

Lent Devotional April 20, 2025

Scripture

Luke 24:13-35

13 Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, 14 and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. 15 While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, 16 but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. 17 And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. 18 Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" 19 He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, 20 and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. 21 But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. 22 Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, 23 and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. 24 Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him." 25 Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! 26 Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" 27 Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

28 As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. 29 But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. 30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. 32 They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" 33 That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. 34 They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" 35 Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Devotion

Dr. Jodie Eckenrod '20

One of the most memorable and well-told narratives in the gospel accounts, the walk to Emmaus, continues to spark our imaginations. Readers have questions about Cleopas and his companion (perhaps his wife?). Why did they not recognize Jesus, who prevented them from knowing who he was, and why did he vanish at the very moment they did recognize him? These two followers were not present at the Last Supper a few days before, so why were their eyes opened when he gave them the broken bread? Why was this moment significant to them?

We can easily identify with these followers in their moment of devastation over what they thought had been lost. We can remain focused on our personal grief or on communal tragedies in the world instead of on the amazing ways God is working. Jesus interprets the scriptures in a new way for his followers, but it wasn't just head knowledge that Jesus conveyed. Their hearts burned as he retold the story, given the events of the previous three days. When was the last time our hearts burned as we reflected upon scripture?

It can be tempting for us to focus on our personal struggles or on the doom and gloom of the 24-hour news cycle. It can even be easy for us to remain merely intellectually engaged with scripture or focus on the never-ending tasks of ministry or day-to-day life. But what if during this season we allowed Jesus' interpretation of scripture to make our hearts burn? What if we truly experienced Jesus on the road to wherever we're going?

As bleak as things may look in our lives, the world, or even in the church, God is in fact working in history and will redeem all things. Jesus is King and in his mysterious ways will set things right in our broken world.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, please help us to recognize your presence in our lives even in the darkest of times. Give us the eyes to see you; allow our hearts to burn within us as we experience the scriptures in light of your amazing work and your boundless love. Amen.