

## THE EMMAUS ROAD - PART 1

### The testimony of Cleopas

Dr. Derek Morris

Preaching passage:	Luke 24:13-32
Subject:	How did the two disciples on the road to Emmaus respond after they met Jesus, listening to His teachings, and finally recognized Him
Complement:	they believed that He was the Messiah
Exegetical idea:	When the two disciples on the road to Emmaus met Jesus, listened to His teachings and finally recognized Him, they believed that He was the Messiah.
Homiletical idea:	<b>Jesus, your Messiah, wants to walk with you!</b>
Purpose:	To encourage my hearers to examine the evidence regarding Jesus as the Messiah and to accept Him as their personal Savior.

#### Introduction

Only Luke records the story. Not a word from Matthew, or Mark, or John. And at first reading, the story leaves us with more questions than answers. And yet, as I studied the story of the Emmaus Road in preparation for today's message, I sensed that I was walking on holy ground!

The story that I'm referring to is found in Luke 24, beginning with verse 13. "Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem." What "same day" is Dr. Luke referring to? Go back to Luke 24:1. This is the day that Christians call "Easter Sunday." The first day of the week. Jesus was crucified on Friday. Rested in the tomb on the Sabbath day. And on the first day of the week, the women come to the tomb and the stone has been rolled away. Two angels share the glorious news, recorded in Luke 24:5-6: "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!"

It is "that same day", according to Luke, that two "of them" were going to a village called Emmaus." Who does the "of them" refer two? "Two of them"? Well, according to Luke 24:9,


the women who heard this glorious testimony from the angels gave a report “to the Eleven and to all the others.” Do you see that in Luke 24:9? The close followers of Jesus had been referred to as the Twelve. But Judas had denied Jesus and betrayed Him with a kiss. Simon Peter had also denied Jesus and betrayed Him with a curse. But Simon Peter had repented with tears. Judas, on the other hand, had experienced only remorse and hanged himself. So now there were Eleven, rather than the Twelve. But please notice in Luke 24:9 that the women gave their testimony about Jesus being risen from the dead not only to the Eleven, but “to all the others.” Jesus had many more disciples than just the Twelve. Luke records, at the beginning of the book of Acts, that there were about 120 followers of Jesus.

The two walking on the road to Emmaus were “two of them.” Two disciples of Jesus. One of these disciples is identified in Luke 24:18. His name was...Cleopas. Who was Cleopas? Eusebius, in the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD came up with the idea that Cleopos was the brother of Joseph, and therefore the uncle of Jesus. Recently, someone has proposed that Cleopas married Mary, mother of Jesus, after she became a widow. Neither of these positions is overtly supported in Scripture. Some have wondered if Cleopas is the same as the Clopas mentioned by John in John 19:25. In John 19:25, we read, “Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.” If Cleopas and Clopas are one and the same, then Cleopas’ wife was one of the holy women who followed Jesus. She was present at the cross with Mary the mother of Jesus, with Mary’s sister, and with Mary Magdalene. She may also have been among the group of women at the tomb who heard the glorious report from the angels, “He is not here! He is risen!”

That conclusion seems to be supported by a comment that Cleopas makes later in Luke

24:22 when he says, “some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive.”

But as we'll discover from the next part of the story, Cleopas is skeptical about the report. Perhaps you're wondering about the other disciple. Who was he? We don't know. Some have suggested that this was Matthias, the one who would later become the replacement for Judas, one of the Twelve. But Dr. Luke doesn't provide that information. There is one interesting piece of information that Luke provides. In Luke 24:29, these two disciples say, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.” What can you learn from that comment? Stay with us? Perhaps these two disciples were related. That's certainly possible. Like the brothers Peter and Andrew. Or James and John. Perhaps this was Cleopas and this brother. Or perhaps this was a father and son. Apparently, they are staying in the same house and they are both disciples of Jesus.

Some of you might be thinking, “We don't know very much about these two individuals. Cleopas could be Clopas, but we're not sure. And we don't know the identity of the other disciple. Where was Emmaus?” Unfortunately, we don't know that either! Emmaus was not a city with walls, like Bethlehem or Jerusalem. That was called a , from which we get our English word metropolis. But Emmaus is referred to as a village, a smaller settlement. This is the only place in Scripture that Emmaus is mentioned. Archeologists are not sure of its location, though the text tells us that it was about 60 stadia from Jerusalem. A stadion was about 607 feet. So 60 stadia is a little under 7 miles if you're traveling in a straight line. Probably 7-8 miles on a winding road. That distance is important for us, because it let's us know how

long the disciples were walking on that road. It also gives us a clue as to when they began their journey.

How long would it take to walk 7-8 miles? About two hours at normal walking speed. But probably the walk to Emmaus took longer. They were talking together as they walked on the way. And Luke tells us that when they arrived at Emmaus it was already dusk. The sun sets in that region at about 6:30 in the evening. So we can infer that these two disciples left Jerusalem in the early afternoon. They had heard a report from “their women” earlier in the day and now they were heading home to their small village of Emmaus. Apparently, they had not heard the testimony of Mary Magdalene who met with Jesus near the garden tomb.

So these two disciples are walking on the road to Emmaus, talking about the events of the past few days. And this is where the story takes an interesting turn. Look with me at Luke’s record in Luke 24:14-16. “They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognizing him.”

Jesus, the Risen Lord, catches up with them on the road. But notice, “they were kept from recognizing him.” What does that mean? Did Jesus look different after His resurrection? I don’t think so. Other disciples recognized Him instantly. So what is going on here? They were kept from recognizing Him. Apparently, what’s happening isn’t natural. Something supernatural is going on. Listen carefully to the rest of the story and I think that you’ll understand why they were kept from recognizing Jesus at first.

Let’s read on in Luke 24:17. “He asked them, ‘What are you discussing together as you walk along?’ They stood still, their faces downcast.” You get the impression that they were

almost speechless. Shocked. Like “Where have you been?” Then Cleopas expresses his thoughts in words. Luke 24:18 “One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, ‘Are you only a visitor to Jerusalem and do not know the things that have happened there in these days?’”

You can pick up a little amazement in Cleopas’ voice. But Jesus coaches Cleopas to share his thoughts. “What things?” Jesus asked. We can read Cleopas’ response in Luke 24:19-24 “‘About Jesus of Nazareth,’ they replied. ‘He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.’”

What do you hear in Cleopas’ testimony? Disappointment. Discouragement. Doubt. Cleopas calls Jesus “a prophet, powerful in word and deed” but he doesn’t call Jesus Messiah. And Cleopas doesn’t say, “The women saw angels who said the Jesus was alive.” But rather “they came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels who said he was alive.” Do you hear a difference? Cleopas and the unnamed disciple are not walking along the road to Emmaus rejoicing the Jesus is the Messiah and that He is risen from the dead. They are disappointed. Discouraged. Doubting if Jesus was who they really thought he was.

And how does Jesus respond? Look at Luke 24:25-26. “He said to them, ‘How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ

have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?””

Why doesn't Jesus just say, "It's me! Jesus! I am risen from the dead!"? Any ideas. For the same reason that the disciples were kept from recognizing Him at first. Jesus has something very important to share with them. What would have happened if Jesus had boldly announced, "It's Me! Jesus! I am risen from the dead"? Those two disciples would have been so excited, they wouldn't have listened to a word more that He said.

But Jesus has something very important to share with them. In fact, in my opinion, it's the most important Bible study that was ever given. What was the content of that Bible study? Look with me at Luke 24:27. "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself."

Don't you wish that you could have been there for that Bible study? Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, Jesus explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself! We are going to prayerfully try to reconstruct that Bible study as part of this series of messages on The Emmaus Road, and it's my prayer that what happened to those disciples would also happen to us!

What happened to them? Look at their testimony in Luke 24:32. "They asked each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?' What do those words mean to you? "Were not our hearts burning within us? They were under conviction. They sensed that they were uncovering sacred treasure. They sensed that they were walking on holy ground.

Before Jesus met with them on the road and showed them all the evidence in the Scriptures concerning Himself their fire was going out. Now, their hearts were burning within

them! That's my prayer for each one of us as we take this journey together over the next few weeks. I'm praying that our hearts would burn within us as we discover the truths of God's Word which clearly point to Jesus as the Messiah, the Savior of the world!

But perhaps some who have never read this story before are wondering if those two disciples on the Emmaus road ever did recognize that it was Jesus who was speaking to them. The answer is "Yes!" And here is how it happened. Look with me at Luke 24, beginning with verse 28. "As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther. But they urged him strongly, 'Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.' So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight."

As Jesus broke the bread, they recognized Him! Was it the way that Jesus broke the bread? Or did they see the nail prints in His hands? Or was it now God's appointed time for the veil to be lifted? We're not sure. But this much is certain. When Jesus took the bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to them, they recognized Him!

And then something else supernatural happened. Jesus disappeared from their sight. They would see Him again in the upper room after they had hurried all the way back the 7-8 miles to Jerusalem, this time in the dark! That's a combined distance of almost two thirds of a marathon. But they were excited! Their hearts were still burning within them. Luke records in Luke 24:35 that when they found where the Eleven were assembled, "Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread."

It is a joyful experience when a person recognizes Jesus for who He really is! Not just a

prophet, powerful in word and deed, but as Messiah, Savior. And not just Savior of the world, but your personal Savior. Cleopas and the unnamed disciple experienced that joy when they recognized Jesus as more than a prophet. He was their Messiah. Their Savior. Their Risen Lord.

I have asked someone today to share her testimony of coming to recognize Jesus as Messiah. (Invite Evie to come to the platform)

-Evie, tell us a little about your childhood.

-I met you just recently at a class reunion at Forest Lake Academy. How did you end up at Forest Lake Academy? That's a long way from Haiti!

-How did the truth about Jesus that you learned at FLA impact your life?

-How did your parents respond to your new found faith in Jesus as Messiah?

-How did that reaction affect your life?

-What is your testimony today about Jesus?

Evie joins us each week via our web church. But today is a very special day, because Evie has requested to become a member of the Forest Lake Church by her profession of faith! What is your response, church family? Amen! Welcome home, Evie. Welcome home!

Evie has been on a journey, and her eyes have been opened. Her heart has burned within her as she has heard the truth about Jesus. And like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, Evie has come to believe that Jesus is indeed the Messiah. Her Messiah. Her Savior.

It's my prayer that as we continue this Emmaus Road series that you too would have your heart burn within you as you hear the truth about Jesus, and that you too would come to



recognize Jesus, your Messiah, wants to walk with you.

Listen now as Steve Green sings about that Emmaus Road. (Song with mime)

Who is Jesus Christ  
The question echoes down Emmaus Road  
Dead or raised to life  
The same doubts spoken first so long ago  
When a stranger came  
To two men on their journey  
And it was not long before  
Their broken hearts were burning

Chorus:

Somewhere between where you are and Emmaus  
A stranger wants to come and walk with you  
Somewhere along the way your heart will be burning  
Drawn into the holy flame of truth  
Right now He may be a stranger to you  
What will he be when your journey's through  
Somewhere between where you are and Emmaus  
The Savior wants to walk with you

Some ask Him in to stay  
As night falls on their own Emmaus Road  
Some push Him away  
And never see the mystery unfold  
But those who take to heart the word that has been spoken  
As He breaks the bread of life their eyes will open

Chorus (2 times)

The Savior wants to walk with you.

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Jesus, your Messiah, wants to walk with you!

Closing prayer.