the bread and blessed it. Then he broke it and gave it to them. ³¹ Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And at that moment he disappeared!

³² They said to each other, "Didn't our hearts burn within us as he talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?" ³³ And within the hour they were on their way back to Jerusalem.

There they found the eleven disciples and the others who had gathered with them, ³⁴ who said, "The Lord has really risen! He appeared to Peter."^[c]

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

³⁵ Then the two from Emmaus told their story of how Jesus had appeared to them as they were walking along the road, and how they had recognized him as he was breaking the bread.

Because He Lives

1. *God sent His son, they called Him Jesus
He came to love, heal, and forgive.
He lived and died to buy my pardon,
An empty grave is there to prove my Savior lives.*

Chorus

*Because He lives, I can face tomorrow.
Because He lives, All fear is gone.
Because I know He holds the future,
And life is worth the living just because He lives.*

2. *How sweet to hold a newborn baby,
And feel the pride and joy he gives.
But greater still the calm assurance,
This child can face uncertain days because He lives.*

Chorus

3. *And then one day I'll cross the river,
I'll fight life's final war with pain.
And then as death gives way to victory,
I'll see the lights of glory and I'll know He lives.*

Chorus

He Lives

*I serve a risen Savior, He's in the world today
I know that He is living, whatever men may say
I see His hand of mercy, I hear His voice of cheer
And just the time I need Him He's always near*

*He lives (He lives), He lives (He lives), Christ Jesus lives today
He walks with me and talks with me
Along life's narrow way
He lives (He lives), He lives (He lives), Salvation to impart
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart*

*In all the world around me I see His loving care
And though my heart grows weary I never will despair
I know that He is leading, through all the stormy blast
The day of His appearing will come at last*

*He lives (He lives), He lives (He lives), Christ Jesus lives today
He walks with me and talks with me
Along life's narrow way
He lives (He lives), He lives (He lives), Salvation to impart
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart*

*Rejoice, rejoice, O Christian Lift up your voice and sing
Eternal hallelujahs to Jesus Christ, the King
The Hope of all who seek Him, the Help of all who find
None other is so loving, so good and kind*

*He lives (He lives), He lives (He lives), Christ Jesus lives today
He walks with me and talks with me
Along life's narrow way
He lives (He lives), He lives (He lives), Salvation to impart
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart*

What Are You Discussing?

Luke 24:13-35 (NLT)

Introduction

Dr. Jerome Frank at Johns Hopkins talks about our **"assumptive world."** What he means is that all of us make assumptions about life, about God, about ourselves, about others, about the way things are. He goes on to argue that when our assumptions are true to reality, we live relatively happy, well-adjusted lives. **But when our assumptions are distant from reality, we become confused and angry and disillusioned.**

In our culture, we set ourselves up for this disillusionment because our assumptions are somewhat distant from reality. Perhaps because of the influence of Facebook and other expressions of social media, perhaps because of the widespread tendency of playing the comparison game with those around us, our expectations about daily life are way out of bounds. One NY Times writer, Joe Queenan, named it this way:

He criticizes what he calls our culture's **"inability to accept the ordinary."** Queenan says that we insist that *"every experience be a watershed, every meal extraordinary, every friendship epochal, every concert superb, every sunset meta-celestial ... nothing can ever again be exactly what it was in the first place ... ordinary."*

Christian author Michael Horton responds to Queenan's quote:

"Today we feel the pressure to have our weddings look like the cover of a bridal magazine or movie set. Our marriages have to be made in heaven, even though we're very much on earth. Our presentations at work have to dazzle. Our kids have to make the dean's list and get into the best graduate schools ... nothing short of "brilliant" and "groundbreaking" will satisfy if you want a good job. When we do stop and smell the roses, it has to be an unforgettable package at an amazing resort. It's not enough to enjoy recreation at the public park, but extreme sports are what really interest us."

As a result, we live in a constant state of disappointment. In fact, it has been said that **"The main emotion of the adult American who has had all the advantages of wealth, education, and culture is disappointment."**

Well, disappointment is what the two disciples on the road to Emmaus were experiencing. That is framed by the phrase they lament about, **"We had hoped he was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel."** Their assumptions were distant from reality.

Let's recapture the story from Luke 24:17-24 (NLT)

¹⁷ He asked them, "What are you discussing so intently as you walk along?" They stopped short, sadness written across their faces. ¹⁸ Then one of them, Cleopas, replied, "You must be the only person in Jerusalem who hasn't heard about all the things that have happened there the last few days." ¹⁹ "What things?" Jesus asked. "The things that happened to Jesus, the man from Nazareth," they said. "He was a prophet who did powerful miracles, and he was a mighty teacher in the eyes of God and all the people. ²⁰ But our leading priests and other religious leaders handed him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified him. ²¹ We had hoped he was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel. This all happened three days ago. ²² "Then some women from our group of his followers were at his tomb early this morning, and they came back with an amazing report. ²³ They said his body was missing, and they had seen angels who told them Jesus is alive! ²⁴ Some of our men ran out to see, and sure enough, his body was gone, just as the women had said."

We can be certain of two things: life down here is disappointing at times, and those disappointments have the tendency to blind us...

- Blind us to God's Presence
- Blind us to fresh possibilities
- Blind us to our own potential

While acknowledging the tendencies of disappointments causing blindness, let's recast them in a positive perspective. Let's see them as opportunities to find a new way to see.

Finding a New Way to See God's Presence

One of the tendencies of the human heart is to close into itself in times of intense pain or loss. When we do this, we become oblivious to what's happening around us because we are lost in our thoughts, trapped in the confines of our own dilemmas. As a result, we sometimes miss the God who seeks us out and pursues us especially in such intensely difficult times.

The two disciples were blinded from seeing the Jesus...

Perhaps the best counsel for finding balance and hope when the world goes awry, ***is to keep on the lookout for God-sightings***. God is a Searcher...the Ultimate Searcher. God will not rest until He has recovered those who have lost their way. Jesus is the Rescuer.

And God is seeking and searching for these two confused disciples. They were retreating away from Jerusalem; Jesus was on their trail, seeking them out, walking alongside them in their confusion until they had a new way of seeing the living Christ.

In these troubling times in which we live, we urgently need a new way of seeing God's Presence. When's the last time you had a fresh "God sighting?"

Finding a New Way to See Fresh Possibilities

Not only were these disciples blind to Jesus' presence in their midst, they were as well blind to the possibilities all around them. Even while the women who had gone to the tomb early Easter morning, found the tomb empty, even while the witness of these women recounted the message from the angels that Jesus is alive, these two just could not see the possibility. In fact, earlier in Luke 24, they commented that it seemed like nonsense to them.

Let's not be too harsh on them. We too are blinded by our disappointments. Everyone of us could name a time when just this sort of thing happened in our lives. The challenge is to find a new way of seeing even in the midst of those disappointments.

Victor Frankl was a brilliant doctor whom the Nazis imprisoned in a concentration camp. They took away his livelihood, confiscated his possessions, mocked his dignity, and killed his family. They locked him in a cell with no way out. A room without an open door is a prison. But he found a door that the guards did not know about.

Everything, Frankl writes in his classic, ***Man's Search for Meaning***, can be taken from you but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."

Frankl discovered that doors are not just physical. A door is a choice. John Ortberg captures this well: *"He found that when his circumstances had closed every outer door to him, they revealed to him the doors that matter far more—the doors through which a soul can leave fear and enter into courage, leave hatred and enter into forgiveness, leave ignorance and enter into learning. **There is always a door!**"*

As we seek to navigate through this pandemic era, that's just what we need. We need to look for that different kind of door—the door of opportunity and possibility—the door that is available to us now that Jesus is risen from the dead! Because Jesus is alive, there are no circumstances that can imprison us, that we cannot find a door to a new, fresh possibility.

Finding a New Way to See Our Own Potential

Without a doubt, disappointments blind us...blind us to our own potential. They undermine our self-identity, they are an assault to our self-esteem, they conspire to convince us we are not worthy. Oh, how the enemy uses disappointments so cruelly!

What these two disciples could not see is that they would become vibrant witnesses of the world's most hope-filled message, the gospel of the Risen Christ. They could only see their defeated selves. They could only see their broken and wounded selves. They could only see their disappointed selves. Jesus came seeking them out in order to set them free from this debilitating prison.

Have your disappointments caused you to foreclose on your potential? Your future? Have they so blinded you to your potential, that you simply cannot see your worth or your promise?

Climax

Christopher Duffley was handed a microphone at 4 years old. Although categorized as "significantly delayed" in speech, social interaction, and cognitive ability, he began to sing and in doing so started a journey that has inspired audiences throughout the world.

By 10, he sang the national anthem at Fenway Park and became a YouTube sensation by 11. Christopher unknowingly began to inspire millions of people from all walks of life. In each song and speech, Chris has spent his life teaching us we are unlimited...we just need a little reminding.

When he was born, Christopher weighed 1 lb 12 oz, due to drug exposure. After five months in the NICU, he was placed in foster care. His biological aunt located him, brought him to NH and later adopted him into her family of 6. A new life lay ahead and his challenges of total blindness and severe delays would define his future.

How we approach a challenge determines its outcome. Taught that his disabilities were just an inconvenience and focusing on what he could do, victories were won. And despite a diagnosis of autism at the age of 5, his boundless personality and gift of music emerged, creating light in the lives of others.

Now, Christopher continues to tour the nation speaking, singing, and creating podcasts. He has been nationally recognized and featured on major news outlets. It is estimated that over 65

million people have collectively viewed the famous "Open the Eyes" video.

Sometimes we lose sight of our potential and the potential of those around us. Christopher removes the limitation blinders of his audiences through story, laughter, and song. He teaches us, through his own life experiences, what it means to be ***unlimited and to have a mission possible attitude.***

What's Your God Story?

Learn to Share Your Unique God Story

Stories have a way of captivating our minds and hearts like nothing else. They capture our attention. They give us fresh eyes to understand the world around us. They raise questions that compel us to think about life. Jesus knew the power of a good story. To communicate the most important issues of the human soul, Jesus used everyday stories that any listener could easily understand such as "the Good Samaritan" or "Zacchaeus Coming Down from the Tree." Every story pointed toward the grander vision of God!

You too have a story to tell! And your story fits into God's grander vision. Your God story tells what Christ means to you; what difference Christ has made in your life. Something about your relationship with Christ could help a neighbor or a friend draw closer to God!

When the situation arises and you have the opportunity to share why you believe, why you are a Christ-follower, are you ready with a thoughtful response? What if you could learn how to do this with a brief, authentic, compelling, and contagious way without unnecessary jargon?

On Sunday April 18 from 4:00-6:00 PM, you will have an opportunity to go through an encouraging and practical process that will help you share your unique God Story! Sign up soon so you can get in on the adventure. You can use the Connect Card or register online at either church.

