

Jesus Appears on the Emmaus Road

(Luke 24:1-43)

Introduction

Who knows why we celebrate Easter? [Let the children respond.] Yes, we celebrate the fact that Jesus came back to life. That's good news! We worship a living God!

We know that 40 days after our Lord's resurrection, He returned to the glories of Heaven where He is right now, sitting on the throne of God. But have you ever wondered what He did for those 40 days here on earth before He went up to heaven?

For the next few weeks, we are going to learn about some of the times Jesus appeared to His disciples after His resurrection and before He ascended back up to Heaven.

Opening Prayer

Father, sometimes we can lose sight of the fact that You are a living God, walking right beside us every moment of every day. Help us to trust in You, even though we cannot see you. Help us to remember that You have a plan and a purpose in everything that happens to us even when we don't understand what's happening in our lives. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. (Luke 24:31a)

Lesson

The Lord Jesus had died a painful death by being nailed to a cross. He gave His life because He was taking the punishment for your sin and my sin. He suffered so that you and I can be forgiven of our sin. (1 Corinthians 15:3b, 4) and given eternal life. He died and was buried in a tomb and His followers were full of sorrow. They thought they had lost Jesus forever.

Has someone that was really important to you died? Perhaps a Grandmother? Losing someone can be devastating. When Jesus died on the cross, His followers felt a deep sense of loss and hopelessness.

As it turned out, Jesus did not go straight up to Heaven when He died. He actually came back to life and was here walking around on earth. For 40 days after His resurrection, Jesus appeared to His followers at different times and different places.

The first ones to see the risen Lord was Mary Magdalene and some other women who had gone out to the tomb very early the morning after His crucifixion.

Luke 24:1-3

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. (2) And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, (3) but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

Two angels were there and asked the women why they were looking for Jesus. They said, "He isn't here! He is risen from the dead!"

So, they ran back to tell the disciples what happened. But the disciples didn't believe them.

That same day, the day after Jesus' death and burial, two of Jesus' followers decided to walk to the village of Emmaus. It was seven miles from Jerusalem, so they had a long time (about 3 hours) to talk about all these things that were so heavy on their hearts—everything that had happened to Jesus—His arrest, His death, His burial.

Luke 24:13-14

That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened.

These two men thought that Jesus was going to be a great political ruler and would rescue Israel from the Romans. They didn't understand that Jesus had come to rescue people's souls.

While they were walking and talking, a third Man joined them, He was a stranger to them.

Luke 24:15-16

While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. (16) But their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

Why do you think these two men didn't recognize Jesus? [Teacher, let the children discuss this.] Perhaps because Jesus was the last person they expected to see, it didn't register that it was Him. Maybe it was because they were so consumed with sadness and disappointment, they weren't looking for Jesus.

Sometimes we can be like that, too. We can be so caught up in our own troubles that we don't even realize that Jesus is walking right alongside of us.

It can be hard to remember that God has a plan and a purpose in everything that happens to us in our lives. We can be so distracted by our own thoughts and worries that we don't even realize that Jesus is at work in our lives.

There's a lesson here for us: We are to keep our eyes open for Jesus! God is always working...even when life is puzzling! Even though we don't see Jesus and even when it seems like all hope is lost, Jesus is still at work in our lives!

Jesus asked them what they were talking about.

Luke 24:17

And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad.

The men stopped walking. They couldn't believe this Man hadn't heard about everything that had been going on.

Luke 24:18

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

In other words, Cleopas said, "Where have you been all week? Haven't you heard about the terrible things that have happened?"

Luke 24:19-20

And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him.

And, they explained to Jesus that religious leaders handed Him over to the Roman government to be condemned to death by crucifixion.

Luke 24:21-24

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 happened. (22) Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, (23) and when 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. (24) Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see."

They couldn't stop talking about what had happened.

Then the Man said to them, "Why do you find it so hard to believe? The Messiah's death and resurrection had been predicted by the prophets. Don't you believe your scriptures?"

Luke 24:25-26

And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! (26) Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"

The Man showed them how the prophets had written about the Messiah all the way through the Bible, from the first book to the last. The prophets had clearly predicted that He must suffer before entering glory.

The whole Bible speaks of Jesus.

Luke 24:27

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

The Man opened their minds to understand the Scriptures; He showed them that it was written long ago that the Messiah must suffer and die and rise from the dead on the third day. (See verses 45-46)

These two men were so interested in what this stranger was teaching them that when they reached Emmaus, they asked Him to stay overnight.

Luke 24:28-29

So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, (29) but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them.

Why do you think Jesus "acted as if he were going farther"? He wanted them to invite Him in rather than inviting Himself in. In the same way, He wants us to ask Him into our hearts! Jesus is just waiting for us to invite him into every area of our lives.

When they all sat down to eat, the stranger asked God to bless the food. Then He took a small loaf of bread and broke it and passed it to them.

Luke 24:30-31

When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. (31) And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight.

How did these men suddenly know it was Jesus? In verse 35 it says, "He was known to them in the breaking of the bread". Perhaps, they saw the nail prints in His hand. Or, maybe they remembered what Jesus had done at the Last Supper. (Remember, Jesus told His disciples that the bread and wine were symbols of His body and blood.) The fact was that Jesus revealed to them at that moment that it was Him; He was alive! But just as quickly as they recognized Jesus, He disappeared.

Luke 24:32

They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?"

The men were so excited, they said, "We must go at once to Jerusalem and tell the others that Jesus truly is alive!"

Luke 24:33-34

And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, (34) saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"

Then the two men shared their good news.

Luke 24:35

Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Then, just as He had suddenly disappeared from them, while they were talking, Jesus suddenly stood before them. He reappeared!

Luke 24:36-37

As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you!" (37) But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit.

The men were so surprised, it scared them. They thought He was a ghost!

Luke 24:38-40

And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? (39) See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." (40) And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.

Jesus said, "Don't be afraid! It is really Me!" Then He let them touch the nail marks in His hands and feet just to prove it was really Him.

Then, just to be sure they knew He was really alive, He asked them for something to eat.

Luke 24:41-43

And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" (42) They gave him a piece of broiled fish, (43) and he took it and ate before them.

It was hard to believe! But Jesus was alive! Just as He had promised.

These two men thought that they had lost Jesus forever. They thought that all hope was lost. But even though they couldn't recognize Jesus, he was still with them.

Jesus is with us today and he is at work in our lives, even if we can't see him or if things seem bad. Jesus gave us ways to remember him by, one of which is the breaking of bread.

Jesus is waiting for us to invite him into every area of our lives and as we live closely with him and talk to him regularly, He teaches us about himself!

Closing Prayer

Father, thank You that you give us hope even when all seems lost. Help us to have the faith to invite You into our lives to teach us about Yourself. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Game Center

"Who?" "What?" or "Why?" —

Before class, write several Who, What, and Why questions pertaining to the lesson. Cut a triangle, a square, and a circle in the bottom of a cardboard box. Make the openings big enough for a beanbag. Decorate the box and label the shapes "Who?," "What?," and "Why?"

When a child throws a beanbag through a shape he may select a card of the corresponding shape with a question to answer for points for his team.

Or, use the following review questions in a time of discussion or a game of your choice:

1. Why do we celebrate Easter? (We celebrate the fact that Jesus came back to life. We worship a living God!)
2. What village were the two men walking to? (Emmaus)
3. What were the two men talking about as they were walking to Emmaus? (Everything that had happened to Jesus—His arrest, His death, His burial.)
4. Who came and walked with these two men? (Jesus)
5. What prevented these two men from recognizing Jesus? (They weren't expecting to see Jesus; or, they were too concerned about their own problems to see Him.)
6. What did Jesus explain to these men? (Jesus taught them how the prophets had written about the Messiah all the way through the Bible, from the first book to the last. The prophets had clearly predicted that He must suffer before entering glory.)

7. Why do you think Jesus "*acted as if he were going farther*"? (Jesus wanted them to invite them into their home.)
8. Why did these men suddenly know it was Jesus? (Perhaps, they saw the nail prints in His hand or they remembered what Jesus had done at the Last Supper.)
9. The two men walking to Emmaus did not realize Jesus was walking right beside them. Is it easy for us to see Jesus? Why is it we can't see Jesus in our lives at times? (We can be so caught up in our own troubles that we don't even realize that Jesus is walking right alongside of us. Even though we don't see Jesus and even when it seems like all hope is lost, Jesus is still at work in our lives!)
10. It says that when Jesus suddenly appeared to them, they thought it was a ghost. Why do you think they were afraid or shocked? (Seeing Him alive again was shocking! They'd never seen anyone raise themselves from the dead.)

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