



The Lonely Road to Emmaus

13 And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. 14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened. 15 And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. 16 But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. 17 And he said unto them, **What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?** 18 And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? 19 And he said unto them, **What things?** And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: 20 And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. 21 But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done. 22 Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; 23 And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. 24 And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. 25 Then he said unto them, **O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: 26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?** 27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. 28 And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. 29 But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. 30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. 31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. 32 And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? 33 And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, 34 Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. 35 And they told what things were done in

the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread. (Luke 24:13-35)

Our Lord has arisen from the Stone Sepulcher in spite of the Tomb 'being made sure' by a large stone rolled over the entrance (which became an exit!) and a cohort of Romans guards stationed before the tomb. He has appeared to Mary Magdelena and other women on that first Easter morning. He will make appearances numerous times in the following hours and days. Not all of the disciples have seen the resurrected Lord and, even though they have heard reports and rumors, they little faith disallowed belief. They were not duly diligent in reading Scripture and were therefore targets of ignorance and doubt. Many today consider themselves Christians, but fail to diligently study the Word of God to know the Lord with the intimacy required of a true disciple. It is a deficiency of faith that results in ignorance of Scripture. Having known Jesus once, as did these disciples, they allow their unbelief to be fed by ignorance, doubt, and fear. So, like we all often do, they walk the lonely Road home to Emmaus distressing over what they consider the worst possible outcome to the ministry of Jesus. It was, in fact, the very best outcome for us; and it was ordained of God before the foundation of the world.

"And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened."

These, mind you, were professed followers of Christ – but they only followed Him by the natural light of day and not by way of the cross. They walked and *"talked together"* in amazing doubt and ignorance of all that had occurred over the past three days – just like most churches of our day – *"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."* (2 Tim 3:5) Suddenly, instead of two men only, there are three walking that Road to Emmaus. Though you may believe you walk alone during times of sorrow and tragedy, there is one who walks right by your side – He is one *"that sticketh closer than a brother."*

When we begin to inquire of the meaning of our Savior's life and sacrifice, He will come to us and open our eyes if our interest is sincere: *"And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them."* The communion at first was only one of men, but suddenly it has become a Holy Communion. We often cease to learn of a great master's teaching when confronted with him face to face. We forget what he taught and, instead, focus on His Person. So Jesus often approaches us disguised merely as a co-traveler and stranger to draw out our knowledge and to teach us more. *"But their eyes were holden that they should not know him."* Just as her view of the Fountain of Waters was blinded by the tears of Hagar in the Wilderness of Beersheba, and the Person of Christ veiled by the tears of Mary Magdalena at the Garden Tomb, so these men's eyes are blinded by ignorance and lack of faith to Christ.

Now, we should know that our Lord's Heart of Love is full of joy at this meeting. He has just conquered the enemy of His beloved people, and has gained victory over death at the Garden Tomb that had reigned from another Garden at Eden until His Passion. There is nothing at all to be despondent about! He often begins, as a good Teacher, with a question! *"And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?"* Like every good teacher, Jesus never asks a question to which He does not know the answer (and He knows the answer to ALL questions). He knows their doubts and fears before they express them. Why is any Christian sad when he knows what our Lord Jesus Christ has done for us at

Calvary?

The response of the two, particularly Cleopas, is almost humorous were it not for the solemnity of the occasion: *"And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?"* As a cadet, I had a military instructor at West Point who was noted for his in depth knowledge of military history. I once challenged him on a point of history. He did not refute my point, but ask me for details of it. As I talked, he would ask strategic and troubling little questions along the way until I stopped digging my own hole and admitted that I didn't have a clue of what I spoke. This is the approach Jesus will take with these two fellows. *"And he said unto them, **What things?**"*

These men had all of the pertinent facts right at their fingertips, but could not see the mystery fulfilled and answered before their very eyes! *"And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not."* Let us examine closely what these men knew:

1. **Jesus was a prophet.** A prophet cannot speak falsely. All that He prophesies must necessarily come to pass. Jesus had told these disciples that He would be crucified and raised on the third day.
2. **It was foretold in all of the Old Testament Scripture concerning Jesus** that He would be murdered by those for whom He came to save. He did not come to make Israel a world military power, but to **REDEEM** them. This, the men admitted here.
3. **These men were aware that Christ had promised to rise on the third day.** Even the ungodly Priests and Pharisees were aware of this. *"An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."* (Matt 12:39-40) He had alluded to this fact in other places of the Gospels as well. Did they not believe? It was their lack of scriptural knowledge that caused them to fall short as disciples.
4. **Did these men doubt the word of the women, or the word of angels?** Which? Was this not consistent with all that the Lord had taught them from the beginning, plus documented verbosely in the OT? They denied the overwhelming evidence of the resurrection just as many proud, pulpit dandies do today.

"Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" I feel like saying this to the mainline preachers who try to rationalize away every miracle and promise of Christ! *"And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."* If we doubt the Word of God in the New Testament, will we at least believe all that was prophesied in the Old? I doubt it, for once we begin to parse and doubt every word of Scripture, we have already lost true faith and religion.

When Jesus teaches us a lesson, He will follow up with an example, as He does here: *“And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.”* As the Spaniards say, *“Jesús es el señor!”* and so He is. Moreover, He is a gentleman and will not impose His company on schools, Federal property, nations, or peoples who do not welcome Him in their midst. Asian hospitality is quite genteel in refusing the first offer of water, or bread, of visitation. So, *“He made as if He would have gone further.”* We, too, after coming into a saving knowledge of the Lord, must CONSTRAIN Him to come unto us. He loves to be CONSTRAINED by our love just as we are CONSTRAINED by His.

Whether we know it or not, we need Christ to Abide in our hearts always for we are perishable mortals – *“Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.”* The midnight hour draws nearer and nearer from the moment of birth. Will we pass that long night without Christ? He sat at meat with these disciples. *“And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them.”* He had a merry time with them in opening their eyes to a grander mystery than they could have previously conceived. At length, He repeated that which He did last with the disciples in the Upper Room – He broke Bread with them. What is the purpose of the Sacrament of Holy Communion? Is it not to *“Draw near with faith, and take this Holy Sacrament to your comfort?”* (BoCP). Do we not experience a close and warm Communion with the Lord beyond all other times at the taking of the Bread (His Body broken for us) and the Wine (His Blood shed for us)? What was the result of this first post-resurrection Communion of Bread and Wine? *“And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?”* Friend, if you have doubted, have your eyes, too, been opened? Has your heart burned warmly inside your breast at His Presence? If so, then go thy way and do as these men did once their doubts were removed:

“And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.” It is high time that we proclaimed to a wicked and adulterous generation the sign of Jonah the prophet: *“For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale’s belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”* (ibid)