

**SUNDAY April 19, 2026    “Emmaus Experience”**  
**Acts 2: 14, 36-41   I Peter 1: 17-23   Luke 24:13-25**

Have you ever gone up to someone and said, Hi\_\_\_. It's good to see you! Then the other person gets a funny look on their face and says, “Do I know you? Sorry my name is not\_\_\_!” Or maybe the reverse has happened to you, when someone sees you and says they know you from somewhere and mistakes the connection. Both of these are situations of mistaken identities which often cause embarrassment or panic. But what is interesting though is that if and when this situation happens, there is something that happens which would not have otherwise-- conversation. One person talked to another and there was a story shared or connection made in some form. Talking with another person is key in these situations and for many people today, actually sitting and sharing with an individual, is not easy. In fact there are now concerns of sociability amongst young people because the isolation experienced during the pandemic of 2020-2021. The effects of over 6 years is still being discovered!

Luke tells a story that occurs the day of Jesus' Resurrection. We are not sure of the timing of this in conjunction with what John has written. John stated that Jesus appeared to the disciples in a room when the doors were locked. Thomas was not present which lead to the story of Thomas wanting to see and touch Jesus for himself a week later. But this part of the story occurs when two of Jesus' followers were going to a village about 7 miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus. They were talking about all what had happened in Jerusalem and what people had shared.

While they were talking Jesus came near and went on walking with them. They did not know it was Jesus because “their eyes were kept from recognizing him.” Jesus asks what they were talking about. They stood still and looked sad. Cleopas answered “are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that took place? Jesus was curious, “What things?” The things about Jesus of Nazareth. Cleopas and the other disciples describe Jesus and what happened including the empty tomb.

Jesus then tells them about the suffering that messiah had to endure along with all the prophets and the interpretations about himself which were to come. This took a while. As they approached the village, the men urged Jesus to stay with them for the evening. And as they prepared to have something to eat, Jesus took bread blessed and broke it and gave it to them. In that moment Cleopas and the disciple's eyes were open to seeing Jesus. They recognized him and he vanished from their sight. They then spoke together and soon after they ran back to Jerusalem and found the disciples and friends and told them what had happened on the road upon which they travelled and how Jesus had made himself known in the breaking of the bread.

The Emmaus experience is filled with emotions- the excitement of the believers after hearing the story of the women and Simon Peter telling them that the tomb was empty. The joy they shared as they talked amongst themselves as they began their journey home to Emmaus. The wonder of how this stranger whom they met as they walked did not know anything. They were happy to tell Jesus' story as messiah and how they hoped he would redeem Israel. And then hearing this stranger talk about the Messiah and how he should suffer and then enter glory. Their hearts were burning when he spoke and shared the scriptures with them. They were overwhelmed.

It is also filled with walking and talking-- for 7 miles- they talked and walked together. Talking and sharing what had happened but also what this meant. Yet they did not know who the stranger was because "their eyes were kept from recognizing him". Had the Spirit/ God done this on purpose or was Jesus hiding his face as he talked? Did he appear differently from before his death? Just how could they not see him for who he is?

Jesus walked and talked- he didn't show them his hands or side but he shared the story of the Messiah from scriptures and why they needed someone to save them. He talked about himself as the prophets described what would happen. Yet the two followers did not know him.

Once arriving home, the disciples were courteous to this stranger and invited him in to stay- it was dark, he was intending to walk further- but they were unsure of to where- and so Jesus stays for a little while. Then Jesus breaks the bread- they see his hands, his actions and they have heard the blessing being offered and they are now able to see the One before them as Jesus. They are in awe and then Jesus leaves. Why would Jesus leave? His purpose was complete-- the disciples with whom he spoke and walked knew he was alive. They now needed to tell the rest of the group- they had seen him.

Running back to Jerusalem for 7 miles---they reach the place where the disciples are together. They tell them their story and all are amazed. They had not thought it possible that Jesus would be seen again. But these two followers tell their story and all are filled with renewed hope in the Risen Christ.

How many times have you wondered about Jesus being alive? Or questioned your faith as to whether you believe in Jesus' resurrection and/ or his teachings? The followers going back home are so excited that they cannot stop talking and when they have a stranger who does not know the story, they are even happier- to share the story and their faith in Messiah.

Maybe you have had similar experiences -- not walking to Emmaus per se, but talking with people about what they know and believe when you find yourself believing something differently or just needing clarification. The followers understood the significance of Jesus' rising to life, but they were not fully aware of Jesus' story. Yet we know that by faith they came to know him as they talked,

shared together and readied the food. In these moments your eyes recognize in the other, characteristics and traits of who Jesus today. Through generations of the past, the teachings of Jesus-love, faith, hope and joy - have been shared faithfully and now are a part of the persons you share and worship with even now. We are one with Christ Jesus in what we say and do because we have been trying to be like him for hundreds of years!

In Peter's address to the crowd in the years that followed, he is asked what should the people do in response to what Jesus has done in dying and rising to new life? He states, "Repent, be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. They then devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Here we are over 2000 years later still asking what should we do in response to Jesus' death and resurrection? The answer remains-- repent, be baptized, receive the gift of the Spirit, devote yourselves to the teaching of Christ and be with one another in prayer and breaking bread. But the question we must ask, are we doing this -enough?

The Emmaus experience changed the lives of Cleopas and the other follower as well as reaffirming the faith and testimony of Mary and Simon Peter. But this experience of meeting Jesus as we walk is not new. Jesus walks with us, is in us and works through us, if we believe in him, his love and in the resurrection from death. There is hope and there is new life offered to us all if we but seek him, look to him and recognize him as the Messiah.

The Emmaus experience teaches us that we can go anywhere knowing that Jesus is with us. That we don't have to go through life alone. That he will listen and talk; he will guide us on the path home and if invited in, he will be with us always. This is important for us now as we look to the future of our church and how as a church family we may continue to tell the Good News of Jesus resurrection and to reach out to others who may not know of God's grace. This is the Emmaus Experience that we may tell others with hope and joy, with wonder and excitement, but we must first believe!

Let us pray:

God of grace, hear our prayer as we seek your guidance to know what it means to experience Jesus in our lives. Help us to understand who He is as Saviour, messiah and Christ. Hear our prayers we ask in His name. Amen.

