

Sermon for April 19, 2026 – The Third Sunday of Easter

Luke 24:13-35 EHV

¹³Now, on that same day, two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴They were talking with each other about all of these things that had happened. ¹⁵While they were talking and discussing this, Jesus himself approached and began to walk along with them. ¹⁶But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷He said to them, “What are you talking about as you walk along?” Saddened, they stopped.

¹⁸One of them, named Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only visitor in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?”

¹⁹“What things?” he asked them.

They replied, “The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God and all the people. ²⁰The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be condemned to death. And they crucified him. ²¹But we were hoping that he was going to redeem Israel. Not only that, but besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. ²²Also some women of our group amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning. ²³When they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. ²⁴Some of those who were with us went to the tomb. They found it just as the women had said, but they did not see him.”

²⁵He said to them, “How foolish you are and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and to enter his glory?” ²⁷Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

²⁸As they approached the village where they were going, he acted as if he were going to travel farther. ²⁹But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, since it is almost evening, and the day is almost over.”

So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰When he reclined at the table with them, he took the bread, blessed it, broke it, and began giving it to them. ³¹Suddenly their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. Then he vanished from their sight. ³²They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was speaking to us along the road and while he was explaining the Scriptures to us?” ³³They got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem. They found the Eleven and those who were with them assembled together. ³⁴They were saying, “The Lord really has been raised! He has appeared to Simon.” ³⁵They themselves described what had happened along the road, and how they recognized him when he broke the bread.

A teenage girl sits alone in her room, wondering how she can go on living.

She’s a Christian who loves Jesus and tries to be kind. But her “friends” are not the same. One day they laugh with her, the next they mock her. Strangers harass her online. Rumours spread about her at school. She feels empty, isolated, and afraid.

“Why is God allowing this in my life?” she wonders. “Is there something wrong with me? I feel so hopeless.”

Her father sees the change. His once-bright daughter is now withdrawn and sad. He prays for her every night. Trusting in God's power and promises, He tries to comfort her with the Gospel. But nothing seems to change!

"Is God really present?" He asks himself, "Why isn't He protecting my daughter from this evil? Has He forgotten us?"

Have you ever felt like this father or daughter – dismayed and disheartened by a situation in your life? You thought you understood God's promises. You prayed – hoping for a good outcome. But what came instead was pain, confusion, and disappointment – leaving you feeling all alone.

Regardless of how you feel, know this: you are not alone. Jesus is with you, faithful to every promise He made in Scripture. Even though you cannot perceive Him, He is present in His Word and Sacraments, drawing you closer to Himself in hope.

Let us consider these things under the theme:

Your Risen Lord walks with you.

- 1) He sees your sadness.
- 2) He listens to your laments.
- 3) He corrects your confusion.
- 4) His revelation revives your hope.

Part One: He sees your sadness.

Our text begins:

¹³Now, on that same day (the same day the women found Jesus' tomb empty and heard of angels proclaim He rose from the dead), two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴They were talking with each other about all of these things that had happened.

Who were these two disciples? Aside from one being named Cleopas, we don't know. They weren't part of the Twelve. They belonged to the wider circle of believers who had followed Jesus.

They could have been any one of us.

With all the commotion in Jerusalem—the empty tomb, the angels' message—you might have expected them to stay. But they didn't. Instead, they walk away from the city, away from the other disciples, their hearts heavy with grief and confusion.

Their hope had died with Jesus on the cross, or so it seemed.

¹⁵While they were talking and discussing this, Jesus himself approached and began to walk along with them. ¹⁶But their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

Picture them: walking with animated gestures, raised voices, desperate to make sense of their missing Messiah. And without their knowing, Jesus joined them.

Why don't they recognize Him? Luke tells us: "Their eyes were kept from recognizing him." God, in His wisdom, hides Jesus' identity for a time. Why?

Because Jesus wants their hope to rest not on seeing His risen face, but on trusting His Word.

Brothers and sisters in Christ. What was true for the Emmaus disciples is often true for us. We walk through seasons of grief and confusion, feeling utterly lost as we try to make sense of the events that try our faith. Our Messiah seems missing from our lives.

But He isn't.

Even when you cannot see or feel Him, the risen Christ mercifully walks alongside you. He sees your sadness, your tears, your anxiety, but remains concealed from your perception. Why? So that your hope will rest not in your changing feelings or circumstances, but in His unchanging Word.

Yes, your risen Lord walks with you — even when His presence is imperceptible. He sees your sadness, and He invites you to bring it to Him.

Part Two: He listens to your laments.

Jesus didn't walk with His disciples merely to observe; He came to teach and heal. Therefore, He invited them to share what was weighing on their hearts.

¹⁷He said to them, "What are you talking about as you walk along?" Saddened, they stopped.

¹⁸One of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?"

¹⁹"What things?" he asked them.

They replied, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God and all the people. ²⁰The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be condemned to death. And they crucified him. ²¹But we were hoping that he was going to redeem Israel.

Why were these disciples so sorrowful? Because they had lost hope in who Christ truly was. They had trusted Him as the Messiah who would forgive, rescue, and redeem them for God. But how could He be that Messiah now that He was dead?

“We were hoping,” they said. The past tense says everything: hope was gone, replaced by a disappointment that ran so deep that even the clear evidence of Jesus’ resurrection – the empty tomb and the angel’s announcement to the women - only left them more confused.

Brothers and sisters in Christ: as Jesus invited the Emmaus disciples to pour out their hearts, He invites you to do the same. He calls you to come to Him in prayer and lay it all before Him — your sins, worries, fears, and disappointments. Even though He sees everything already, He wants you to tell Him. Why? So that He can correct your confusion and rekindle your hope through His Word.

Part Three: He corrects your confusion.

²⁵He said to them, “How foolish you are and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!

Jesus comes at the disciples rather strongly — and it is worth asking why. It is not because their grief was illegitimate. Sorrow over loss is real. But their sorrow had curdled into a false conclusion: that Jesus had failed, that God had not kept His Word, that their hope was finished. And that conclusion was simply not true.

Jesus hadn’t failed them. He hadn’t broken a single promise. Everything that had happened, including the cross, was foretold in the Scriptures. Unfortunately, they let their preconceived notions get in the way of properly understanding the Scriptures, which was why Jesus confronted them with the question:

²⁶Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and to enter his glory?” ²⁷Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

What a Bible study that must have been.

Jesus walks them back through the entire Old Testament. He shows them how every sacrifice in Moses’ law—every lamb laid on the altar—pointed ahead to His once-for-all sacrifice for sin. He reminds them of passages like Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22, which describe the suffering of the Messiah in detail, and the glory that would follow.

They had expected a political Messiah who would restore Israel’s earthly power. Jesus shows them a different Redeemer: One who gave His perfect life as payment for sin; One who reconciled sinners to God; One who secured not just a better life here, but everlasting life for all who call on Him in faith.

As Jesus taught the Scriptures, something stirred in them. The fog of confusion lifted. Their hearts began to burn as the pieces fell into place. And as the sun set over Judea, a new dawn of hope was rising in their souls.

As Jesus used Scripture to correct His disciples' confusion, so He uses it to correct ours. We are often tempted only to look to Jesus as our deliverer from a difficult diagnosis, a troubled marriage, or a financial crisis — and when He doesn't resolve things the way we hoped, our faith falters. We miss the true purpose for which He came: to be our Redeemer from sin.

And that is the only thing that ultimately matters. Not because our daily struggles are unimportant, but because our true purpose and lasting joy are found not in this world, but in our relationship with our living Lord. The things of this world are temporary. Our God is eternal.

Jesus came to reconcile us to God — to secure for us an everlasting future that no human power, no disease, no demon, and no force of nature could ever take from us. His resurrection is the proof that He succeeded. Because He lives, nothing can separate us from the love God has for us in Christ. Because He lives, we can be confident that God will work all things for the good of those who love Him — even when we cannot see how.

The more we look for and listen to Jesus in His Word, the more clearly we begin to see this truth. Fear gives way to peace, confusion to comfort, and doubt to confidence.

Part Four: His revelation revives your hope.

Let us return to the road. As the two disciples neared Emmaus, Jesus acted as though He intended to travel on — and they would not hear of it:

²⁹But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, since it is almost evening, and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰When he reclined at the table with them, he took the bread, blessed it, broke it, and began giving it to them. ³¹Suddenly their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. Then he vanished from their sight.

Notice what Jesus used to reveal His identity to His disciples: the taking, blessing, breaking, and giving of the bread. Luke used these exact words to describe Jesus' actions at the feeding of the five thousand and again at the institution of the Lord's Supper. Jesus opened their eyes precisely at the table, in a special meal with Him.

This is no accident. Every Sunday, when your pastor takes the bread and cup, blesses it, and gives it to you, the risen Christ also reveals His presence to you. You come to this table burdened with grief, confusion, and doubt, and you leave it forgiven and at peace — knowing the risen Lord is with you — having given you the very body and blood He used to win your salvation.

³²They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was speaking to us along the road and while he was explaining the Scriptures to us?"

What a difference time with Jesus makes. Once tired and sullen, these disciples are now blazing with joy and purpose — so much so that they brave the dark road back to Jerusalem, back to the very city that crucified their Christ, to tell everyone: He lives.

We read:

³³They got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem. They found the Eleven and those who were with them assembled together. ³⁴They were saying, "The Lord really has been raised! He has appeared to Simon." ³⁵They themselves described what had happened along the road, and how they recognized him when he broke the bread.

Brothers and sisters in Christ: the joy that seized those Emmaus disciples is the same joy Jesus offers you today.

Do you remember the teenage girl we met at the beginning of this sermon — the one sitting alone in her room, wondering whether God sees her at all? And the father, praying for her, looking for any way he can help? Perhaps it happens like this: he reads a devotion with her at the dinner table, and as he reads, something in her shifts. Or her pastor says something that strikes her like sunlight breaking through clouds. Or a Bible verse appears on her phone at just the right moment. And suddenly she knows — Jesus has not forgotten her. He has been walking with her all along.

That is exactly what He does for you. He walks with you through every grief and confusion. He meets you in His Word to reframe your understanding of what truly matters. He comes to you in His body and blood at this altar to make Himself known. He reminds you of His sacrifice and points you ahead to what His resurrection secures: through faith in Him, you are forgiven, reconciled to God, and adopted into His eternal family. Because He lives, so shall you. Nothing can separate you from His love.

And as I have witnessed again and again in my ministry: when that revelation breaks through, it revives your hope — strengthening you to face another cancer treatment with courage, to bless those who curse you online as you pray for their conversion, and to encourage those God puts in your life to find in Christ the same hope you have received from Him through His Word - showing them the victory that is ours in Him. Amen.