

Easter 2026, Luke 24:13–35

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 05 April 2026

Preacher: David Helm

[0:00] Luke chapter 24, beginning in verse 13. If you're able to stand with us, please do. That very day, two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem.

! And they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them.

But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, What is this conversation you are holding with each other as you walk? And they stood still, looking sad.

Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days? And he said to them, What things? And they said to him concerning Jesus of Nazareth, A man who was a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God and all the people. And how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death and crucified him.

[1:14] But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. And he said to them, And besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened.

Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning. And when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had seen a vision of angels who said he was alive.

Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said. But him they did not see. And he said to them, And they said to them, O foolish ones, And slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.

Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther. But they urged him strongly saying, Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.

[2:26] So he went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them, He took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened.

And they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, Did not our hearts burn within us? While he talked to us on the road.

While he opened to us the scriptures. And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem.

And they found the eleven. And then those who were with them gathered together saying, The Lord has risen indeed and has appeared to Simon.

Then they told what had happened on the road. And how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread. This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God. Please be seated. Well, good morning. As the ancient greeting goes, He is risen.

[3:26] He is risen indeed. He is risen. He is risen indeed. You know, when it comes to how the Bible handles Easter, It's the early morning appearance of Mary.

And then the women that take precedence. And rightly so. Because it was the women who first heralded the good news of the resurrection.

And after that, it's the evening disclosure of Christ to the disciples long after the sun had set.

It's those two Easter appearances, one before daybreak, one long after the sun set, that receive Easter Sunday's primacy of place.

But here, in Luke's gospel alone, sitting between those two great Easter stories that center around eyewitness testimony, comes the appearance of Jesus, in which the eyes of those who are on the road are intentionally blinded, prevented from seeing him for who he is.

[4:44] How strange. What do you make of it? Why would Luke, alone among all the gospel writers, go beyond the preeminent eyewitness accounts, while dark, to give a third Easter appearance that doesn't highlight eyewitnesses at all, although it occurs when the sun is high overhead and finishes even before dark.

Let me give you a hint. Luke is convinced that it's the documentary evidence in the afternoon appearance that is best to convince you that he's not dead.

So welcome to Easter at Christ Church Chicago, where we will see that the scriptures themselves offer you the best assurance that he's not dead.

In other words, not eyewitness testimony this morning, but the testimony of the scriptures which you can take in with your own eyes.

And so with that outcome in mind, put your eyes on the text, Luke 24, and let's walk Easter's road to Emmaus together.

[6:12] On the road. It makes me wonder what road you're on. You have to envision these two travelers setting out on a Roman road, exiting Jerusalem out of what today would be called the Jaffa Gate.

It's a gate situated along the western wall, very near the Tower of David, which provided an elevated place for sentinels to stand and begin to look west all the way out to the vistas beyond. Their walk to Emmaus would have been on stone, laid down to handle the immediate initial descent from the city, some 750 feet it was, above sea level.

They would have made this journey at the time of Passover, which we know from the previous parts of scripture. It would have been called in their own calendar, not the month of April, but the month of Nisan, very near corresponding to the time of year in which we find ourselves.

It's the time of year that as they leave the gate and begin that descent and then the rugged up and down until the flattened road comes. They would have seen the olive trees along the way, now preparing to bud, not like our own wisteria that hangs like chandeliers beneath, but with their own creamy white flowering buds extended along their way.

[7:57] From other clues in the text, we know that one was named Cleopas, no indication in the text at any rate on who the other was or the significance even of this man.

Evidently, the journey was made in the afternoon. So as they leave the city, we know first, because the story will reveal, if you look at it in verses 21 to 24, that they had been in Jerusalem long after the women had been at the tomb, long after the morning had been spent in conversation with the disciples who had gone to the tomb, long after, according to verse 11, they had determined to disbelieve the eyewitness accounts of the women as idle tales.

So here they are, on the road, in the afternoon. We also know it's the afternoon, because they arrive in Emmaus, according to the text, when the day was far spent.

It's the same word Luke will use in chapter 9 to indicate the time of day when the day is wearing away. So here we are.

We're on the road with them. Probably about 70 degrees. You can look it up yourself. Temperatures at this time of year in Jerusalem range from about 50 in the morning till 70.

[9:33] So this is a pleasant walk, walking from the east to the west, into the sun, and the warmth on their face.

If that's all you knew, you would think that all was well. That their gait was slow, only because they lacked any care in the world.

And then that brings you to verses 16 to 21, where the narrator, Luke himself, will let you in, and me, on a drama that's about to unfold under the direction of Jesus, who's very coy, but very intentional.

Look at verse 16 with me. Their eyes were kept from recognizing him, and he said to them, what is this conversation that you're holding with each other as you walk?

They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in the last days?

[10:45] And he said to them, what things? And they said to him, concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God, and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death and crucified him, but we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.

And yes, besides all this, it's now the third day since these things happened. If you look back at the text, when you get to 15 and 16 through 21, it indicates that Jesus drew near to them.

Now what we're moving in the text then is from the road that they're on, the desire of Jesus to draw near. Oh, think of it even in regard to yourself.

The road that you're on and the desire of Jesus to draw near. They're kept from recognizing him. Evidently, Jesus wants something different for these two than a straightforward eyewitness exchange.

Let me put it this way. He's meeting them where they are, just as he will for us. People are in need of something more than eyewitness testimony.

[12:15] For them, this was a walk of lament. So much show that it showed in their countenance. The word that's translated there in verse 17, sad, is the same word Matthew 6 uses to talk about Pharisees who intentionally put on a gloomy face.

It's the same word in Genesis 40 when Joseph says to his friends, why is your countenance so sad? It's the same word that the overseer says to Daniel, I fear lest your countenance be gloomy. They were facially, physically, exhausted and heading home from a funeral. Jesus, their dear friend, the one in whom they had hoped would be the redemption of Israel, was dead.

Their friendships were in disarray. Peter had denied Christ three times. Thomas was nowhere to be found and earlier that day they had disbelieved the very thing that would have given them hope, the eyewitness record of the women.

And here, right in the middle of the road, the story turns and we begin to learn the reason why they were supernaturally kept from recognizing him.

[13:40] He wanted to provide the evidence for the resurrection that they had overlooked in their own experience.

Now, I have read, I'm not an attorney, some of you are, and you can correct me afterwards if I'm wrong. I have read that on occasion it's documentary evidence that is to be preferred to an eyewitness testimony.

I began to think about that. I was just an athlete, you know, struggling with a 1.9 GPA to play. Why wouldn't an eyewitness record be preferable to anything else?

Well, attorneys are correct. eyewitnesses forget things. Eyewitnesses change the story on things. But documentary evidence introduced, it can't forget. It won't change. It's a permanent, fixed record concerning the situation at hand.

[14:57] So what happens here is Jesus unfolds the scriptures. You can see how it begins to turn, the center of it. Verses 25 to 27.

I've fallen in love with these verses this week. And he said to them, O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Notice, not all that the women told you.

All that the prophets have spoken. Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory and beginning with Moses and all the prophets he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

He stands as it were a defense attorney on behalf of the women whose testimony was rejected to offer further evidence that would convince them he's not dead.

And so what did he offer? And how might it affect the road you're on? And his intention to draw near to you.

[16:06] I envision Jesus as it were here submitting records, scrolls from the earliest apostles preaching in the book of Acts I am confident that Jesus took them to Psalm 16 a psalm which is attributed to King David who reigned over Jerusalem from 1010 to 970 B.C.

a thousand years before this walk along the road. Verse 10 of that psalm prophesies that the coming king's physical frame will not undergo decay although King David's did.

And as one of those things is being remembered or read almost by way of mind in the hand of one Jesus produces a second document of evidence and hands it to another one and says well what about Psalm 2 that predicted that God would anoint a king over Israel from Jerusalem that will rule over all nations for all time and before he can even consider the fullness of Psalm 2 there's the documentary evidence of Hosea brought forward which was written in the 8th century before this walk which reads after two days he will revive us on the third day he will raise us up that we might live before him let us know let us press on to know the Lord says Hosea he is his going out is as sure as the dawn he will come to us as the showers as the spring rains that water the earth and while their minds are now beginning to spin he brings forward the documentary evidence of Psalm 110 which prophesies that one greater than

King David would sit at the right hand of the father until he makes his enemies his footstool it's the same Psalm that declares that this one is going to come again at the end to execute judgment on all people and now they're fumbling with the weight of the evidence and 2 Samuel 7 is tucked in as well which would have been in view where God promises David that from his line God intends to bring a savior who will sit on a throne that will never ever end they're stunned reading the record of material prophesying the resurrection some seven eight nine hundred plus years before their journey to Emmaus when it came to providing the unchanging weight of documentary evidence on the need for the substitutionary death of Jesus I can see

Jesus producing the promissory note of Genesis 3:15 written some 1400 years before the time of Christ where Satan is said to crush the one who is going to come but that that one will actually crush the evil one and then out comes the scroll of Psalm 22 which prophesies the very words that are attributed to Jesus on the cross my God my God why have you forsaken me all my bones are out of joint you lay me in the dust of death they divide my garments and my clothing they cast lots and Isaiah 53 is coming forward with ease it deserves its place in the evidence and the record that ought to make us believe and be confident in our belief written around 730 BC it says surely he has borne our griefs we esteemed him stricken he was pierced for our transgressions trust for our iniquities and even as our choir sang by his stripes you are healed they made his grave with the wicked and a rich man in his death although he had done no violence and there was no deceit in his mouth the evidence is piling up on them as they continue to walk on the road you wonder if they stopped when he said what are you talking about they must have stopped time and time again on their journey in wonder in amazement for while their sight was withheld the wonder of the scriptures filled their minds and then their heart so why the blinding of the eyes on the road to Emmaus simply this so that their faith and yours would be grounded in the certainty of what you could put your eyes upon in the biblical text not in what you would portend to see through your personal experience let me put it as clearly as I can

[21:12] Easter faith is grounded in the faithful exposition of the scriptures no wonder Paul who also saw Jesus face to face would nevertheless write I delivered to you that of first importance that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures that Christ was raised on the third day according to the scriptures he doesn't argue on the basis of according to my visual eyesight that laid eyes on him but you have the full record here no wonder Jesus earlier said in his ministry if they won't believe the Old Testament and what they have in Moses they're not going to believe anyone even if someone should rise from the dead yes it's the documents it's the documents it's paper it's scrolls it's papyrus it's prophesied material in the Old Testament that is the best assurance that he's not dead he is risen he is risen indeed the scriptures themselves offer you this now how did all of this affect them on the road

I mean it's a it's a day where I wouldn't have wanted church to end much the way you feel right now Jesus preaching to them moved them having drawn near to them verse 15 check it out verse 28 now they are drawing near to Emmaus and as they draw near to the end of their journey they're eager for the presence of their Lord to remain and so he feigns as though he's moving on but their hearts have been electrified notice their hearts have been won and moved by the scriptures that

have entered their mind when God wants to save you he's going to activate your mind to understand the scriptures rightly and in which your heart will begin to burn look at verses 28 and following as they drew near to the village to which they were going he acted as if he were going further but they urged him strongly stay with us for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent so he went in to stay with them and when he was at table with them notice the four verbs the same four verbs that appear earlier at the feeding of the 5,000 the same four verbs that appear at the at the last supper when he took the bread blessed broke it and gave it to them their eyes were opened he utilizes the similar pattern of giving God's people bread from heaven himself and in that moment they came to recognize him but not until the scriptures were grounded in their mind which would hold them fast their heart it says burned notice what they said did not our hearts burn within us not when I saw him for who he was did not our hearts burn within us when he talked to us on the road while he opened to us the scriptures this is how

Christ draws near he sets hearts ablaze due to the Bible being rightly expounded and understood Martin Luther gargoyle of the reformation before coming to faith was reading the preface to the epistle to the Romans I'm sorry Wesley was reading the preface and Wesley then writes I felt my heart strangely warmed well if you've ever read Luther's preface to Romans it's interesting it's it's simply an explication of the book in chapter one you're going to read this in Romans 2 you're going to get this in Romans 3 you're going to get this in other words the preface to Romans is simply the exposition of the text itself and it's the exposition of the text then that causes

Wesley to say as I read it as I read the scriptures my heart was strangely warmed and then he says I felt I did trust in Christ Christ alone for my salvation and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins even mine I'm praying for this this morning for many here that even that litany of texts from the Old Testament on the record of the resurrection and the substitutionary death and the crucifixion would under the hand of the Holy Spirit so work in your mind as to convince you or reconvince you to make you stand firm that yes he's not dead and how do you know I know because the scriptures themselves compel this belief that holds me fast

I remember when it began to happen to me early that is when I was fascinated simply with listening to the weakness of somebody explain the scriptures scriptures I was about 18 years old I had just come to Christ and the man that was preaching was 37 he was new in ministry and he was lit on explaining this and I sat there and I felt like my heart was penetrated and my mind was quickened and the truths were confirmed and later he would write about what was taking place in his mind during that season of ministry ministry and he said there were times where I felt the pleasure of God while preaching it seemed as though my words went through the air like arrows penetrating the mind moving the heart compelling the feet to a life of Christian study of the truths this morning set your heart on fire

[28:20] I don't know what road you've been on but I want you to know this from the road to Emmaus he takes people who in their experience say this can't be true and yet he draws near as you meet him in his word the road the drawing near the journey on here they are verse 33 they rose that same hour and returned to

Jerusalem and they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together saying the Lord is risen indeed and he's appeared to Simon then they told what had happened to them on the road and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread your joyful journey to Easter faith is not complete until you journey on bearing witness that he is not dead as we bear witness as these two are off to tell immediately it calls upon us to follow suit and begin to speak of the confirming truths of the Christian faith and to present those to those we love grounded in the fact not that you've seen him but you have on the pages of scripture our heavenly father so many today are on a road that feel as though their hopes have been dashed and that the journey of life is really nothing but a procession unto death we pray that you would draw near to us and that we would be lifted in spirit by the teachings of scripture and embrace the truth that he's not dead and that we then would give praise adoration that we would hail the name of Jesus as king of kings and lord of lords in whose name we pray amen