

The Stranger on the Road

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[0 : 0 0] Well, good morning. My name is Cleopas. I just got out of the time machine. I might look like Pastor Josh, but he lent me his clothes.

Most of you probably haven't heard of me. For some reason, all those parents who have been looking for good, strong biblical names just passed right over mine. But it is what it is. You can call me Cleo for short. I want to say thanks to your pastor for giving me the opportunity to share with you this morning.

I want to tell you about the best day of my life, a day that I'll never forget. It all started on what you folks call a Sunday afternoon.

Now, Sundays for me look very different than for you folks. What you call Sunday, we called the first day of the week. And for us, the first day of the week usually had more of the feel of what you folks call Monday.

It was a workday typically for us. But that particular Sunday was not a workday for me. Where do I even start? Yes, Sunday afternoon.

[1 : 0 4] I was not at home that day. In fact, the whole week before, I had not been at home. I had gone up to the capital city, to Jerusalem, to celebrate the Passover as we Jewish folk did every year.

And what a Passover it was. Unlike anything we'd ever experienced. It had all come to a tragic end. They killed him.

And so Sunday afternoon, me and a friend, we packed our back sacks and we started out for home. We lived in a little village called Emmaus.

About 60 stadia from Jerusalem. Let me do the conversion for you. That's about 600 feet per stadia. That's about 7 miles from Jerusalem. Or 14 kilometers for you younger ones.

And of course, we didn't have cars back then. We walked mostly everywhere. But at that distance, we could make the trip easily in an afternoon. For the first little while of the trip, me and my buddy were talking about everything that had happened that past week.

[2 : 1 3] What a week it was. And as we were talking about all of that, a stranger came up behind us. Now, I'm sure you've all had that happen before, where you're walking along and somebody who's walking a little faster kind of catches up to you.

What do you do? Well, you usually just make room for them and, you know, let them pass on by when they finally catch up to you. But this stranger, he quickly walked right up to where we were, came right up beside us, slowed his pace to match ours, and walked with us.

And then, friendly fellow that he was, he turned and said, What is this that I hear you guys talking about? Well, I think it was pretty obvious what we had been talking about.

He'd probably heard a good deal of it already. And at that moment, we all just stopped walking for a moment. And I looked at him with a furrowed brow, and I said to him, Where have you been all week, man?

I mean, you must be the only person visiting Jerusalem who doesn't know the things that have happened here these past few days. And with a curious twinkle in his eye, he said, What things?

[3 : 36] Well, about Jesus, the man from Nazareth, we both blurted out at once, me and my friend. He was a prophet.

Powerful in word. Powerful in the things that he did. In the sight of God. In the sight of God. In the sight of all the people. The chief priests and our rulers handed him over.

To be sentenced to death. And they nailed him to a Roman cross and hung him up to die. But we had hoped.

We had hoped that he was the one. The one who would redeem Israel. But man, get this.

I said to the stranger. It's now the third day since all this happened. And get this. Some of the women in our circles baffled us.

[4 : 45] They went to the burial place of Jesus. A tomb. Early this morning. But they didn't find the body of Jesus.

They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels. Who said that Jesus was alive. And then, said my friend.

Some of our companions went to the tomb and found it. Just like the women said. But they didn't see Jesus. And then this stranger.

He turned to us. And he said. You guys are fools. How slow of heart. Are you.

To believe all the things that the prophet said long ago. Did not the Messiah have to suffer? And only after that to enter his glory?

[5 : 45] And then as we walked along with this stranger. He began to tell us. Starting all the way back with Moses.

Working all the way through to the prophets. All the things that they had said about the Messiah. It was amazing. Neither of us could believe just how well this guy knew the Torah.

The writings. The prophets. The prophets. The prophets. Well as we finally came to our little village of Emmaus. We were about to go our way. But then as we looked over at this stranger.

It looked like he was just going to keep right on going. Right on to the next village. And I kind of looked up at the sky. And saw that the sun was getting low. He surely wouldn't make it there before dark.

So we both said. Hey. Come on over to our place. Stay the night with us. It's almost dark. The day's almost done. Please.

[6 : 46] It's no trouble at all. Stay with us at our place this evening. You can leave and go on your way in the morning. And he agreed. He came over. And after making that journey.

We were hungry. We were ready for some supper. So we got the meal ready. We got all the food onto the table. And we all sat down around it.

And we did that awkward thing. That all of us sometimes do. Where we looked around at each other. See who's going to give thanks for the meal. This stranger.

Certainly seemed like he would be a better prayer. Than either of us. Especially after all he'd said to us on the journey here. So we asked him to give thanks.

And then the strangest thing happened. He reached out. And grabbed some bread from the table. He held it up. He gave thanks.

[7 : 49] Broke it. And he passed the pieces. Out to us. All of a sudden. It hit me. It was like deja vu times a thousand.

I couldn't believe it. No way. Me and my buddy just. Stared. Shocked. Speechless. No. It couldn't be. And then all of a sudden. Right before our very eyes. He vanished. Now I know what you're thinking.

Well you were probably just having some really crazy dream here. Funky hallucinations or something. I had the piece of bread in my hand. I didn't break it. All of a sudden it hit us.

He was alive. All the way from Emmaus. He had been walking with us. Jesus. The one that we had seen. Crucified.

[8 : 50] Three days earlier. It was him. He was alive. We couldn't believe it. But we knew it was true.

We laughed. We cried. We got up and just started joyfully pacing around the room. Talking about everything that had just happened. We started thinking back over the whole thing.

Right from the beginning. When he first joined us on the road. Up until this moment. No wonder he knew all those passages from the Torah. The writings. The prophets. The prophets. And oh.

Said my friend. Were not our hearts burning within us? When he talked with us on the road. And opened the scriptures to us. It was amazing.

We walked all that way. With the one who we had seen. Killed just three days ago. Suddenly it hit us.

[9 : 48] Everything that the women had said. The angels. The angels. It was all true. Jesus was alive. We thought.

Man. We got to go tell everybody about this. So we. Ran out the door. We pretty much ran all the way to Jerusalem.

Right back up the road into the city. We found the eleven. The apostles. All our friends. Gathered together in the house. And the first thing that they said to us was.

It's true. Listen. The Lord has risen. And he has appeared to Simon. And then I said. Everyone. Listen up.

We've got a story to tell you. And we told them what happened on the way. To Emmaus. How we had recognized Jesus. When he. Gave thanks.

[10 : 47] And broke the bread in front of us. And while we were talking about all of this. Suddenly I heard gasps. In the room. And a shriek. Everybody was just staring.

Dumbfounded. And I turned around. And. There. Standing in the middle of the room. Was the stranger. That we had walked with. Jesus.

Himself. It's a ghost. Someone cried. And Jesus said. Peace. Be with you. He looked around at all of us.

And said. Why are you troubled? Why do doubts. Rise in your minds? It is I myself. Look at my hands.

Look at my feet. Come. Touch me. See. A ghost does not have flesh and bones. Like you see I have.

[11 : 47] And he stretched out his hands. For all of us to see. He showed us his feet. Where the nails had pierced him through. Some of us.

Went right in and touched. Others just kind of stood back. Fearful. In shock. In shock. In shock. In my heart.

There was so much joy. It almost seemed too good to be true. I kept pinching myself. Even gave myself. One of these. Just to make sure. This was no dream.

It was real. Some of them were pretty sure that. Well. It must be a ghost. It must be a spirit. Playing a trick on us. And then Jesus.

With that same twinkle in his eye. Said. Do you have anything here to eat? So someone went and.

[12 : 44] Grabbed him a piece of broiled fish. And he took it. And he gobbled it right down. In front of us. The rest of that night. There. With Jesus. We were all.

Giddy. With excitement. I don't know how many times. I heard it said that night. By someone in the room. I can't believe this. I don't believe it. Well finally.

Jesus. Said to all of us. This is what I told you. While I was still with you. Everything. Must be fulfilled. That is written about me.

In the law of Moses. The prophets. And the Psalms. And this is what is written. The Messiah will suffer. And rise from the dead.

On the third day. And repentance. For the forgiveness. Of sins. Will be preached. In his name. To all nations. Beginning.

[13 : 40] At Jerusalem. You were witnesses. Of these things. And then he told us. Of what would happen. In a little while. He said.

I'm going to send you. What my father has promised. But stay in the city. Until you have been clothed. With power. From on high. It was the best day.

Of my life. That first day. Of the week. A day. I'll never forget. I'll turn it back over.

To Pastor Josh now. Thank you. Cleopas. Most of you know. And love this story. But in case you've never heard it before. Or if it's only a little familiar to you.

I want to be clear. I didn't make this story up. What you just heard is a true story. Now there was a few little details. That I kind of added in there.

[14 : 38] Just so that your senses could kind of feel. And appreciate. And imagine what it must have been like. But Cleopas was a real man. He was one of the followers of Jesus.

Before his death. And this is the true story. Of him and his unnamed friend. And how they encountered Jesus. Alive. On the day that he rose from the dead.

You can read it for yourself. In your Bibles. Gospel of Luke. Chapter 24. Verse 13. I love this story. It's a story of incredible joy.

The kind of joy and excitement. That rivals. Even surpasses. The happiest moments. Of all of our lives. I love the shift that we see.

In the two men. The deep sorrow. And disappointment. The crushed hopes. And all of that. Just melts away.

[15 : 34] As Jesus speaks to them. And then eventually. Reveals who he is. To them. It's a good time to remember. What Jesus said. Not long before he was arrested.

And crucified. John chapter 16. Verse 19. Jesus was talking to his disciples. And he said. This to them. Are you asking one another. What I meant. When I said.

In a little while. You will see me. No more. And then after a little while. You will see me. Very truly. Said Jesus. I tell you. You will weep.

And mourn. While the world rejoices. You will grieve. But your grief.

Will turn. To joy. Just like a woman giving birth to a child. Has pain. Because her time has come. But when her baby is born.

[16 : 34] She forgets. She forgets. The anguish. Because of her joy. That a child. Is now born into the world. So with you. Now is your time of grief.

But I. Will. Will. Will. See you. Again. And you will rejoice. And no one. Will take away.

Your joy. Just as Jesus had said. So it happened for them. What a beautiful. And joyful. Reunion. They had with Jesus. On that day.

That he rose from the dead. A couple other comments. Are in order. As we reflect on this delightful. Account of what happened. I couldn't help but think this week.

As I read it again. Some people think of Jesus. As a man who was just. So serious. So stoic. All the time. A man who barely. Eeked out a smile. Because he was so focused.

[17 : 28] On his mission. And on the greater. Spiritual realities. But as I read this account. Of Cleopas. And his buddy. On the road to Emmaus. I can't help but think. That Jesus.

Had a sense of humor. I mean. He walked all the way. To Emmaus. With them. Telling them all about. The Messiah. And he didn't tell them. That it was him.

Right there. I mean. These are men that Jesus. Had some level of. Personal relationship with. Before. He died. They were two of his followers. At least to me.

I think this is one of the best. Pranks ever played. You had to know. That there was a twinkle. In his eye. When he asked them. What things. What things are you referring to.

That just happened. A few days ago. And they went on and on. And told him. How depressed. And sad they were. Jesus still didn't tell them. Who he was.

[18 : 23] And when he finally did reveal it. He vanished. Leaving them. Beside themselves. With joy. And excitement. To laugh. Over what had happened.

All that afternoon. Or how about later that evening. When Jesus appeared. To all of them. I love how he just. Kind of puts them at ease. And works on their minds.

No. I'm not a ghost. How can I make them understand? Do you guys have anything here to eat? I mean. We all know that spirits. Don't eat physical food.

Right? So here's Jesus. The day of his resurrection. Chomping on a piece of fish. Just waiting patiently. For them to realize. Yeah.

It's really me. I'm here. I'm alive. Jesus has a sense of humor. Of course he does. What gave us the idea. That laughter.

[19 : 17] And humor. Originated with us. In the first place. We have a joyful God. And we were created. In his image. To laugh. And to find funny. To rejoice. And to celebrate.

Secondly. The joke. Is really. On the followers. Of Jesus. Why? How many times. Does Jesus say to them.

This day. This resurrection day. I told you. That this is how. It was going to go. On the road to Emmaus. How foolish you are. And how slow of heart.

To believe. All the prophets have spoken. The scriptures. The Old Testament. It foretold. The suffering. Of the Messiah. And his being glorified after.

It was all there. In the scriptures. About Jesus. About how it would all go. And then again. There in the house. Later that evening. This is what I told you.

[20 : 16] While I was still with you. Everything must be fulfilled. That is written about me. In the law of Moses. The prophets. And the Psalms. That the Messiah will suffer. And rise. On the third day.

That's all there. In the Old Testament. And Jesus had been telling them. And pointing them. To these same Old Testament passages. For the past three years. As he taught them. At least three times.

If not more. He had flat out told them. That he would die. And rise again. The gospel writers record this for us. Before any of it even happened. And so in a sense.

The joke is on his followers. It's they. Who in these moments. Are probably kind of chuckling. At the flimsiness of their own faith. Oh yeah.

I remember. That you said that. If only I'd been listening a little better. And Jesus doesn't hammer them for it. He doesn't try to make them.

[21 : 12] Wallow in guilt. Because of their lack of faith. Or their poor listening. He's so patient with them. He carefully explains it again to them. And he gives them time.

To process what is happening. This great miracle right in front of their eyes. Perhaps we can learn from them. Have we been slow in heart.

To believe all that Jesus has said to us. Have we been only kind of maybe half listening. Like some of Jesus' disciples were.

Maybe noticing the parts that we like. Of what Jesus said. And conveniently ignoring the parts that don't really mean that much to us. Or the parts that we don't like.

Of what he says. So may we learn from what Jesus said to his disciples. May we not be foolish. Or slow of heart. To believe all that God has said.

[22 : 09] Through the prophets. And especially through Jesus. His son. Now we live in a very different. Time. And day.

Different era. But there are many things that the prophets. And Jesus said. That are yet to be fulfilled. That pertain to a future day.

To the end. We may not be able to correctly. Sequence all of those things. At least I'll admit that. I can't. But we can be confident.

That God will bring. Every one of those things to pass. Just as he said. No matter what it looks like. Here on earth today.

Just as the first coming of Jesus. Unfolded according to God's plan. So too. Will his return. Finally. There is great joy.

[23 : 08] Not just for these guys. Back then. That day. But for all of us. Here today. Who believe in the name of Jesus. His resurrection from the dead. Means that the payment.

That he made for our sins. At the cross. Was accepted. By God. And we. Who believe. Are forgiven. His resurrection from the dead.

Means that he can. And he will. Do everything. That he has promised. In the future. His resurrection from the dead. Means that he really does have the power.

To give life. Forever. To those who believe in his name. To raise us up on the last day. As Jesus said. And Jesus' resurrection means.

That you and I. And forever. And forever. Can have a personal relationship. With this man. With this son of God. This Jesus.

[24 : 06] A friendship. Similar to how his disciples did. All of these things. Hinge on Jesus. Rising from the dead.

And so there is great joy. For all who believe. Life. Because our Lord. Did indeed. Conquer the grave. Look out at our world today.

What's the greatest problem. That we all have. There's all kinds of things going on. That are. Not good. But the worst of them. We all eventually do.

Come to die. Jesus. Has beaten. That problem. Of death. And he offers.

To us. The ability. To overcome death as well. To those who believe. In his name. Christ. Is risen. He is risen indeed.

[25 : 04] Let's continue. Singing. I'll invite the worship team. To come back up. Thank you. How do you know.

folded. When will. différent. Turn. Jeremy. How do you know. Him. distintos. Anger. TV çə gravy. Jesus. Hein.

Him. Two. What else did you know. He Hooded. How do you know. He decide. Jesus.
Son. Himself. Me.