

Word of God – Word of Life

Luke 24:1-53

Jesus Lives! In Us, Among Us, For Us and Through Us

One way of letting Luke's magnificent, multi-layered account of the first Easter shape our lives is to let each of the three sections first speak for themselves – making connections with our own Easter faith.

In each section Luke shows people moving from sorrow to joy; from bewilderment to understanding; from unbelief to faith. They (and we) are asked to remember the words of Scripture and the very words of Jesus.

Luke 24:1-12 – Faithful, but broken-hearted women discover an empty tomb and hear a message of incredible hope and joy. Their witness, while true, is dismissed.

Luke 24:13-35 – Two disciples on the road of broken dreams and shattered hopes hear words that begin to burn away their sorrow and fears. They receive in the breaking of bread more than their dreams could contain.

Luke 24:36-53 – One emphasis here is that the Risen Lord is none another than the servant-minded Jesus who was betrayed, forsaken, suffered and died. Keeping Cross and Empty Tomb together empowers our mission of proclaiming repentance and forgiveness to all people.

Luke ends the story of Easter and his entire Gospel on notes of blessing, of joy and of continuing worship in community.

The suggestion is that you spend one week with each section perhaps reflecting on how your own faith journey includes both sorrow and joy, perplexity and understanding, doubts and faith. You might also be alert to ways that the Risen Lord is present in your life and in our congregation.

Week Two – Luke 24:12 – 24:35

From Walking in Sorrow and Confusion to Eating with Recognition and Joy

This beloved scene is unique to Luke. A first step might be to imagine your way through the passage. Find a time and place of quiet. Perhaps start with using Google to find images of “The Road to Emmaus;” then pray for a receptive spirit as you slowly read the passage. What might you have been feeling at the horrific death of Jesus and the loss of whatever hopes you had invested in him. Your mind might be befuddled with the story of the women and Peter's inconclusive trip to the empty tomb. What was it like to listen to Jesus' unfolding of Scripture's witness to a suffering Messiah? What longing touched your heart as this “stranger” was about to depart? What did the wondrous moment of recognition feel like? Imagine the joyous return to the community with news of the Risen Messiah.

In this passage Luke picks up several thematic threads that are woven throughout his Gospel and continued in the Book of Acts:

- Jesus' words about his mission are met with misunderstanding. (9:45; 17:20-21; 18:34, and Acts 1:6)
- The Messiah's glory and kingship comes through service and suffering not through political power or military might. (4:1-19 and others)
- Jesus, in his words and deeds, is the trusted path to understanding the Scriptures.
- The crucifixion, though tragic and unjust, is within the will of God and necessary for Jesus to accomplish his mission. (2:34-35; 22:42; 24:26, and others)
- In the many meals in Luke, Jesus often becomes the host, even when he is an invited guest. The meal at Emmaus is directly connected to the feeding of the 5,000 and the Lord's Supper. Jesus' actions with the bread are the same in each: taking, blessing, breaking and giving. There are at least a dozen thematic threads woven among these three meals with Jesus.

Finally, Luke shows how we receive and experience the presence of Jesus; both in being gathered to hear the life giving Word and to share in the Supper of the Crucified and Risen Lord.