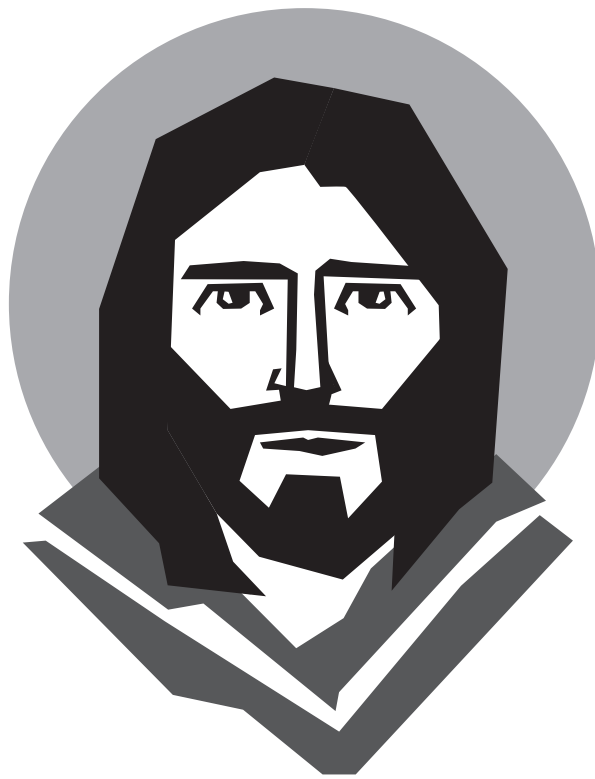


THE REAL **JESUS**



A study through the Gospel of Luke

BOOK 5: HIS RESURRECTION



BECOMING A CHRISTIAN

In the Bible, God reveals His truth about how to have eternal life by becoming a believer in the finished work of Jesus Christ. The believer is a Christian, a follower of Jesus Christ, a true child of God, and one who has been saved by God according to God's grace (undeserved favor). *"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast"* (Ephesians 2:8-9).

How does one become a Christian?

- The Bible, God's word, says that eternal life (salvation) is a free gift of God which cannot be earned or deserved (Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9).
- However, we also find in God's word that all people are born sinners and cannot save themselves from the penalty of sin, which is eternal death and separation from God. God's requirement is perfection and no one is perfect (Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:3-23; Ephesians 2:1-3).
- God tells us in His word that He is holy, meaning that He is perfect and that He is also just, meaning that He gives to sinners what is deserved, and because of His holiness and justice He must punish sinners. But thankfully, the Bible also says that God is loving and merciful and does not take pleasure in punishing sinners (Exodus 34:6-7; Ephesians 2:4-5).
- God has mercy on sinners by not giving them what they deserve. This is only possible because He gave His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, the God-man, to be the substitute for sinners bearing the penalty for their sin and satisfying God's justice (John 1:1,14; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 5:8).
- Jesus said that in order for anyone to have eternal life there must be repentance of sins and faith placed in His substitutionary death on the cross to pay for the penalty of one's sins. This faith must be in Jesus Christ alone not depending on anything else including "good works" (Mark 1:15b; Acts 20:21; Ephesians 2:8-9).

What then is the response to these things if one desires to have eternal life and become a Christian?

1. Pray and ask God to forgive you. The Bible says that you must repent of your sins, being ashamed of them, genuinely regretting and grieving over them, and firmly deciding to make an about-face and turn away from sin and your old lifestyle (Acts 3:19-20).
2. Pray and tell God that you place your faith in Jesus Christ alone to save you. The Bible says that for you to become a Christian, you must place your faith and trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ who died on the cross to become your substitute and who took the penalty for your sin upon Himself once and for all (John 3:36).

THE REAL JESUS: HIS RESURRECTION

Week Two | October 7, 2018 | The Talk around Town

PREPARATION

GETTING READY

Before your group meets next time, spend some time alone in God's Word reading through this week's text, Luke 24:13–35. Pray that God, through His Spirit, would bring to life the truth of this text and how it applies to your life.

THIS WEEK

KEY BIBLICAL TRUTH

Jesus reveals Himself to the depressed, the disappointed, and the doubting with truth and mercy.

THEOLOGY APPLIED

When your hopes are smashed, and life hits you in the head, run to God's Word.

MEDITATE

"And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:27).

GETTING STARTED

+ Use this section to prepare your heart and mind for the truths of this week. This section will help to introduce the focus of this week's lesson.

The breaking news was spreading like wildfire. Jesus, who everyone had seen crucified and buried just days before, was spotted alive. You've probably heard this story many times and recognize it as the next part of the plot. But what would it have been like to be in Jerusalem that weekend? How would you have reacted to this news if you weren't expecting it?

Sometimes we are quick to jump from Jesus' burial to His resurrection without really thinking about the three days in between. Jesus didn't instantly rise from the dead. He stayed in the ground—for three whole days. His resurrection was the greatest miracle, and God delayed it.

Confusion set in. Hope was questioned. The darkness was real. Those who had followed Jesus with such devotion began second guessing everything they had come to believe about Him. Who was The Real Jesus?

What do your spiritual doubts look like? For some people, believing God exists is a real struggle. They see pain and suffering in the world and cannot reconcile the idea that a good, loving God could possibly exist. Others have no trouble with God's existence but doubt His character. God may exist, they think, but is He really present in my life? Or is He more like an absent father, alive and breathing but entirely negligent and unconcerned about me? Some people admire the historical Jesus, but believing He is the Christ, the Son of God, is a leap for them. Others are eager to believe in Jesus as Christ, but they become really confused when life side-swipes them, causing them to wonder if this Jesus really is the Healer, the Redeemer, the Savior. What do you do when the struggles of what's really going on in your life don't seem to match up with who The Real Jesus says He is?

If any of these questions resonates with your thinking, this passage is for you.

🔗: *Which of the above questions do you tend to struggle with most?*

🔗: *What do you do when you struggle with doubt?*

📖 UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

In Luke 24:13–35, we read of the first people who, after He appeared to Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9), saw the resurrected Jesus in the flesh. They were not the religious elite or even ones holding out in faith that a miracle would happen, and He would be resurrected like He promised. They were the depressed, the disappointed, and the doubting.

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1. DEPRESSED, DISAPPOINTED, AND DOUBTING
 2. DIVINE IRONY
 3. JESUS' DIAGNOSIS AND CURE

GOING DEEPER

+ This next section will help show what God's Word says about this week's particular focus. Read through the Scripture passages and connect the text to this week's biblical truth.

DEPRESSED, DISAPPOINTED, AND DOUBTING

📖 LUKE 24:13-24

🗣️: *Who did the men on the road to Emmaus say Jesus was? What had they hoped He would be?*

🗣️: *Why did they not recognize they were talking to Jesus?*

Jesus' followers had witnessed the tragic death of the man they had spent years watching and following. They believed He was more than just a good teacher or miracle worker. They believed He was the Messiah, the long awaited one who would redeem Israel. He had finally come, fulfilling their greatest dreams. But then, their Messiah was killed. How could it be? How could God be put to death? How could a conquering redeemer hang on a cross? It didn't make sense!

This is not the first time we have seen utter bewilderment in the Bible. Think back to when God called Abraham to sacrifice Isaac in Genesis 22. After years and years of holding out hope that God would fulfill His promise and give Abraham a son through whom He would bless the nations, Isaac was finally born. What's more, Isaac was born to parents who were far beyond childbearing years! For biological reasons, his birth made no sense. It was a miracle. God showed that for Him all things are possible.

But then, God called Abraham to sacrifice his only son. How could this be? Isn't Isaac's life necessary for God's big plan of redemption? But choosing not to lean on his own understanding and instead obey God, Abraham climbed the mountain with his son. He trusted in God's faithfulness to keep His promises even though common sense gave him every reason to question and doubt. He hoped in God with confidence and found his assurance in the character of God (Hebrews 11:1) rather than the way things "looked." For this, Romans 4:16 says, Abraham is the "father of us all."

It seems Jesus' followers not only forgot Jesus' promises all throughout His ministry that He would rise again, but they also forgot the way their father Abraham modeled faith for them. Yahweh is the God of the impossible. The Bible is the big story of how He overcomes one seemingly insurmountable obstacle after another in order to accomplish His purposes. Faith means to fix your gaze on God rather than your own understanding. It means to trust His promises and obey His commands even when everything around you looks impossible.

We learned last week that the first people who heard about Jesus' resurrection were not the religious elite, but a group of women. Women were oppressed and considered less important than men. But not to our Lord. This week, we see another group of people Jesus revealed Himself to—the depressed, disappointed, and doubting. They were not the spiritually strong, but the spiritually weak. They didn't hold positions of religious power. They were ordinary folk. They weren't even the people who had remembered Jesus' promise to rise again and waited in faith for His resurrection. They were the ones who had forgotten His promises and had lost sight of who He really was.

As Jesus' grief-stricken and confused followers were talking together, He came alongside them. Verse 15 says He drew near to them. Jesus drew near to them. Kent Hughes writes, "Cleopas had let it all out—his confusion, his depression, his disillusionment, his shrinking faith, his anger. And did Jesus reject him? Of course not. Jesus coaxed the couple to reveal their true thoughts, which were by and large their doubts. And when they did so, he answered. Our Lord honors spiritual honesty."

In verse 16, we learn that the men didn't recognize Jesus. In fact, their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him. It is the Spirit who opens our eyes to see Jesus for who He really is. We are spiritually blind. We don't discover truth about Jesus on our own. We need truth to be revealed to us. That is why the Bible is so important. Through it God reveals to us the truth of who Jesus really is.

But beyond a spiritual blindness, these men were also experiencing an emotional blindness. Look at the way they recounted the events to Jesus in verses 19–24. They included the part about the empty tomb, but for them this was not good news. It was only more bad news!

If you have ever experienced depression or helped someone who has, you know it is very difficult to find comfort in good news under the weight of it. Depression does more than steal your joy. It is like a pair of glasses altering your vision of reality, but you can't take them off. All you see is more disappointment, worst-case-scenarios, and an overwhelming future. These men interpreted the facts of the empty tomb with these glasses on. The conclusion they came to was not that Jesus must have risen, but that His body had been stolen. They saw insult added to injury.

These glasses did not help the men see things more clearly, but less. In fact, in verse 21, Cleopas mentions that it had been three days since Jesus died. Three days. Even that reference didn't jog his memory of all the times Jesus said he would raise from the dead in three days (Mark 9:31; John 2:19). Depression can make your memory of the truth hazy. It can keep you from seeing Jesus, even though He is right in front of you!

When things are dark, bewildering, confusing, soul-crushing even, don't fall asleep. Stay alert! It is under those conditions that God does His greatest work!

Q: *Can you identify with the men walking on the road to Emmaus? Do you feel spiritually weak? Have you forgotten God's promises and lost sight of who He really is?*

Q: *Do you sometimes think Jesus is probably nearer to those who are spiritually stronger or more important than you? How does this passage encourage you?*

DIVINE IRONY

📖 LUKE 24:17-24

Q: *Looking back over these verses, why do you think Jesus asked them to recount what was going on?*

“Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?” Yes, Cleopas really did just ask Jesus if He knew about the crucifixion! How ironic! Jesus is the one who knows best about the crucifixion!

But look at how Jesus responds in verse 19. He doesn't shame them, but He does have a sense of humor! Playing along, He asks them to explain what things they are talking about. As He listens to them recount the events of the past three days, imagine what was going through His mind! He, of course, knew the facts better than they did, but He patiently listened while they recounted them.

First, they say this Jesus was from Nazareth, a great teacher who performed miracles. His ministry clearly came from God and was a great blessing to many people. They had even hoped He would be the promised redeemer. For a while, it looked like that might be the case. But then, the religious officials pulled a fast one. They found a way to sentence Him to death. Now all hope is lost. The men even include the part of the story about the women finding an empty tomb (verses 22–24).

They get all the facts straight and they don't leave out anything important. They say a lot of true things about Jesus but fail to see The Real Jesus standing in front of them. Thabiti Anyabwile says, “These men know the facts of the gospel, but they don't yet recognize the face of the gospel.” Their problem was not an intellectual problem. They knew all the right things, but they still didn't know The Real Jesus.

Sometimes we may think the problem lies with liberal scholars who want to study facts about Jesus and discount Him as Lord. But, in reality, we may experience a version of this unbelief in The Real Jesus inside the walls of the church. There are many people who, like the men in this passage, know all the right facts about Jesus, but don't really know Him. They may even preach a sermon on who Jesus is, what He taught, and what He did on the cross, and not really know Him. There are even those who would include the fact that He is God—but they don't really know Him. Some can talk a lot about Him but wouldn't recognize Jesus if He were standing right in front of them. They may have even memorized everything He said, but they haven't been transformed by Him. The question, “Do you know The Real Jesus?” is not just for others to answer, it is for you to answer too.

The question Jesus asks the men on the road is the same one each of us must answer. How do you talk about Jesus? Is it similar to the way the men talk about Him? Does Jesus listen to you roll off theologically accurate facts about Him when underneath lies confusion or doubt that He really is who He says He is? Does your intellect say one thing about Him but your life reveal another? Have you let Jesus inform your brain but not transform your heart? Jesus knows the facts about Himself far better than you do. He is not interested in the facts making your head fat. He is interested in making your heart right by knowing Him.

Q: *Look back at the questions above and identify which ones apply to you most.*

Q: *How do you know that you know The Real Jesus?*

JESUS' DIAGNOSIS AND CURE

■ LUKE 24:25-35

Q: *What did Jesus point the doubting and disappointed men to?*

Q: *How they respond?*

Now it was time for Jesus to speak. He completely rocked their worlds. They thought they were recounting facts and had a grasp of the situation. Jesus quickly showed them they did not.

Like depression, doubt can be a pair of glasses you see the world through. Sometimes we put on the glasses of doubt because we are afraid of believing something foolish. It's better to be skeptical than naïve, right? Sometimes we put on the glasses of doubt because we've been hurt in the past. Better to miss out on something good than be disappointed, right? Doubt is often rooted in pride and fear. And it can be crippling.

Jesus' diagnoses are that depression, disappointment, and doubt have made these men slow to believe (verse 25). The glasses they are wearing haven't given them a clearer vision of reality. Instead, it has impaired their vision. Being quick to believe something may be foolish, but being slow to believe can be equally foolish.

To help them take off the old glasses and put on new ones, Jesus turns to Scripture. Notice that He doesn't tell them to memorize verses or facts from it. Instead, He teaches them to see Him in it. All of Scripture points to Jesus, even those strange Old Testament passages! Ed Clowney writes, "Jesus fulfilled the law not only by keeping it perfectly for us, but also by transforming our understanding of it. Christ not only obeyed the law, but also displayed its true meaning and depth." The Bible isn't just a moral handbook, but God's revelation of the

gospel to us—that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). When we are reading the Bible, Jesus teaches us to look for how each passage is a part of God’s bigger story of redemption that culminates in Christ.

In verses 28–34, we see a radical transformation. The men who had been down in the dumps of depression, disappointment, and doubt not only saw who Jesus was, they exclaimed that their hearts burned within them as they heard Jesus speak and saw Him revealed in the Scriptures. Instead of walking along the road to Emmaus with their heads drooping, talking about how their world had fallen apart, they returned to Jerusalem and declared to the others that Jesus—the Lord—had risen indeed! They spoke of Him not as prophet or the one they had hoped would be the Messiah, but as the risen Lord. They had encountered The Real Jesus!

When we read God’s Word, we encounter The Real Jesus. The best way to root out the fear or pride that fuels our doubt is to continually encounter Christ—to be humbled, comforted, and amazed by Him. While depression may involve doctors and professionals to address physical imbalances, it also always involves meeting the One who sees the hurting and performs miraculous acts of healing all throughout Scripture.

Q: *Faith should not be rooted only in facts or subjective experience. What should it be rooted in instead? What is your faith rooted in?*

Q: *Read Mark 9:23–25. How has the father transitioned from being slow to believe to expressing humble belief? What similarities and differences do you see between that kind of posture toward Jesus and the posture of the men on the road to Emmaus?*

NEXT STEPS

+ *Connect the truths from God’s Word to your daily life. Process how what you’ve learned this week will impact the way you live beyond today and into the future.*

- Q: *Can you think of a time in your life that was particularly dark or when you experienced intense disappointment or doubts? How did God meet you in it? What miracles did you witness?*
- Q: *What things do you run to in order to “cure” your depression, disappointment, or doubts? How can you practice Jesus’ cure instead?*
- Q: *How can you practice reading the Bible with Christ at the center? Are there good resources people in your group can share?*
- Q: *What is your posture toward belief in who The Real Jesus is? Are you slow to believe or quick to come to Him when you struggle with unbelief?*

PRAY

+ *Use this prayer point to connect your time in prayer to this week’s focus.*

- Father, thank You for Your Word. Thank You that through it we can know who The Real Jesus is. Thank You that it is a sure foundation and that it can be trusted. Strengthen our faith as we go to Your Word to encounter Christ.

COMMENTARY

LUKE 24:18 Cleopas is likely the same man mentioned in John 19:25 as a relative of Jesus. He is said to be Jesus’ uncle, the brother of His earthly father, Joseph.

LUKE 24:19-20 While the Romans technically crucified Jesus, Luke puts the responsibility for it on the Jewish religious leaders.

LUKE 24:21 “But we had hoped” also shows the people’s view of Jesus in contrast to that of the religious leaders. The people believed Jesus was the Messiah and viewed Him in that way. The religious leaders scrutinized Jesus in order to prove He was not the Messiah. This contrasts two different ways of seeing Jesus, one from a posture of

openness and the other from a posture of doubt.

LUKE 24:31 How did Jesus vanish if He wasn't a ghost? Some suggest the door was miraculously opened so His physical body could enter. This is consistent with Acts 12:10 in which Peter went through a locked door.

**All exegetical content and commentary resourcing for this lesson was provided by the ESV Study Bible Commentary Notes, Christ Centered Exposition (Luke), and Preaching the Word (Luke).*