

# Life after Easter: Bewildered or Bewondered?

Luke 24:13-35

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Opener: I hope you had a bad Easter....I know you think I should be saying "I hope you had a good Easter"...but for today's sermon, it might be better for you if you had a bad Easter. Because when you think back to the first Easter, the disciples weren't gathering together early on Sunday, excited about a sunrise service at the local park and looking forward to singing "Christ the Lord is Ris'n Today" and then partaking of a lovely Easter dinner with ham, turkey and all the trimmings.



Take a moment to put yourself in the shoes of the early disciples or the early followers of Christ...it was truly an emotional rollercoaster...the glory and pageantry of Palm Sunday...the tumultuous week of the Passion...the last supper, words and rumors of betrayal, the dramatic trial and then of course the gruesome and tragic crucifixion of Christ...and then on Sunday....more rumours...this time of a body that was no longer in the tomb...and some people saying that they had actually seen the resurrected Christ. And so on Easter Sunday, if you asked some of the followers of Christ how their Easter was? What do you think the answer would be? Lovely! Blessed! I think not....more like, Insane! Heart-wrenching!

And so I hope you had a bad Easter...not in a masochistic sense but in the sense that it will put you better in touch with these friends of ours that we walk with to Emmaus...bewildered disciples who were trying to make some sense of what had happened during a crazy Passover weekend in Jerusalem....and as we look closer at today's texts, we will see **3 choices** that help these disillusioned disciples move from a place of **BEWILDERED** to being **BEWONDERED** by the presence of the resurrected Christ...

## 1) The Bewildered disciples are OPEN TO AN INTERRUPTION (v. 13-27)

Our passage starts off with two disciples heading out from Jerusalem on an 11.5 km journey (NorthWest) to Emmaus. These are not the 11 disciples, but the broader circle of disciples that followed after Jesus. One is named Cleopas and the other is a close friend, perhaps even the wife of Cleopas. The two friends are caught up in conversation...at a walking pace, this would probably be a 2-3 hour journey and they have MUCH to talk

about...it is the First Easter Sunday, the Passover week has just finished and so they are probably talking about the incredible events of the past 2 weeks...the wild and crazy events that led to the crucifixion of their Lord and friend, Jesus...and then these strange reports that were now swirling about in regards to an empty tomb, angelic visitations and the perplexing news that Jesus was now alive!?!

In the midst of their talk, they soon realize that someone else has joined them on the journey...the stranger is Jesus, but for some reason, the disciples are kept from recognizing him. Instead, he is just an interruption...how are you with interruptions? If you're anything like me, they are annoying...nagging distractions that take us away from the more important things of life. But...in the midst of their bewilderment, the disciples make the right choice...instead of dismissing this person as a "third-wheel", they allow him to enter in to their conversation. Surprisingly, the stranger starts off with a question: "What are you discussing as you walk along?" Perhaps an innocent question but in the context of what was going on in Jerusalem, I wonder if their first thoughts were of condescension....in [v. 18](#), Cleopas responds "Are you only a visitor to Jerusalem and do not know the things that have happened there in these days?"

As the disciples respond to this stranger and fill him in on the current events of the day we get some insights into why they are so bewildered. It seems that these disciples were **"let down"** by God...they had been counting on Jesus to be their redeemer...to be the one who would set them free from political/social injustice. They were looking for Jesus to be the **"magic messiah,"** waving his wand and making everything better for these disciples' lives. They had developed high hopes in this **"prophet powerful in deed and word"** ([v. 19](#)) but had just a few days earlier been witnesses to his grisly and torturous death.

Let's pause for a moment here....aren't we sometimes the same way? We put all our hopes in God for answering some prayer for us (a new job, boyfriend/girlfriend/spouse, make the team/grade/promotion) and now it's the 3rd day....or the 3rd month.....or the 3rd year....and we haven't seen the result we wanted...and we find ourselves disillusion and disappointed because we didn't think God was supposed to work that way!?

**And the disciples were so caught up in their confusion and their downcast hearts that they were missing resurrection literally looking them straight in the face.** May God grant us the wisdom to be open to holy interruptions in our lives, rather than focusing on our life circumstances and agendas.

After listening to the dashed hopes of these two disciples, this stranger on the road suddenly becomes the navigator of the conversation rather than the interrupter...In [v. 25](#), Jesus begins to address the disciple's dilemma. He is not necessarily soft and gentle but comes at them with a sense of forceful rebuke! **"How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?"** ([v. 25, 26](#)).

And as we look ahead to **v. 27** Jesus continues this teachable moment by taking them on a walk through the OT....he challenged them to consider 2 key words....**ALL** and **NECESSARY**. They needed to see **ALL** that the prophets had written about and how it was **NECESSARY** for Christ to suffer. Suffering was the prerequisite to glory. The disciples, with their natural understanding of things, could only see the suffering of Christ as a defeat. They couldn't have been further from the truth...for God had triumphed through the sufferings of Christ!

Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, we sometimes fall short of **ALL** that God is challenging us to believe...we want all the glory of the good life, but are we willing to accept the theme of God's story where suffering is a part of our growing intimacy with Christ....as Paul writes, **"I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me"** (**Gal. 2:20**) or in Philippians he writes **"I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead"** (**Phil. 3:10-11**).... Or in Romans we read...**"We also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us."** (**Rom. 5:3-5**).

All this because they were open to an interruption.....now we see a **2nd choice** that these disciples made on their way from bewilderment to wonderment.....

## **2) The Bewildered disciples are INSPIRED TO AN INVITATION (v. 28-29)**

In **v. 28** Jesus ACTS as if he is going further and it appears that if the disciples had not extended him an invitation to stay, he would have just kept on going...the disciples had probably been intrigued and encouraged by his stranger's teaching and though he was forthright and bold, there was something about the interaction that they didn't want to let go of...

It baffles me to think that in a split-second they made a decision to create a way for this supernatural, spiritual awakening that they would experience at the table. Then it further blows my mind to think of how we might be missing out on supernatural encounters with the living Christ because we quench the **"nudge"** that inspires us to invite the living Christ into our lives and our circumstances. Had the disciples not asked Jesus to join them for the evening they would have shortchanged themselves of a gigantic, post-resurrection blessing.

**"Stay with us...."** Are the words of invitation, that lead these disciples to the biggest wonder of all...

### 3) The Bewildered disciples are BEWONDERED BY PARTICIPATION (v. 30-32)

As we move into the **verses from 30-32** we see Jesus taking on another role-reversal in this experience with the disciples.....the stranger who has become the teacher now moves from being the guest...to the host, as he takes the bread, blesses it and then proceeds to break it and share it. While he is taking and breaking the bread the disciples' eyes are opened and they recognize that this is more than a teacher or host...it IS the risen Christ! But why is he recognized at this particular time?

Perhaps they see the nail marks in his hands as he grasps the bread to break it... or maybe it's in the way that he intimately talks to his Father as he blessed the meal... or maybe it's simply a matter of God's timing.

The amazing thing to note here is that Jesus was recognized in the commonplace routine of everyday life. The breaking of bread was a matter of fact, ho-hum thing in the life of these disciples yet it is in this mundane moment that the fullness of Jesus' presence is most realized and recognized.

This incredible story continues and in **v. 31** Luke notes that the recognition experience is immediately followed by the disappearance of Jesus. And as the disciples reflect on their long walk with the risen Christ, they share about the joy of their hearts that were kindled by Holy fire as they listened to their Lord lead them through the story of God's redeeming love. **Their hearts had been warmed...their spirits had been illuminated and their bewilderment had been replaced with wonder and hope.**

There is a "So What" to this story...(v. 33-35)

#### **Interruption, Invitation, and Participation lead to one more action: DECLARATION.**

These disciples are not content to drink a cup of "sleepy time" tea and tuck themselves in for the night with a soothing rush of warm fuzzies surging through their bodies. NO! This awakening to the ignition of their hearts moves them to action and bold declaration...this is not just a good feeling but it is the GOOD NEWS! Good enough to get them back on the road, headed back to Jerusalem late at night, regardless of darkness and unknown dangers. This experience has been so real and life-changing that their immediate response is to share their joy with their fellow believers.

**Conclusion:** (Moving from Emmaus to wherever God needs you to go...)

Where are you at on the Emmaus road of life this morning?

Are you bewildered in your spiritual journey or are you excitedly "rushing to Jerusalem" with a testimony of what God has done in your life?

If you're feeling bewildered, then I challenge you to invite Jesus' presence into your life....even into the mess or the confusion of your life...trust that he will be recognized in the simple, commonplace moments of communion wherever you're at...If you're in a season of bewonderment...then use your time of reflection this morning to give thanks...you've enjoyed communion with the living Christ and now the Lord may be calling you to share this real joy, peace and presence with others at work, or in your family, or at your school.

The simple truth is that Jesus is always calling us to commune with him. It doesn't need to be flashy, it doesn't need to be forced...it can happen every day and often it happens in those very common place times of meals and "breaking bread" with others. May we be challenged to know and recognize Jesus more intimately in the common circumstances of our lives...

This morning we have the opportunity to put the WORD into action as we come to Lord's table to celebrate the Lord's Supper.

If you're in a place of bewilderment, then use this time as a time of invitation, asking Jesus to meet you by the presence and power of His Holy Spirit...

If you're in a place of wonder, then this table is a place of celebration, an opportunity for you to praise God for his faithfulness and the kindness of his salvation...

This is the Lord's table...it's not a church table, or any other table - - -

### **Prayer:**

Gracious God, Thank you for the opportunity to gather around your table. You are the host, we are the guests and we pray that you would become SUPERNATURALLY present in our midst. Your word reminds us to examine our hearts before we partake in the bread and the cup....we do that now, confessing our sins for what we have done, and for what we have left undone. Soften our hardened hearts, heal our strained/broken relationships...CLEANSE our minds of that which would hold us back from knowing you more intimately.

We remember you, Jesus, and your sacrifice for us. While we were still sinners, you died for us so that we might have everlasting life.

We ask that you would bless this meal, we praise you for your provisions for us, and we thank you for being the King of our hearts....Amen.